

Begin with the Blueprints (1 of 8)
Series: Extreme Home Makeover for Families
Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Introduction

1. A few years ago, one of the most popular television shows around the Raymond household was *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*. You put together the design aspect of renovating and remodeling a very run-down house, under this timeline of doing it all in one week, and having to do it with hundreds of volunteers and several strongly opinionated designers, and you put that together against the backdrop of a needy family who deserves a better place to live, what you get is compelling television that could touch even the hardest of hearts.

2. What you got to see in one hour is not only the unbelievable makeover of the house, but you see how that impacts the life of a needy family. Undoubtedly, the remodeled homes on that show dramatically changed people's lives. When everyone would shout, "Move that bus," and the family saw their new house for the first time, not only were they crying, but you would be crying too watching in your living room. But still the title is misleading. It really should have been called, *Extreme Makeover: House Edition*, because people can change a house, but only God can change a home.

3. Over the next several weeks, we are going to be doing our own extreme home makeover. No, we're not going to go remodel your house, but we're going to see how God can remodel your home. There will be something in this series for everyone, because one thing that is true for all of us, we are all a part of a family, no matter how broken or damaged it might be, we are related to somebody. You are a son or daughter. You are brother or a sister. You are a husband or a wife. You are mom or a dad. Most of us are a combination of these things. And families are the first environment in which we must learn to live out our faith. Often times, they are the primary environment we have to make real what we already believe. But families can also be the most challenging environment to practice what we preach.

4. Famed sociologist at Harvard University, Carle Zimmerman, published a book entitled, *Family and Civilization*. In that book, he traces the history of the family from its beginning through ancient Greece and Rome, through medieval Europe to modern times. He argues that the heart of society is the nuclear family - father, mother and the children that they raise. His book makes one simple case that as the family goes, so goes society. He said that

you can tell where a society is headed and where a culture is going by looking through the prism of the family. As the family goes, so goes the culture. Here are some of characteristics Doctor Zimmerman said you should expect to find in such a culture.

- Access to quick, easy no-fault divorces and increasing divorce rates
- Elimination of the real meaning of the marriage ceremony and the failure to understand the permanence of marriage
- A promotion of co-habitation over marriage and a "looser" understanding of family as a solution to social problems
- Increased public disrespect for parents and parenthood, along with an increasing revolt of youth against parental authority
- The breakdown of most inhibitions against adultery
- Common acceptance of all forms of sexual perversions

5. Now, are you surprised that a professor at Harvard would publish a book saying these things? It's because Zimmerman published his magnum opus in 1947. This is back before we had all these problems in our culture, when the traditional family still seemed strong. Dr. Zimmerman was one of the most respected sociologists before this this book. After he published *Family and Civilization* he became a pariah almost overnight amongst his academic colleagues, because they didn't like what he had to say.

6. Today, seventy years later, Zimmerman sounds like a prophet in that he so accurately depicted where the American family, and thus our culture as a whole has gone. The family today is definitely in need of an extreme home makeover.

7. If you have ever seen the television show, you know that in order to rebuild or remake a house, the first thing you need is - blueprints. You need a good set of plans. In a house remodeling project, you have to know what needs to be torn out and what stays. Which walls are weight-bearing? Are there any places the foundation needs to be strengthened? Where does new plumbing and new electric need to be run. And to make sure that all of this works right and looks good, you need a good set of plans.

8. The same thing is true for your home and your family. The blue prints for your family can't from Hollywood, godless academia that no longer even believes in the legitimacy of the family as God created it, or from our culture. The blueprints for our extreme home makeover must come from Heaven. The Bible is God's blueprint for an extreme home makeover. The home was God's idea. It is God that made the family the cornerstone of

society. All the way back in the very beginning of the human race and the beginning of the Bible we read these words, *"Then the Lord God said, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him' ...Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh."* (Genesis 2:18, 24, LB)

9. Moses understood this. His job was to prepare the Children of Israel for crossing over into the Promised Land and building a brand new nation. He wanted to make sure that they would build a nation under God.

