

UNTO YOUR SONS

“You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up.”

DAD NEVER DID TELL US MUCH OF HIS HISTORY. In snippets here and there, in off-hand references we would learn that he left school during the eighth grade to support his mother and sister; raised goats when a youth; a few years later joined the “Three Cs” (Civilian Conservation Corps), one of F.D.R.’s public works projects for giving meaningful work to unemployed young men; and was rejected for military service in the Second World War because of a heart condition (a “bum ticker,” as he called it). He told us even less about *his* father, who was in his youth an immigrant from Europe, and who was—this born and bred Baptist learned more than twenty years after Dad’s death—almost certainly Jewish.

And it was not until much later, only a few years before his death, that Dad opened up about God's working in his life. During my own childhood he had been a junior high boys Sunday School teacher. For many years he taught these impressionable lads the truth from God's word, but it was only decades later, sitting with me during a camping trip, that he shared with me what that experience meant to him. He told me of young men who approached him later, thanking him for the impact he had made on their lives, for being for them an honorable role model. This with tears in his eyes.

I thought of this a few days ago while reading in Deuteronomy,

“You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates, so

that your days and the days of your sons may be multiplied on the land which the Lord swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens remain above the earth.”

Deuteronomy 11:18-21



My guess is that *most* of us have been somewhat negligent in telling our children about what God has done in and for our lives—and even less the importance of knowing and keeping “as frontals on your forehead” His actual words.

The things of God—the truth of His word, the truth about His Son and Spirit, the intimate reality of Him working in a life—should be the things of our everyday conversation with our kids. They should be topics as common as the weather, the latest box scores, and the price of gas because they are “on our heart and on our soul.” They are part of us—the *best* part—and we should be eager to share that part with those entrusted to us.

Would it have made a profitable contribution to my upbringing if Dad had mentioned in conversation, say as he drove me to Little League practice, “Let me tell you about the time the Lord answered my prayer about...”? Would it have,

perhaps, foreshortened my years of teenage rebellion if, while working with him in the garden, Dad had said to me “By the way, I really learned something yesterday from God’s word when I was preparing my Sunday School lesson...”?

Yes to both.



We will not conceal them from their children,
But tell to the generation to come the praises of the Lord,
And His strength and His wondrous works that He has done.
For He established a testimony in Jacob
And appointed a law in Israel,
Which He commanded our fathers
That they should teach them to their children,
That the generation to come might know, *even* the children yet to
be born,
That they may arise and tell them to their children,
That they should put their confidence in God
And not forget the works of God,
But keep His commandments,
And not be like their fathers,
A stubborn and rebellious generation,
A generation that did not prepare its heart
And whose spirit was not faithful to God.

Psalms 78:4-8