

Know Them, Teach Them

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[0 : 00] Good morning, everyone. First, I just say good morning to everyone, those of you who are online and those of you who are present.

! And I want to say a special thank you to those who are visiting because I invited you. I have a good friend James and his wife, and I'm going to try not to forget it.

I have Thomas over there, a good friend of mine. I have Ted and his wife, Patrice, Romeo, and the faithful Pamela, who has probably heard just about every time I've spoken before, no matter where it was.

She has been a friend since high school, so that's 40 years ago. Also, I think I dated myself just now.

In any event, and a special Happy Father's Day to all fathers, to those who have lost their fathers, as I have.

[1 : 03] It is my hope that you do have cherished memories. It was about 36 years ago, pretty much around this time of year, that I learned that I would become a father.

And I distinctly remember, I distinctly remember having a sense of trepidation. While my father had fathered me, and he was a very wonderful father, I must add, I had this sense that there would be children or a coming child who I would be thoroughly responsible for, the raising of them.

As it turned out, I would have four of them, and now I have six grandchildren. I wish at the time, when I was having that sense of trepidation, I wish at that time that I knew the things that I would learn later.

But as it was, I didn't. Even though I was brought up in a Christian home. I hope that what I will share with you today will help you as parents, especially those of you with young ones, those of you who have grandchildren in particular.

So I want you to pay attention very, very closely to something I'm going to say to you. Like I said, I wish, I literally wish, that I had known this.

[2 : 31] Something I came to know only 13, 14 years later, when my daughter was 13, which I will get to in today's message.

Just for other matter of record, all scripture references today will be taken from the English Standard Version. English Standard Bible Version, unless otherwise mentioned.

Two weeks ago, I spoke on the theme, the theme children of God, and who they were or are. Using the text as found in 1 John 1-10, we found that the children of God are those who seek purity, keep God's law, and practice righteousness.

Last week, our brother, Sean B. Gadet, dealt with a very crucial motto regarding forgiveness. From the text, Matthew 18, 21-35, we learned how essential it is for us to forgive others.

Since our Lord has so greatly forgiven us, so ought we to forgive our brothers who sinned against us. There is no greater act of righteousness that we can do that reflects the heart and character of God than that of forgiveness.

[3 : 46] It was only a few days ago that I had commenced preparing for today's sermon, but as God would have it, what I was about to speak about had changed.

As Thursday afternoon began to unfold, I got this overwhelming sense that I should change course and speak from another passage. And I don't know why I didn't land on this at first.

This will be the first time that I've ever spoken on Father's Day. Hopefully, it won't be the last time, but, and that's not, I'm not putting a pitch for next year, Pastor.

But this is literally the first time that I was spoken on Father's Day. And given that, my mind went back to, what was the greatest thing that helped me as a father?

What was the greatest passage of Scripture that helped me? So let's pause for a moment of prayer. Father, may your name be hallowed throughout the entire earth, for you are the creator and sustainer.

[5 : 01] Let your kingdom reign, and may we do your will in bidding here on earth. We thank you for your provision, the greatest of which is your revelation, that we might come to understand who you are, but more importantly, know you.

Teach us to forgive those who have sinned against us, especially in light of your great mercy, having forgiven us of our debt of sin. Lord, help us to keenly be aware that you are holy, and that you take sin so seriously that its wages is death.

We thank you for the provision of your dear Son, who died in our place, so that we might live forevermore, and escape the death that we deserve.

Help us to love you, and to live obediently. Today is Father's Day. Help all fathers here today, and those who will become fathers in the years to come, to understand that you have commanded us. What you have commanded us. Help us to be like you, our Heavenly Father. As we reflect on your word today, may our love for you deepen as we come to know you better.

[6 : 13] To you be all the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. Today's sermon is entitled, Know Them, Teach Them. The year was 1999.

The family was set for a time of vacation in Abaco. Jonathan, my youngest, was five, and my eldest, Leah, was 13. While I cannot remember what triggered it, there was this compulsion to do something different than before.

Rather than studying and reading the Bible from a topical approach, I felt the need to read the entire books of the Bible instead, and where possible, to do it in one sitting.

Little did I realize at the time that that simple change would alter the direction of my life, changing even the very framework from which I had come to understand the Scriptures.

And for whatever reason, I knew almost immediately that the first two books of the Bible that I would tackle would be Deuteronomy in the Old Testament and Romans in the New Testament.

[7 : 23] Given that vacation was within days, I determined to get started at that time. Today's sermon text, Deuteronomy 6, 4 through 9, had such a profound impact on me that it literally changed the way that I would father my children from that point on.