10. Deuteronomy 6 Moses' farewell address, his swan song, and his main topic for the nation of Israel isn't economics, trade, foreign policy, national security, domestic issues, or jobs. His focus is the home. God had given to Moses the blueprint for a happy home. Knowing that the stronger the family, the stronger the nation. Knowing that when the family is secure, the nation is secure, and so Moses lays down this blueprint that involves three principles.

I. Home Is Where Righteous Lives Are Lived

I Am A _____

1. Moses begins talking directly and primarily to moms and dads.

"Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, 2 that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long."
(Deuteronomy 6:1-2)

From the get go Moses says a strong nation depends on the fear of the Lord being passed to your children and grandchildren. The blueprints for a happy home begin with the parents. A nation never rises above its homes and a home never rises above its parents. This means - I am a model.

2. Parents, we are whether we like it or not, role models to our children. We set the example. There is one thing I learned many times the hard way. Character is not taught to your children. It is caught by your children. They learn it from us. When our children are little they mimic us. They say what we say. Do what we do. True, during our teenage years we want to throw off that parental mantel, and yet what our teenagers do, has been shown time and time again to be most influenced by what we modeled when they were younger. Then, as young adults, do you remember hearing your mom or

your dad coming out of your mouth? The most persuasive set of instructions you will ever get on how to be a human being is your mom and dad. Whether we want to be or not, we are role models. Think of what happens if we're not intentional about that. If your attitude towards your child is, "Do as I say, not as I do", you are headed for heartache and brokenness.

3. This is especially true of dads. There has been too much research that shows that dads of a unique and special influence on what their children turn out to be. I'll give you one example. The faith of the dad is the number one determining factor on whether or not the children have faith. If both mom and dad are active in their faith, then there is a 74% chance that their children will be active or somewhat active in their faith. If only mom is active, and not dad, then that drops to 39% and only 2% of those will be very active. If you flip-flop that where only the dad is active and not the mom, surprisingly, the figures actually go up to 82% regular or somewhat regular.ⁱ

4. Why do you think the enemy and world is working so hard on removing dads from the picture? And what men remain are barely men. We have psychologically and emotionally castrated men, and we turned them into effeminate snowflakes that couldn't make a snowman let alone a man. I want to say in particular to the fathers who are here, there is really no substitute for a father who shows his child by the way he lives, by the language that he uses, by the places that he goes, by the television programs that he watches, by the books that he reads, that he fears the Lord.

5. This doesn't mean that you are a perfect example, or that you don't fall on your face and blow it sometimes. We all do that. Even this is part of your example. Sometimes, the godliest example you can set for your children is to say, "I was wrong. I'm sorry. I didn't live up to what I teach you. I didn't live up to what I believe myself. Will you forgive me?" That models an authenticity that kids need to see.

6. When Moses talks about fear of the Lord, he is not talking about being terrified of God, being afraid of getting zapped at any moment. This is not about living life from a place of guilt and shame. You know when you look in the dictionary for a definition and certain words have multiple meanings depending on how they are used. That's the case here with this Hebrew word. In this sense it is about reverence, respect, honor. It's like going into a high court and the judge comes out wearing her robe. In that courtroom are different kinds of fear.

7. There is a reason, parents, why you should model a fear of God in your life. It is not just for your sake, but for the sake of your children and your grandchildren. Moses said in one chapter earlier, in chapter 5:29, *"Oh that they had such a heart as this always, to fear me and to keep all my commandments, that it might go well with them and with their descendants forever!"* (Deuteronomy 5:29)

7. I remember when Alyssa graduated and all the people who were at the top of her class and who won all the awards. Everyone mentioned how important their parents were. Their parents were the most influential people in their lives. Now I don't know this, but If I were a betting man, I'd put every cent I had down on it. If you could ask the bottom 10 in the class. If you could survey those who dropped out and never made it to graduation, you'd also find their parents, or lack thereof were also the most significant influences in their lives. Moms and dads, we are role models. The question is simply - are we going to be good ones or poor ones?

