

Deuteronomy 6:4-12

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. "You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. "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. "So it shall be, when the LORD your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build, "houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant—when you have eaten and are full— "then beware, lest you forget the LORD who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage."

A Healthy Appetite

One of the blessings of our Canadian multi-cultured society is the privilege of seeing how others have grown accustomed to live without travelling half way around the world. This is perhaps best evidenced in the great variety of culinary preferences in our land. At a recent youth gathering some of our children were introduced to a highly nutritious meal of bugs. Surprising enough, after getting over the "cultural barrier", these bugs were found to taste "not bad at all", which just goes to prove that people can develop an appetite for practically anything. The sad corollary to that is the ability for people to develop uncontrollable appetites for that which can destroy them. With this potential for destruction, the importance of parental input in their children's "appetite forming" is crucial. It is with this in focus that the scriptures urge parents to help their children develop an appetite for God.

The Bible states " Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. The Hebrew word "תנך" (khaw-nak'), translated in this passage as "train", is a derivative of the Hebrew word for palate or mouth. The significance of the choice of this word in reference to raising children is understood in light of the custom of the day in which a mother/nurse would touch the tongue of a baby with a sample of the food in order to stir up the appetite. This is a custom still practised among nomadic some people, made necessary by the limited choices of food and therefore necessity for children to learn to eat what is presented for survival's sake.

God urges parents, with the same sense of necessity for survival, to give their children a taste of spiritual food in their earliest formative years. This can be done by ensuring the home is the place where God's name is heard in prayer rather than in curse, and where the Bible is the foundation for values and goals.

Moses' words to Israel are wise counsel to all parents: "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God [is] one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up" (Deuteronomy 6). Can you say that your children are developing a healthy spiritual appetite?

What is my response:
