

Where Are You Leading?

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[0 : 00] Hi, my name is Mitch Sefton. I'm the youth pastor here at the First Christian Church and I'm so glad to be with you all today.! It's a true privilege to be able to share God's Word with you. You see, the message today is actually something that has been seen and has been done in response to a meme that most of the students that are listening today will have already understood or have already known.

Or if you're a parent or a grandparent or an educator or just anyone that works with students in general, kids that are younger than high school age or high school age and younger, you probably understand what this really annoying thing is that we're going to be talking about today that's kind of taken our culture by storm right now.

You see, we have grown to realize that much of what is said by the younger generation as slang sounds quite silly to us, but it's part of their everyday language. You see, as a leadership team and a staff, we understand and we know that we must continue to remain culturally relevant without ever stepping away from standing on the truth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

You see, we have made a commitment here at FCC to be a Jesus First Church where it is our goal that everyone will belong to, believe in, and become like Jesus.

See, today we're going to tackle a passage that is challenging to all of us and a verse we are going to really be working through is coming from the book of Deuteronomy and it's coming from chapter 6-7.

[1 : 25] You see, many of you really have no idea why there is a significance in what I just said or what I just did. However, if you serve in the kids' men or like I said, if you've been around students in general in any capacity, you know that the silly thing that they're saying is the number 6-7 has become a viral sensation.

Even to the point of our director of kids' ministry, Lynn, came to me about a month ago and she asked me, is there any reason I shouldn't be saying the number 6-7?

And now she's kind of taking that by storm and using it all the time. This saying originated from a song and it has really grown into a meaning that has no meaning whatsoever and it's something that kids find as fun to say and to do with the hand motions.

And needless to say, this is definitely something that has been heard many times in our 220 youth on Wednesday nights. You see, I find it very valuable to have the opportunity to share with you all just some of the things that are going on in 220 youth.

And recently, as we've been talking about just doing some different things in our youth ministry and our students have had to navigate what they're doing in this crazy world and we just continue to cover your prayers as they continue to navigate their faith in Jesus and the world that they're living in.

[2 : 39] You see, we just finished up a series called Battle Plan where our theme verse was John 10, 10. The thief comes only to steal, to kill, and to destroy.

And I have come that you may have life and have it to the full. You see, in this series, we have tackled the idea of how the enemy's battle plan is laid out in Scripture.

He tells us his game plan to steal, kill, and destroy anything and everything that we have in life that will bring honor and glory to Jesus. And he also wants to steal our lives as well.

The second part of that Scripture, however, is the part where Christ has come and he has talked about how we have full victory and we must learn how to be on the side of victory and to continue to grow in our relationship with the Lord.

Our five topics that we chose to study were that of prayer, that of worship, to study Scripture, fellowship, and forgiveness. You see, one of my favorite parts of this series is that one of our own

youth delivered the final message on forgiveness.

[3 : 41] We had the opportunity to sit down, he and I together, and just plan out this message so that he could work through the passage as he was being led by God.

And so he had a chance to deliver this message on Wednesday night. And we're just so excited about that, that our students are choosing to do those types of things. We have students in our 220 Youth Ministry that are currently making kingdom impact right now, right where God has placed them.

You see, we have students that are leading Bible studies at their schools. We have students that are on the leadership team at the local FCA. We have students that are playing in the praise band. We have students that are working in our sound booths. We have students that are serving in our kids' ministry. We have students that are leading prayer on their sports teams. We have students that are showing up consistently to study God's Word.

And we are still having between 65 and 85 students on a given Wednesday night in our youth center to learn about the Scriptures and the importance of a relationship with Jesus. You see, if you have students that attend on Wednesday evenings, take some time just to ask them what they're learning about.

[4 : 47] Needless to say, I'm honored and blown away by the opportunity to have the privilege of serving as the youth pastor here at FCC. And I love my students. You see, as we dive into this message today, I want to say this one may step on your toes.

I'm going to be honest with you. And I only say that because as I have continued to prepare for this particular lesson and just dove into God's Word and just really studied, He has stepped on my toes so many times.

And so as we continue along this passage, just know that God is going to challenge us through His Holy Word today. You see, our passage, like I said before, is going to come from Deuteronomy 6. So if you would like to go ahead and open your Bible there, we will get into that here in just a moment. You see, in order for us to completely understand the significance of this passage, we must take a look of what it says also in Deuteronomy 5.

You see, here we're going to find Moses, where he reveals the Ten Commandments to the Israelites. You see, this is such a huge part of why it is so important for us to have an actual Bible in our hands as we are choosing to study.