II. Home Is Where The Real Lord Is Loved

I Am A _____

1. Right in the middle of talking to parents, Moses almost interrupts himself with these words,
"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."
(Deuteronomy 6:4-5)

In those two verses, we are told the two basic things parents are to teach their kids about God. Unfortunately, most parents stop at the first one and don't really go on to the second. The first one is the reality of God. Obviously, I hope all of you parents have a conviction that you should teach your children that there is a God and that God is real. But it is not enough to teach your children there is a God and that God is real, you must teach them how to have a relationship with the real God.

And yes, this means that your kids need to see you reading your Bible, they need to know that prayer is an important part of your life. They need to see you worshipping God. They need to see how God's truth enters your decision making process, but it's deeper than that.

2. They will learn about their relationship with God, and about all relationships by how you engage in the most significant human relationship in your life, and that is your marriage. Throughout the Bible God uses marriage as an example and as a symbol of our relationship with Him. This means not only am I a model, it means something else. I am a mirror. My

marriage is to reflect the relationship between Jesus and his church.” .
“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord... Husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her.” (Ephesians, 5:22, 25)

3. Husbands and wives, your faithfulness to each other is to reflect God's faithfulness to you. Your love for each other is to reflect God's love for you. Your forgiveness of each other when things go wrong is to be a mirror of God's forgiveness of you. Kids will learn more theological truth from your marriage than an entire childhood of Sunday School and youth group lessons. I am not saying those are unimportant. What I am saying is that your marriage either gives proof to those timeless truths, or undermines it.

4. I am going to answer a difficult question with an even harder answer. Do you know why so many church going parents turn out children who eventually leave the church and Christianity? It is because many parents don't understand the difference between being church going-parents and Christ-following parents.

5. Let me explain. Do you remember having to get your shots when you were little, or getting your own children vaccinated when they were young. These vaccines inoculate or immunize you from certain diseases. How they work is this. When a doctor gives you a shot, he is giving a very small dose of the actual germ or disease, or he gives you a dead form of whatever it is so that your body can build a resistance and develop antibodies to the pathogen.

6. Too many parents give their children just a small dose of Christianity, or a lifeless form of it, just enough to make them immune to the real thing. Growing up, these kids watch these parents go to church and go through the religious motions, but they don't see a passionate love for God - a love that loves God with all the heart, soul, mind and strength. As they get older they conclude, “Been there. Done that. It doesn't work. It's not for me.”

7. There is a word that is repeated three times in verse 5. It is the word, “all”. *“...with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”* There is nothing more dangerous than for children to see in their parents a half-hearted love for God. That's like being a broken mirror, or a mirror so smudged and dirty that you cannot see a clear image of God. All they see are the cracks and the smudges.

8. I heard about a Sunday school teacher that was talking to a group of kids one time and he asked them the question, "Why do you love God?" As he went down the line, he got a variety of answers, but the one he liked best

came from a little boy sitting on the end of the row and he said, "Mr. Smith, I don't know why I love God. I guess it just runs in my family."

9. You ever wonder why it is that we seemingly have no problem turning our children into passionate Kansas City Chiefs fans, or St. Louis Cardinals fans. Our girls learn to shop til they drop just like mom. Our kids become avid hunters or fisherman just like dad, or mom and daughter can binge through six hours of Stranger Things together, or spend all afternoon baking, or that father and son can share the same passion for Led Zepplin. It's because we are passionate about those things. We talk about them all the time. We buy the hats and shirts. We cut time out of our schedule to make room for those things. It's just a part of the atmosphere or the terroir of your home. It just runs in the family.