It reads, Hear, O Israel, The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise.

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

What can we learn from today's text? In summary, to love God is to know them, His commandments, and to diligently teach them to our children.

[8 : 43] The Shema, as today's passage is more commonly known in Jewish circles, is a passage of scripture that is often referenced in sermons today. After all, when Jesus was asked what was the greatest commandment, He answered with the opening line of the Shema.

And He said to them, to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment, Matthew 22, 37, and 38.

However, the Shema, when referenced in sermons today, tends to refer to God's entire written revelation as opposed to something specific. So let's examine the text a little more closely.

Was Moses referring to something in general or was he referring to something specific? And further, was Jesus' reference to the Shema something in general or was it something specific?

Let's revisit the Matthew 22 passage. Only this time, let's start with verse 35 and end with verse 40. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him.

[9 : 54] Teacher, which is the greatest, which is the great commandment in the law? And he said to him, You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.

This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.

Notice Jesus' reference to all the law and the prophets. That is, Jesus would be referring to the entire written word at that time.

Jesus said that all of it depends or as the NIV puts it, hangs on two specific commandments. First and foremost, the love of God and second, the love of your neighbor or love of our neighbor.

Up until the time of Moses, up until the time that Moses spoke the Shema, today's passage, there was only one thing actually written down and that was by God himself.

[11:04] The Decalogue, the Ten Commandments. And it was these commandments that Moses was referring to specifically. Today, these commandments are referred to as the moral law and rightly so.

As stated by Moses and reiterated by Jesus, the greatest thing that we can do is to love God with our entire being. But Moses doesn't leave the how to love God.

Moses does not leave the how to love God up for grabs since he immediately references the Decalogue as recorded in the prior chapter, Deuteronomy chapter 5, the words that God wrote down with his very own hands.

As I stated a few weeks ago, there is only one time in all of the recorded scripture where we find that God himself wrote something down.

And it was the Decalogue and he did it twice as I pointed out. Despite this fact, the majority of Christians today are unable to recite them, let alone in any order.

[12:26] I am fairly certain that I can prove my point even this morning. But the point is not to embarrass anyone. Permit me to state them in very brief form for you.

We are to one, have no other gods, two, have no idols, three, not misuse God's name, four, remember the Sabbath day, five, honor our father and mother, six, not murder, seven, not commit adultery, eight, not steal, nine, not lie, number ten, not covet.

Commandments one through four are all related to God while commandments five to ten are all related to our neighbors. Jesus' reference to the loving of God and the loving of neighbor are in fact the summary of the Decalogue as given by God to his people.

In light of today's passage, what exactly was being called, what are we exactly, what are we exactly being called to do? Where is our starting point in showing that we love God?

What is Moses trying to say to us? This leads to the first of two points in today's sermons. loving God gives expressions to his commandments.

[13:43] This requires that we know them. Moses writes in verse six, and these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

As I memorize this passage way back in 1999, I prefer the rendition of the NIV, which I think makes the thrust of the passage clearer.

The NIV reads as follows, These commandments that I give to you today are to be on your hearts. That's the NIV version of Deuteronomy 6.6.

While it is true that God's entire word is to be cherished in such a manner that we would be careful to observe them, the thrust of this passage is very specific.

These commandments, these commandments that I give to you today are to be on your heart. In recent months, I have been sharing a psalm each morning in a high school class chat.

[14:56] I have somebody here in the class chat so they would know what I'm saying. In doing so, I have been amazed at how many times that David, in particular, references God's commandments, his law, statutes, testimonies, word, rules, and precepts.

Here's just one excerpt from Psalm 119, 97 to 104. Oh, how I love your law. It is my meditation all day.

Your commandments make me wiser than my enemies for it is ever with me. I have more understanding than all my teachers for your testimonies are my meditation.

I understand more than the aged for I keep your precepts. I hold back my feet from evil, from the evil way in order to keep your word.

I do not turn aside from your rules for you have taught me how sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth.

[16:13] Though, through your precepts, I get understanding. Therefore, I hate every false way. in a world that considers rules, commandments, laws, statutes, and precepts as restrictive, David, on the other hand, speaks of his love for them.

For the commandments do the following, according to David. They make him wiser than his adversaries. They give him greater understanding than all his teachers and those much older than he.

They keep him from doing evil. They keep him focused. They become sweetness for his soul. And, they cause him to love truth.

Oh, how I love your law. It is my meditation all the day. Brothers and sisters, and fathers in particular, there is a clear call of God to know his commandments, that they are to be upon our hearts.