[6 : 00] You see, many of us, and myself included, will rely on the Bible app or just the screen that's in front of us when we're in a service on a Sunday morning or as we're watching here right now.

And it's just something that we have to understand that there's more to the context of the passage than maybe what meets the eye if we're just in that one spot. You see, when understanding the Ten Commandments are the commands, the decrees, and laws that are being discussed, it truly allows us to understand the Scripture in Deuteronomy 6 better.

You see, just to give you a little information, Deuteronomy was a book that was written soon before the death of Moses. This was a compilation of speeches that are believed to be during the last few weeks of Moses' life.

You see, Moses, in doing everything in his power to make sure that the next generation was prepared with the Word of God and how to truly follow Him and glorify Him.

We are reading about a time when God is preparing the Israelites to enter the Promised Land. In chapter 5, He lays out the commandments so that the Israelites are put in the best position possible to successfully enter that Promised Land.

[7 : 14] This book, written by Moses, was done in the last parts of his life. And what that just tells us is this. We never retire from ministry. We are to serve the Lord until He chooses for us to take our last breath.

And so as you continue to read, understand that Moses was doing God's work all the way up until his final days. And that's going to be a challenge for us as well as we study today.

When reading Deuteronomy 6, we can better understand that Moses is telling the Israelites to not only follow the laws themselves, but to teach them to the generations to come. You see, knowing that Deuteronomy 5 is laying the groundwork for these people to enter the Promised Land, but also for their children and their children's children for the many generations to come.

You see, we're going to be taking a look at this particular passage from three different points of view. where we'll be able to think about what God was teaching the Israelites and then how we can take those same commands and those same lessons and apply them to our lives today in living the way that God has called us to live.

We will start by looking at our own families. And then we're going to branch out and we're going to look at it from what would look like from the church or our church family. And then the last way that we're going to look at this particular passage is going to be what I'm going to call the village or the group of people that are around others as they walk through life together.

[8 : 47] You see, but before we dive into God's Holy Word, I just want to take a moment to pray. God, thank you for the opportunity just to dive into your Word this day.

And God, we just thank you so much for the blessing of Deuteronomy 6. And I ask you, Lord, just to speak through that particular passage as we just dive into it. Father, thank you for Jesus in his name. Amen. Starting in Deuteronomy 6, it says, These are the commands and decrees, the laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you, to observe in the land you are crossing, the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children, and your children after them may fear the Lord God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life.

Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that you may go well with, so it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in the land flowing with milk and honey.

Just as the Lord, the God, the God of your ancestors promised you. Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

Love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul and with all of your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts and press them on your children.

[10 : 13] Talk about them when you are sitting at home, when you sit at home and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads.

Write them on the door frames of your houses and on your gates. Now as we tackle this particular passage, we're going to go back through and we're going to break it down just a little bit.

We're going to go into verse 1 where it says, I'm going to read again, These are the commands, decrees, and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess.

You see, Moses writes about the commands, the decrees, and the laws and this is the perfect trio of words for them to understand completely the authority of God.

And they truly understand the significance of following Him and why it's so important because of these words that were used. You see, Moses understands the importance of his job as well.

[11 : 19] He has been given the job to teach them about these commands and why they are so important to the future of the Israelites. And when they are able to enter the promised land, they will be better prepared.

And then we go on to verse 2 where it says, So that you, your children, and their children and after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all His decrees and commands that I give you and so that you may enjoy long life.

You see, this verse expresses the importance of generational faithfulness. God is giving them all that they need to be able to teach their children how to live a long and God-centered life.

These are the things you need to do not to put yourself in the same position as what your ancestors put themselves in. You see, this also gives us a picture of the importance of sharing and passing on our faith in Jesus to the younger generations.

We're going to talk about all of these things a little bit later on. Then moving on to verse 3, it says, Hear Israel and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly and the land flowing with milk and honey just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors promised you.

[12 : 44] The words here, Israel, are part of the Shema prayer that is the call to faith. This is a foundational prayer in the faith of the Jewish people. These words would have been very well known to the Israelites and it basically or it essentially means listen up.

Moses continues to tell the Israelites that they need to be paying attention to these commandments and then he gives them a reason why it's so important. This is a warning for the Israelites that if

they go into the promised land and they do not follow the decrees that they will not increase greatly. It is important to be faithful to God and follow the commands that he has given them. And then we move on to verse 4 where it says, Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.

You see this verse states the part of the listen up. The hear O Israel. What that's saying is, Hey everyone, pay attention. When it states the Lord our God and the Lord is one, this is the indicator to the Israelites that God is the one and only God.