10. Parents, it doesn't matter what else you give your children if you do not give them a real love for God. What good does it do to raise your children in good home, to give them a good education, to see to it they get a good job, to help them marry a good person, to enable them to have a good career, so they can have a good retirement, and be buried in the finest casket, given a moving funeral, only to stand before a God in eternity they never knew and they never loved. Home is where God is really loved and Christ is really followed.

III. Home Is Where Right Lessons Are Learned

I Am A _____

1. Moses gives parents specific instructions on what they are to do with what he has just told them.

⁶ *And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.*

⁷ *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.* ⁸ *You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.* ⁹ *You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.* (Deuteronomy 6:6-9)

Moses says, "What I have told you, you are now to teach your children." This may surprise you, but the primary responsibility for educating your kids does not lie with the school system, nor with the church. It lies with you at home. God intended for the home to be the university of life. You can write this down - I am a mentor.

2. Home is the child's first classroom. Home is where right and wrong are

taught. Home is where children learn that actions have consequences. Home is where kids learn personal responsibility - how to be kind and courteous, how to submit to authority, how to be obedient, and how to practice selflessness. Home is where you learn the two most important lessons you ever learn in life - that is how to love God and how to love others.

3. You learn things in a family that you never learn anywhere else. It is truly a learning center. It is where you learn basic skills - how to talk, how to walk, how to eat, how to burp, and how to use a TV remote.

4. The most important thing that is learned in the home and must be taught in the home is truth, and not just any truth, but God's truth. Ephesians 6:4 says,

"Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6:4)

Notice the words, "training" and "instruction". Our job as parents is to move our kids through three stages learning. Stage 1 is parent control. Stage 2 is self control. Stage 3 is God control. Parent control is when you tell them what to do. Self-control is when (for the most part) they know what to do. God control is when they ask God what He wants them to do.

5. When a parent says, "I'm not going to force my kids to come to church" or "I'm not going to impose my spiritual values on my kids", that parent has just done two things. First of all, They have created a vacuum that the world will be more than happy to fill. Secondly, they have basically said, "God is an option." I am here to tell you today that God is not an option. Teaching your children values and teaching your kids character and teaching your kids God's truth is a part of your job.

6. You may be asking the question, "What do I teach my kids and where do I start?" The statues and commandments that Moses was referring to in verse 1 of this chapter was referring to the Ten Commandments he had just given in the previous chapter. That is a great place to start with your kids, just teaching them the basic truths of the Ten Commandments.

7. I heard about a father that was having family devotions with his little kids one night and he was trying to teach them the Ten Commandments. He said, "Kids, the commandment, 'Honor your father and your mother', is the commandment that teaches you how to treat your parents. Is there a commandment that teaches you how to treat your brothers and sisters?" His youngest, little six-year old boy, said, "Yes sir, you shall not kill!"

9. The greatest gift you will ever give your children is not a will, a living trust, or a truckload full of money. The greatest gift you could ever give your children is a godly parent. If you are not a parent, this message is still for you, because if you have any relatives, you still have a family. If you don't even live around any of your relatives, then you can have a family in the church, because the church is meant to be a family. You don't have to be a parent to be a model, a mirror, or a mentor.

10. I don't know what shape your home is in. I don't know how fractured your family might be, but you can over the next several weeks have an extreme home makeover if you just remember it begins with the blueprints and the blueprints begin with God.

11. This is where God's grace and love come in. It is not our perfection that matters. It's his perfection. His power is sufficient, even for every way we fall short. There is hope for the broken home. There is hope for the troubled marriage. There is hope for the single mom. God isn't looking for perfection. He is looking for direction. It's not where you are. It's where you are going. Direction determines destination. You can't get to where you want to be if you don't start walking in that direction. That direction can start today. Today can be the day you start being the right kind of model for your children. Today can be the day that your life can be a mirror that shows the love of God. Today can be the day you start mentoring your children in God's truth.

¹ Low, Robbie (n.d.) The truth About Men & Church. Touchstone. Accessed Jan. 11, 2017.
<http://www.touchstonemag.com/archives/article.php?id=16-05-024-v>