

Trading Stamps

When I was young, our neighborhood grocery store offered trading stamps with every purchase. The more money you spent on groceries, the more stamps you got. The idea was to collect them and put them in a little booklet by affixing them to the page just like postage stamps. When you filled a booklet or two, you took them to a redemption center where you could redeem your stamps for merchandise, like a toaster or ironing board, a sleeping bag or TV. The more stamps you had, the better merchandise you could pick up and take home. I often accompanied my parents on those trips and learned from them much about saving a buck (or stamps, as the case may be).

God is our redeemer, and he offers us a place in his family, a place at home with him. He has redeemed us from an eternity without him into an eternity with him. It's a lesson in saving that we can pass on to those younger in the faith than we are, whether our children or others in God's family. Let's take a look this week at what that means.

Monday – A Healthy Fear

"You shall have no other Gods before me." Deuteronomy 5:7

1. Please read Deuteronomy 6:1-12. According to verses 1-3, how are we to go about fearing the Lord our God? How would you describe the blessings that follow in this passage?

Text Insight: Fearing God is more than respect. We should fear what it would mean to be in his hands if we were not also his friend.

2. How do Proverbs 1:7, Proverbs 9:10 and Psalm 111:10 describe wisdom? What does this tell you about fearing God?
3. Take a look at James 4:4. What attitude and consequence are described there? Now read James 4:4-10. What is the answer to the problem noted in verse 4?

Digging Deeper: What does 2 Peter 2:1-22 tell you about those who do not have a healthy fear of the Lord?

Tuesday – Listen and Learn

"The Holy Scriptures tell us what we could never learn any other way: they tell us what we are, who we are, how we got here, why we are here, and what we are required to do while we remain here."

A.W. Tozer, 20th c. American pastor and author

1. Please read Deuteronomy 6:4-5. What is the command in verse 4? What does it mean to hear God? How well do you hear God?
2. Read James 1:22-25. What does this passage tell us about genuine listening?
3. What can we learn from Luke 18:15-17 about always being open to hearing God and learning from him?

Making it Personal: Ask God your Father to guide you into always hearing him, always learning from him.

Wednesday – Love the Lord Ferently

"We cannot help conforming ourselves to what we love." Francis de Sales, 17th c. Bishop of Geneva

1. Please read Deuteronomy 6:5-6. In your own words describe the way we are to love God. Do you love God the way you want to? Take some time to talk to him about this.
2. What importance did Jesus put on this command in Matthew 22:34-38?
3. Jesus spoke not only of our relationship with our heavenly Father, but also with the people God has put in our lives. According to Matthew 22:34-40, what sums up the entire Old Testament?

Prayer Focus: Pray for God's people, the Church – ask God to purify our love for him and others in such a way that a legacy of love for God will be passed along to all generations.

Thursday – Teachable Moments

"Teach your children well." Graham Nash, 20th c. American songwriter

1. Please read Deuteronomy 6:6-9. What are we to do with our knowledge of God? How will this fulfill the command of verse 5?
2. In Deuteronomy 5:1-22 Moses reminded his listeners of the most well-known commands in the Old Testament. How does that passage help you understand what you should be impressing upon your children or others younger than you in their faith?

Text Insight: The book of Deuteronomy is chiefly comprised of three sermons that Moses delivered to the Israelites toward the end of his life. Chapters 5 and 6 are at the beginning of the second and longest sermon.

3. Take a look at Ephesians 6:4 and Colossians 3:21. What qualities can creep into a relationship between parent and child if they are not brought up "in the training and instruction of the Lord?" How can we avoid this according to 1 Peter 3:15?

Making it Personal: Showing God to others is everyone's responsibility according to Deuteronomy 6:6-9. Ask God to show you how to do so in a way that glorifies him.

Friday – Remembering the Lord

"My memory is nearly gone; but I remember two things: That I am a great sinner, and that Christ is a great Savior." Isaac Newton, 17th-18th c. English scientist and theologian

1. Please read Deuteronomy 6:10-12. What are the Israelites to do? Why are they to do this?
2. Take a look at Job 19:25-27 and Psalm 19:14, in comparison with Psalm 78:10-17. What might lead someone to act like those described in Psalm 78?
3. Now read Deuteronomy 13:1-18. How would you describe God's view of his role as our redeemer?

Making it Personal: How can you be more like the people speaking in Job 19 and Psalm 19?

For the Weekend: Please read Psalm 111:1-10. Do you have a healthy fear of the Lord, leading you into a healthy relationship with him?