They live in a time where many people believed in many different gods which is very similar to what we live in today. And this was God's way of saying that he was the only one.

[14:10] He is the only one true God, Yahweh. And then we move on to verse 5 where it says, Love the Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul and with all of your strengths.

You see, this is a reference of Lord your God is used again in verse 5 to indicate that Yahweh is the one and only true God that can be worshipped and He is the one that is worthy of the worship.

You see, this leaves no aspect of our lives to not be in God's hands with all of our heart, with all of our soul, and with all of our strength. God wants all of us, not just the parts that we're willing to give Him.

He desires our whole heart, our whole soul, and all of our strength. He wants our whole self being much of what He loves us.

And moving on to verse 6, These commandments that I give you today are on your hearts. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

[15:24] You see, this particular verse has so much more meaning than what might meet the eye test as we just read through it. You see, when we talk about the commandments to be on our hearts, this is when we take what God says and we are truly living them out because of the love and the devotion that we have for Him.

Not just because we're supposed to be following some moral code of conduct to make it look like we have it all together. Or that we're checking the box of going to church on a Sunday morning or on a Wednesday night.

Or maybe we're just in that, oh yeah, I listen to the sermon type mentality. You see, what it really means is that you're taking the scriptures that you're learning and you're putting them into your everyday lives.

Have you allowed the holy scriptures to change you to the very core of your heart? God wants your heart. He wants His words to be all over His image bearers.

And that brings us to verse, kids, you ready? You with me? Six, seven. And that is this, to impress them on your children.

[16:34] Talk about them when you sit at your home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. See, I know it's taken us a little bit of time to get to the passage that we're going to be focusing on today, but I really feel like what we have done leading up to this moment has been unbelievably valuable to get to this particular point and this particular part of the passage.

You see, this is where we're going to really spend a good chunk of our time on as we move forward. We're going to talk about those three things that we talked about earlier but kind of going back to what the title of the sermon is.

Where are you leading? You see, we're going to look at it from those three different groups of people that everyone listening will fall into one of these categories and a lot of us will fall into multiple of them.

See, we're going to talk about the family. We're going to talk about the church and then we're going to talk about the village. Family, when you start thinking about it from a family perspective, we're talking about what you're doing within the walls of your own home.

Proverbs 22.6 coming from the ESV version, it says, train up a child in the way that he will go and when he is old he will not depart from it.

[17:55] You see, training our children does not just happen by accident. It's the product of years and years of prayer, consistency, love, and time.

So I have to ask this question to you because this is one that really stepped on my toes as well. Is are you spending intentional time teaching your kids about Jesus?

You see, one of the most valuable things we can give our children in the next generation is our time. As you continue to grow older, you continue to realize just how valuable time is.

You will never regret the amount of time that you chose to spend with your kids. You see, I'm definitely not saying that we as parents and guardians should not do things that will refuel us to be the best version of what God has called us to be for our children.

However, when we choose to spend more time scrolling through on our phones or playing in our local sports leagues or choosing to spend time with the guys or the girls on Friday and Saturday night and we don't choose to actively pour into our kids, the next generation will negatively be affected and that's how they're going to learn to live.

[19 : 12] They will not understand what it truly looks like to be a godly husband or a godly wife or a godly mother or a godly father. Our kids are going to be raised and disciplined by someone or something and we as parents and guardians have to be willing to take a stand against the world and impress upon them the love that Jesus offers in a way that all aspects of their lives are understood.

You see, being a parent is one of the most rewarding and one of the most difficult things I have ever had the privilege to do. Our boys are now 17, 14, and 10 and I love them so much and I'm honored to be their dad.

You see, one of my favorite and hardest things to do in life right now and this sounds silly but it's to hold my two-year-old nephew. I love him so much. He's awesome.

He loves going on four-wheeler rides and I take him up and down the driveway in our van and he gets to drive and it's just so fun but it can be so hard when you really start to think about this particular part of it and that is that it seems just like yesterday that a parent as myself were holding my boys when they were that age and I think about all of the time that I've lost with them because I haven't chosen to be intentional or I've missed the moments to truly pour into them the way that Jesus truly pours into each of us.

I've missed moments to teach them when they were just sitting at home around the dinner table or playing catch in the backyard or watching movies together or when we do our bedtime routines and I'll be honest I don't know about you but there have been way too many times at the end of a long day when we focus more on just getting our kids to bed so that we can have some peace and quiet in the home instead of taking the intentional time that we should have taken to be showing them the love of Jesus at that time.