We are to love them and meditate on them. There is so much that can be garnered from meditating on them and memorizing them as David declares.

[17 : 35] Allow me to highlight on one of those benefits as days of trouble are always ahead of us. When the day of trouble comes, as they most certainly always do, the commands of God will be so deeply rooted in our hearts that we will not be moved.

Pastor Cedric and I were speaking just days ago. He mentioned the fact that most people do not have their minds set in such a manner so as to face the troubles that are sure to come.

I agree. I firmly agree. brothers and sisters, fathers, the commandments equip us. But why is it that we remain so ill prepared?

The answer is plain and simple. There is a gross lack of meditation, reflection, and memorization of the commands of God. We have not taken the time to know them.

For anyone who is familiar with this church, as you would observed earlier, you would be aware that there is a commitment to the memorization of God's word.

[18 : 47] Each week, as we come together in corporate worship, we take time to learn the scriptures together. Pastor Moss and the leaders here are committed to the word, that we know it, so that it will be upon our hearts.

In fact, the theme verse of our Verses to Remember, Scripture Memory program, is taken from the same Psalm 119, which captures the very same point being made by Moses in today's sermon text. Psalm 119, 9-11, reads as follows. How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart I seek you.

Let me not wander from your commandments. I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you. The very point of storing up the word in our hearts is the very purpose of not doing anything, is for the very purpose of not doing anything that is offensive to the Lord.

That we ourselves might not sin against him. To love God is to obey his commandments. And those commandments have much to say about how we ought to love our neighbors.

[20 : 03] there is a deliberate point to memorizing, meditating, reflecting upon, remembering, and having the word of God on our hearts. So that when the moment of truth rears its ugly head, be it one of temptation, or pressure of enormous proportions, that we will be able to stand.

You must equip yourself to know them. I'm reminded of the story of the three Hebrew boys who went under the command of King Nebuchadnezzar were told to bow to the golden image of himself or face the fiery furnace.

Sometimes when we read stories like this from the Bible, we tend to see them in a glassy-eyed manner, as though these were not real people in real circumstances facing imminent peril, just as you and I would today.

But these are real people facing real danger, and often the threat of death. Consider for a moment the many Christians who right now, as we sit here, right now, and in this very moment, are under the threat of severe persecution in Muslim and Hindu communities around the world.

Many are literally facing the sword, the barrel of a gun, the burning of their homes, and even rape, all in the attempt to get them to renounce their faith.

[21 : 44] Or how about something far less consequential, when we are being pressured to lie or cheat? Or what about those who are currently being pressured into sexual favors, in order to maintain their jobs, with their livelihood hanging in the balance?

What does one do when under such immense pressure? Fathers, young men, listen up. Brothers and sisters, there is immense value in loving God's commandments and having them on our hearts. when facing the fiery furnace. Listen carefully. When I read this, and I'm off script right now, when I read this, I was like, what?

Listen carefully to the candor of those three Hebrews when Nebuchadnezzar demanded that they bow.

I was recording in Daniel 3, 16 to 17. 16, 17. Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego answered and said to the king, O Nebuchadnezzar, we have no need to answer you in this matter.

[23 : 11] You all get that? We need to go over this. that's a done deal. We have no need to answer you in this matter.

If this be so, our God, whom we serve, is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace. And he will deliver us from your hands, O king.

But if not, be it known to you, O king, that we will not serve your God, or worship the golden idol image that you have set up.

That's resolved. No doubt, they were holding fast to God's commandment. And in particular, the second commandment, which reads as follows in Deuteronomy chapter 5, 8 to 10.

By the way, this is the longest scripted commandment. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or anything in likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

[24 : 33] You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I, the Lord, your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers and the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandment.

There's no other God to be worshipped. None. Not even you, King Nebuchadnezzar. When first considered, when first conscripted by King Nebuchadnezzar to serve as governors in his kingdom, I hardly believe that Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego would have thought that the day would come when they would square off with the king of the entire known world.

But as time passed, there came a point when they began to realize that they would be under pressure to bow in the worship of the king. Perhaps some of you listening right now, and in this moment are under the pressure to bow the knee or buckle to some authority pressure.

The details may be different, but the potential loss and consequence is nonetheless real and before you staring you in the face. Stand.

these commandments that I give to you today are to be upon your hearts. Do not bow.

[26 : 14] But there remains another requirement for those who love God, a commandment directed specifically at parents, which leads to my second point. Fathers, take heed.

