

Chapter 2: Join the Vision

Dig Deeper:

Passage: Read Deuteronomy 6:1,3

"Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it... O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey."

Would you say this is a passage relating the personal *Passover experience* (saved out of “Egypt” by grace) or *Pentecost experience* (the pursuit of righteousness through obedience on the way to “The Promised Land”)? If you missed the teaching in the introduction about the difference between Passover and Pentecost as required stages in the individual spiritual maturing of every believer, go back and read it now—it is vital to understanding the teachings of the Bible for this study and the difference between justification (free gift of grace, saving one from sin and death) and sanctification (becoming set apart through obedience). Notice that God is teaching parents (the audience of this passage) to obey now so they will be ready to live by His “commandment” in the *new land*.

Why do you think is it important to learn obedience through the process of Pentecost? _____

Consider verse 1 in light of Ephesians 5:5-8:

“For this you know with certainty, that no immoral or impure person or covetous man, who is an idolater, has an inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore do not be partakers with them; for you were formerly darkness, but now you are Light in the Lord; walk as children of Light.”

One might assume that this passage is speaking of unbelievers, but that is incorrect. Paul is warning the believers in Ephesus against becoming or remaining “sons” of disobedience.

Many believers somehow dismiss these kinds of verses. They believe that once you become a Christian, you have little responsibility for pursuing holiness through works of righteousness and obedience. But you see that Paul is speaking very specifically about lifestyle sins of believers in this whole chapter, and he does not dismiss them as soon as you are “in Christ.” Why?

I believe the Bible teaches that true “Tabernacles,” or abiding in Christ, only comes through this step of Pentecost. As we covered in the intro, Tabernacles in its fullest sense refers to our future personal Promised Land of immortality with the fullness of God’s power and presence dwelling within believers as we inherit His Kingdom. In other words, our readiness to dwell fully in the “Kingdom of God” (same as Kingdom of Heaven and refers to His dominion over people on earth) only comes after we learn obedience and sacrifice. For many believers, this will happen in this lifetime. For others, it will be a process of learning in a coming age (I address this in my

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Bible commentary). When you understand this concept, verses that were once confusing become illuminated (we covered some in the intro as well):

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ...Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:3, 10

"For I say to you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5:20

"But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness..." Matt. 6:33

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; DEPART FROM ME, YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'" Matthew 7:21-23

"For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification." 1 Thess. 4:7

"Pursue peace with all men, and the sanctification without which no one will see the Lord." Heb. 12:14

*"Or do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God. Such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were **sanctified**, but you were **justified** in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and in the Spirit of our God. 1 Cor. 6:9-11*

"Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry...enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying...and things like these, of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" (Galatians 5:18-21, selected).

Obviously, many believers past and present practice those things mentioned in the previous two passages, and Paul is warning them that they will not be able to obtain their inheritance in the Kingdom as long as they continue to practice unrighteousness. Again, throughout Scripture, there is a difference between salvation (gift) and sanctification (inheritance). Salvation is an event (delivered from Egypt on one day), sanctification is a journey (from the giving of the Law at Mt. Sinai and living by it on the way to the Promised Land).

Once again, we notice that these passages focus on action and obedience. As believers, we've already been safely delivered through Passover. Now we have entered the journey out of Egypt through obedience, and the focus is on developing personal holiness with our children.

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Group Interaction:

- Did anything particularly touch or inspire you from “Papa’s” story?
- Why do you think God has used such a man with little education or human opportunities to impact so many? Do you believe that He can do the same through you and your family? Why or why not—what would it take?
- What does it mean to live with vision? Does your family share a vision or a common goal? If so, share with the group.
- How does a family go about locating a vision to champion?
- Have your children expressed an interest or desire for any particular field or occupation? How can you best prepare them to see their future goals, desires, and plans through the lenses of using their gifts and abilities for the Kingdom as “weapons of mass destruction”?
- Have you ever fully surrendered your children to God for His will and service? If not, what are the obstacles in your heart to doing so? If yes, are you encouraging them to also surrender themselves?