[21 : 14] See but with all of the discouragement that we can find in beating ourselves up for not leading in a way that we are called to do so like the example that is set in Deuteronomy 6 we can start doing more now.

See I saw this post not too long ago then I asked a really hard question and the question was would you be happy if in 10 15 20 years from now you saw your kids living a similar life to what you are currently living?

You see my hope for my boys is that they will do a better job discipling their children than what I have done for them. I hope that we can instill in them now some of the things that God has called us to instill in them all along the way.

You see some of us aren't just doing a good job living out Deuteronomy 6 7 We're too worried about making sure that our kids like us.

We're too busy making sure that our kids have the nicest things. We're too busy making sure that they have every opportunity under the sun to do the things that they love.

[22 : 28] but we're missing the part of sharing the love of God with our kids because we are too busy encouraging them to chase the things the world has to offer.

You see the next generation needs to understand what it truly means to love Jesus and they need to be done inside the walls of your home first.

Your family is your greatest ministry. Your job is to usher your kids into the kingdom of heaven not into the hall of fame.

Now I need you to hear me. I'm not saying we can't do the things that we love to do but what I'm saying is that it cannot become an idol in the life of you or your family and I can tell you right now I hope my kids are better husbands and fathers and servants and teachers and Christ followers than what I have ever been but in order for that to happen it is my job as their parent to teach those skills and allow them to see me love my wife more than anyone else.

Parent them with love serve Jesus boldly with thanksgiving in my heart teach others about him. My kids need to see me make my faith a priority or they will never understand what it really looks like to be a sacrificial Christ follower.

[23 : 57] I think we all know that life is hard. There's always going to be opportunities for us to make excuses for why we aren't able to intentionally pour into the next generation. Our calling as families are much greater than to allow the excuses to get in the way.

It is the future generations of the body of Christ and that is worth investing in. Parents, guardians, where are you leading?

The next group of people I want to talk to is that of the church. My question for you church and that is the body of believers is what are you doing to point the next generation to Jesus?

What are you as a person that professes their love in Jesus doing personally to help raise up a generation of people that truly love the Lord and understand what it means to live under the Lordship of Jesus?

To truly surrender all parts of our lives to Him and live according to His commands and decrees?

You can be a part of raising up a generation of church leaders to carry the torch that we will one day need to pass.

[25 : 13] This can look different for different people. Some of you you have stepped up to serve in the kids ministry or that you've stepped up to serve in 220 youth and you're pouring into our junior high and senior high kids.

You are truly pouring into the lives of the next generation when you're doing that. Some of you have chosen to coach. Some of you have chosen to be bus drivers. Some of you have chosen to teach. Some of you have a daycare. Some of you help in the Good News Club. Some of you volunteer at your local schools. Some of you have chosen to foster. or adopt and the list can just continue to go on and on and on.

We have to understand that God commands us to lead the next generation. this is one of those here oh Israel moments that you find in Deuteronomy 6.

This is when God is saying hey church listen up. Teach the next generation how to truly love Jesus the way that someone taught you at one point or another.

[26 : 13] And a question I would encourage you to ask yourself is this. Where would you be right now if the person that led you to Jesus would have stayed on the sideline?

You see God has given each of us gifts and talents and we are called to use them to build his kingdom. We just have to be willing to say yes.

So the question you need to ask yourself is not can I do it? but the question that you need to ask yourself is am I going to be obedient?

See church where are you leading? And the last group of people that I want to talk to is that of the village. You see most of us have probably heard the saying it takes a village to raise a child.

You see more than likely you are part of someone's village. You are part of an influential person or a part of someone's life that helps take them to the level of where they are called to be and whether that looks like is your decision on how you're going to lead them.

[27 : 25] But that is what it means to be in the context of being a part of someone's village. You are setting an example for someone who is watching. It could be a child, it could be a teammate, it could be a co-worker, it could be a player, it could be a younger sibling, it could just be someone that watches you consistently, it could be someone that you have the opportunity to pour into their life and you have the opportunity to make a difference in.

You just have to choose, are you going to lead them in a way that is more like Christ or is in a way that looks more like the world. You see we have so many people that we allow into the inner circle of influence for our kids.

You see some of them are welcomed and as much as we hate to say it, some of them are appointed. So how do we handle when a child gets a teacher that does not follow the Lord? What happens when your kids coach schedule practice on a night that you know is a church night and you have set that aside because those are the things that are important?

What are you willing to do to teach the next generation not to put them in a position to be swallowed by the world? You see as part of the village of the next generation be the teacher that lives out the love of Christ in your classroom and that you can directly even if you're not able to directly speak about him.