Loving God gives expression to his commandments, which requires that we teach them to our children in particular.

While it is important that we know them and cherish the commandments of God first, God commands everyone to teach them to our children. Here are the words of God as spoken by Moses, verses 7 to 9 of today's text, reads as follows.

You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you, by the way, I've learned this in the NIV, so I'm having this trip in my going on. I'm tempted to recall it from memory. And when you walk in the way and when you lie down and when you rise, you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

[27 : 25] You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. Fathers, listen, this is chiefly your responsibility in the home.

As Christ is the head of the church, so you are the head of your wife. I know that doesn't go well in a woke culture.

stand. Stand. Every command of God is chiefly your responsibility to see through within the confines of the home.

This command is not a command to the government. Teaching of your children, I mean. I'll say something further.

this command is not even a command to the church. This is a command to you, that you, me, that I, ought to be about the business of teaching the commandments to our children.

[28 : 36] You are commanded of God to be the first instrument by which your children come to know the Lord. your wife is to be your help mate in accomplishing what God has commanded.

But you are to be the one to make sure that his commandments are taught to them. And as a sidebar, I gotta do this sidebar.

As a sidebar to all unmarried ladies here present, all listening online, if you truly love the Lord, this martyr will be a priority for you.

Resist entertaining any man unless you are certain that he loves the Lord in such a manner where you know that the word is on his heart and where it is consistently coming out of his mouth.

If it isn't, if it isn't, it is likely that he neither knows the commands of God at all. How can you teach what you do not know?

[29 : 47] Back to our text. Sorry for that sidebar. Talk of them when you sit in the house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise.

Notice the centrality of the commandments in the confines of your home. When you sit at home, is a reference to the moments that when you are with your children in the home.

It is there you ought to be about teaching the commandments. When you walk along the road is also a reference to when you are with your children when out of the home.

In ancient times, parents walked with their children everywhere. In modern times, our children drive along with us in cars to go various places, school, church, birthday parties, events, and to visit families and friends.

Those times while driving can be critical moments of instruction. Use those moments to teach them the word as they interact with the world around them.

[30 : 58] Fathers, parents, I encourage you to strongly, strongly to discourage the use of technology during these moments as a means to simply occupy attention of your children.

You are called of God to teach them. Your children, technology, toys, and the like are too often a welcome distraction from engaging conversation with our children, especially for us, the parent.

I get an amen? Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Remember, we are the primary source and influence from which our children will experience the world around them.

We give them the framework to understand the world around them. And God has placed us as the very means by which they are to be taught.

life circumstances and events are moments when the rubber hits the road as children experience the world out there. These are moments when we aid children in thinking through the relevance of God's word to the world around them.

[32 : 23] We live in a world where people think that the word of God is totally irrelevant. Part of the reasons why we don't even make it relevant. It's amazing how relevant the commandments are and can be used in everyday life situations.

I can recall moments when I had to say to one of my children, who I shall leave their name anonymous, this is what I said.

It was a chastising moment. Now, before you answer what I just asked you, I want you to keep in mind the ninth commandment.

And I said it just like that. I want you to notice what I just did. We're now having an exchange, talking to my children, and rather than say what the ninth commandment was, I actually referred to it.

And after saying that, I could see that little brain accessing what the ninth commandment was. And by the way, I knew he knew it.

[33 : 33] Oh, I gave the sex away, so that eliminates one. I have one daughter, three sons, so you're still in a dilemma. Talk of them when you lie down and when you rise.

The commandments, the word ought to be the last thing on their minds at night, and the first thing on their minds in the morning, teaching your children to recite the commands, or perhaps a memory verse that you want them to learn is a good thing for them to have on their minds as they go to bed or as they wake up.

By the way, we have memory verses that the church is learning. This would be a good thing to get them involved with. Verses 8 and 9 of our today's century, you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. The hands are symbolic of the work we do. And the frontlet between our eyes is symbolic of the things that we see and think about.

The idea here is that the children can see the relevance of the commandments in everything we set out to do and in everything that we as fathers and mothers think about.

[35 : 07] They can actually see it. In closing, and as an encouragement to all of you, you in particular, all of fathers here, let me refer back to my 1999 experience when I first set about to read the book of Deuteronomy.

Two things stood out immediately. First, the word remember, that it may go well with you. In the first 12 to 14 chapters of Deuteronomy, that word remember keeps popping back.

Moses says it so many times that literally I'm going to be honored with you like I got tired of hearing him say it as I read it. Remember, I'm reading this in one sitting. Remember, remember, remember.