Homework Assignment:

Next week we are going to be taking the Spiritual Gifts Analysis posted online along with this study. Be sure to read through the Analysis this week to familiarize yourself with the different gifts as well as to print out the test, take it, and then bring the results along with you to your next group meeting for discussion. If you have a group facilitator, he/she might want to bring along the whole booklet for reference.

Bring it Home:

Suggestion: Read Papa’s biography as a family; it will bless your socks off! You can find the free downloadable PDF book under the “vision” tab at OneMillionArrows.com.

Jesus taught His disciples to SERVE...

Day 1: Read Matt. 20:25-28

But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not this way among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

1. Think of famous people you know who are considered great in society. Are they known for serving or for being served?
2. What is Jesus’ definition of a great person?
3. What does He mean by telling His followers to be servants?
4. What specific ways in your daily life could you be a servant to your family? Your friends? Your teachers? Those people around you who are rejected by others?

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Day 2: Read Mark 6:31-37; 8:6 (selected portions)

And He said to them, "Come away by yourselves to a secluded place and rest a while." (For there were many people coming and going, and they did not even have time to eat.) ... When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things. When it was already quite late, His disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and it is already quite late; send them away so that they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." But He answered them, "You give them something to eat!" ... And He directed the people to sit down on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve to them, and they served them to the people.

1. Did Jesus teach His followers to only serve when they were rested and in the mood to serve? Tell about a time when you were asked to do something to help out and you felt too tired or unwilling. What did you do?
2. What is the reason that Jesus served people even when He was tired and hungry—what did He feel for people?
3. Couldn't Jesus have done a miracle and easily fed the people Himself? Why do you think He gave the responsibility to His followers even though they were tired and hungry themselves?
4. What does Jesus want us to learn from this example?

Day 3: Read Matt. 25:37-40

Then the righteous will answer Him, "Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?" The King will answer and say to them, "Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me."

1. According to this verse, who should the "righteous" followers of Jesus be paying attention to and helping?
2. Who do you know that fits any of the descriptions above?
3. How could you meet a need for them this week?
4. What do you think Jesus means when He says that when you help others, you are really helping Him? Why is that?

Day 4: Read John 13:3-5

Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded.

1. Why do you think that Jesus would serve His disciples by washing their feet? What was He trying to teach them?
2. How would you feel if Jesus washed your feet?

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3. Consider having a candlelight foot washing ceremony at home this week and telling each person in your family what you appreciate about them—it's a special time!

Day 5: Read Matt. 23:11-12

"But the greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted."

1. Why do you think Jesus taught the opposite concepts of what the world teaches?
2. How can someone become great in this world through serving?
3. Name some people in history who became great through serving others.
4. Who will exalt you when you humble yourself?

Day 6: Read Mark 9:34-37

...on the way they had discussed with one another which of them was the greatest. Sitting down, He called the twelve and said to them, "If anyone wants to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." Taking a child, He set him before them, and taking him in His arms, He said to them, "Whoever receives one child like this in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me does not receive Me, but Him who sent Me."

1. Do you like to be first in your activities and opportunities?
2. What do you think Jesus meant by saying that if you want to be first, you will be last of all?
3. Why do you think Jesus spoke to adults that they should be more like kids or pay attention to them more? What kind of kids should we especially pay attention to?
4. Do you think Jesus wanted us to "receive" or take care of all kinds of kids? The Greek word for "receive" in this verse means: to take hold of, to take up, receive, to receive into one's family to bring up or educate, to receive favorably, embrace, make one's own, approve, not to reject. How could your family make a difference for a kid who needs help?

Day 7: Read John 12:26

"Blessed are those slaves whom the master will find on the alert when he comes; truly I say to you, that he will gird himself to serve, and have them recline at the table, and will come up and wait on them."

Also read Luke 12:35-37

"If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me; and where I am, there My servant will be also; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him."

1. What does it mean for a servant of God to "be alert" when He comes?
2. Based on the verses we've learned this week as well as these two verses today, how can you recognize a true servant of God?
3. What are the future rewards for faithful servants?