Be the coach that refuses to schedule things in conflict with your players ability to go to church. You see as a youth pastor I'm going to be honest this one is hard for me. It's one of those things where I have heard every excuse under the sun on why students can't come to youth group.

[29 : 06] We'll encourage them to be here because we know that we're going to be teaching them about Jesus and there's something going on or there's some reason why they can't be here but here's what I'm going to ask you. If you are a coach or you are someone involved in an extracurricular that you're leading young men and young women don't be the reason why they can't make church a priority.

I've been a coach. All you do is you just don't schedule practice during church times. Stop making our kids choose between their extracurricular activities and their ability to come and learn about Jesus.

So I ask you this question village. Where are you leading? See as we begin to wrap up it is important to be able to put some tangible ideas on how to truly lead in the way that we can turn to verses 8 and 9 for some guidance on this particular situation.

So as we go back to Deuteronomy chapter 6 verses 8 and 9 it's going to give us some tangible ideas on what we can do to ingrain these commands and these decrees into the lives of the next generation.

And it says this, Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on your door frames of your houses and your gates.

[30 : 33] You see there's so many things we can do to hide scripture in our hearts and commit them to memory. Many people will decorate their homes with scripture to help them memorize verses.

Our family, one of the things that we have chosen to do is we write post-it notes to each other. We take index cards and we'll tape them around the house with scripture on them. These will be put in the high traffic area in our home.

They'll be put on the bathroom mirror. There's one on the window as we look out from the kitchen area. There's just things that you do that help you hide scripture deep in your heart to help you understand what it looks like to truly live out your faith.

One of the ones that I've put on the mirror in my boys' room is this. When you look in the mirror, do you look more like Jesus or do you look more like the world? You see some of our good friends, here's another idea that you could have.

They actually, in order to help memorize scripture, I remember they used to buy fake tattoos and they would put them on themselves for a, there would be like a scripture per week that they were trying to memorize.

[31 : 35] So they would have some fun with it and they would put a fake tattoo on their arm and that would be the way that they could help memorize the scripture. You see there's a multitude of different ideas that you can come up with to help commit these commands to memory as well as other scriptures you would like to hide in your heart.

But you see the main goal in all of this is taking the time to make scripture and the commands from God the centerpiece of your life. Hide them deep in your heart so that in everything you do you will point your life back to the one that gave it to you.

Back to the one that saved you from your sin that you could not be saved from yourself. And in the process guide others to him as well.

You see I know a lot of this could feel very overwhelming or you could feel defeated or like a failure but don't. Just like Pastor Steve spoke last week about Jim Valvano where he says don't give up. Don't ever give up. Here's what I'm going to tell you. It's never too late to begin living out the scriptures and sharing your love for Jesus with others. You just have to remember that no matter what you do you're going to be leading someone somewhere.

[32 : 55] there. You just have to decide if your life choices are an example of leading people closer to the cross of Christ or farther away from it.

So again the final question where are you leading? Pray with me. God thank you so much for Deuteronomy 6.

I thank you for the challenges that you have given us through this Holy Scripture. And God I pray right now that as we are called to lead the next generation Father that you give us opportunities to love you boldly with that group of people.

And God I pray that we can just lean into you and that you can pour into us so that we can pour out to others. And God just give us opportunities to stand firm on your gospel and to teach the truth.

And Father thank you for Jesus. Thank you for his gift of salvation. In your precious and holy name. Amen. Have a great week church. Thank you Pastor Mitch for sharing that amazing message all around Deuteronomy 6.7.

[34 : 03] Okay now if you don't quite know what that means that's okay. It's just a pop culture reference. But no matter what kind of fads come in and out of popularity we know that the Bible stays absolutely true and central to our entire lives.

So I appreciate him taking some time to dive a little bit more into the Old Testament scripture that we covered today. Hey if you don't know me my name is Pastor Tyler. I am the worship and tech pastor here at First Christian Church.

And the reason I'm here talking to you now after the message is because I want to give you just a simple invitation. If you're someone who is questioning your walk with Jesus perhaps you're someone who doesn't 100% understand who Jesus really is or who he wants to be in your life. We just want to invite you to give us a call. You can call the church. We're First Christian Church of Greensburg Indiana. You can call us at 812-663-8488.

You can email me directly at Tyler at FCCGreensburg.com or if you would rather you can email Mitch directly at Mitch at FCCGreensburg.com or any of the other staff members here at FCC.

[35 : 13] But thank you so much for being here. Thank you so much for dealing with our antics. And thank you more than anything for just leaning into your relationship with Jesus. In other words putting Jesus first.

Thanks. Have a great day. Thank you.