It's constantly there. Second, this very passage that these commandments would be on our hearts and that I was to teach them to my children.

I will admit that while I was unable to fully appreciate the significance at the time, I determined that day that I would be about the business of knowing the commands of God, that is being able, I could recite them without going right out of the head, and that I would teach them to my children.

[36 : 37] That was 1999. and it is now 2021, some 22 years later, if my math is correct. I think I now can know better and appreciate the value of heeding this command of God.

As a father, the teaching of the commandments to my children have resulted in a deepened conscience, both for me and for my children.

I was having lunch with a friend of mine just a couple days ago, and this is what I said to him. This is what I said to him.

Sorry. When we don't teach the commandments or the law of God, when that's not clear in a child's mind, it's easy to slip off the way, because there's no barriers, but when you give them commands, not only they have to break down some walls in their own heads in order to do whatever fool they may have in their mind to do.

In other words, they ain't just slipping. As a father, the teaching of the parents of my children have resulted in a deepened conscience, both for me, for me and for my children.

[38 : 06] The commandments themselves reveal, in the very least, two things to us. They reveal much concerning the character of God, while at the same time showing us what loving God actually looks like.

Those who love God have no other gods before him. Those who love him put nothing else before him. They are careful to speak of God correctly, never to misrepresent his personal character. They understand that he is the provider, and not they themselves. They honor their parents. People who love God place a premium on human life.

They see sex and marriage as sacred. They do not take things that belong to others.

By the way, we live in a world where all we need now is to influence the government, to raise taxes, so that we can have more stuff.

[39 : 18] I don't know if you caught the thing there, but people who do not have can pressure the government to create laws to take from those who have, and give it to them.

People who love God are truth tellers, and they are content with what they have. And yet those same commandments that show us how we ought to love God are the very ones that prove that we in fact don't.

for we violate God's law, and repeatedly, the apostle Paul says, God's law is perfect.

The commandments are perfect. It is the very thing that brought about our condemnation. The law is perfect.

We aren't. thus we are under condemnation. For they expose, the commandments expose, the sin that is within.

[40 : 35] Sin that is deserving of God's wrath. Romans 3, 23 declares, all have sinned and fall short of God's glory. But God, in display of his great mercy, sent his son Jesus as the perfect keeper of the law and the commandments, in order to fulfill God's requirement of the law on our behalf.

And he died the death that we should have in order to make atonement for our sin, to redeem us.

John 3, 16 reads, I'm sure we all know it, for God so loved the world, that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

God's so there's hope for those who have violated God's law. There's hope for all who hear. But you must believe.

Repentance is required at turning away from sin, a loving of God. And to those who believe, there's a renewed heart that loves God and seeks to live obediently to his word, his commandments.

And those who now love his commandments will actually know them and teach them. The final word to all.

[42 : 04] It's never too late to teach your children, nor your grandchildren. It was three days ago.

By the way, this was one of the experiences that triggered me to change my original sermon to this one.

It was three days ago when I had two of my grandchildren with me in the car as I was driving with them to get a treat. You know, we spoil our grandchildren, right? Then we send them back home to

their parents.

One is four, and the other is six. As I am often with them, I have been teaching them the commandments, but in short form. While waiting in the drive-thru line for their treat, and having not addressed the commandments any time prior to that moment, I turned to my grandson, the four-year-old, and said, London, what is the ninth commandment?

By the way, this is just a teaching moment. I wasn't implying anything. I just said, I literally was sitting in the box, you know, the young children, they have to be strapped down, so they can't be in the front seat.

I literally am on the waiting line, I turn around, and I said, London is off to my left, and I said, London, what is the ninth commandment? This is a four-year-old.

[43 : 35] And to my utter amazement, without even a pause, and I want you to hear this, he didn't even pause. He said, you should not lie.

You should have seen the grin on his face as I gave him a high five. And hopefully, hopefully, you can also hear the sheer pleasure in my voice, in knowing that the commandments are already beginning to be upon his heart.

Fathers, brothers, and sisters, loving God starts with knowing his commandments, his word. We must know them.

Secondly, and loving God, and loving his commandments, demand that we teach them to our children. Know them, teach them.

Let's close in prayer. Father, may we, as David, love your law, your commandments.

[44 : 57] May we value all that you have spoken, your entire revelation. You have revealed to us what loving you looks like. Forgive us for not loving you as we ought.

May your commands be ever on our hearts so that we might not sin against you. May we love you as we ought, and as you truly deserve.

For those who do not know you, we pray that they would believe and so love you also. These things we pray. Amen.