

BUMC Weekly Bible and Sermon Study

Sermon: “Spiritual Formation” from the “Called Together” sermon series

Scripture: Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Matthew 19:13-15

Key take-aways from the Scripture

- Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is one of the most quoted sections in the Bible. “...The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all soul, and with all your might.” Jesus called this the first and great commandment, and in Mark 12:30, added to it the phrase “with all your mind.” According to the NRSV Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible commentary, “Putting words on one’s heart and soul is expressed in loyalty oaths of the ancient Near East, as in Hittite treaties of Mursili II and oaths of allegiance to Assyrian king Esar-haddon.
- Orthodox Jews refer to this section as the Shema and recite it every morning and every evening! According to rabbinic tradition, the Shema originally consisted of only verse 4, but then was later expanded to include Deut. 6:5-9; 11:13-21; and Numbers 15:37-41.
- Matthew 19:13-15 is the story of Jesus blessing the children. “Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; but Jesus said, ‘Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs.’ And he laid his hands on them and went his way.”
- 2 Kings 4:27 offers some insight into this verse: (1) disciples tried to protect the teacher from distraction. In 2 Kings, there was a woman who tried to approach the man of God, but Gehazi (his servant) pushed her away; and (2) the man of God in this story could overrule his servant (or disciple) from keeping the faithful away.

Key take-aways from the Sermon

- We are called together to worship: “Worship is an act of sanity in a world on the edge of insanity, whereby we are re-clothed in our right minds.” -Walter Brueggemann.
- Today, we will explore the task of spiritual formation: Our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the *world*. (based from Matthew 28, The Great Commission). A disciple is a learner, a follower, teachable.
- The word *disciple* is not just a noun, but also a verb! We are called not only to be a *disciple*, but to *disciple* disciples...called to be a follower and disciple to others.
- Sanctification: the lifelong process of spiritual formation. This begins with listening or hearing.
- Deuteronomy 6 is known as the *Shema* and begins with the word *hear*. This kind of hearing is not just a physical activity but spiritual. It prompts us to action!
- In 1 Samuel 3, Samuel heard his name being called several times. He did not know who was calling him and went to the priest Eli thinking it was he who called him. After a few times of this happening, Eli told Samuel to reply the next time with “Here I am. Did you call me?”
- There are 3 Keynotes of the Shema in Deuteronomy 6: (1) Hearing and obeying is evidence of our love for God; (2) There’s danger in forgetting God, becoming inattentive; and (3) Enduring faith must be transmitted to the next generation.
- A major part of our mission is the discipling of our children. This involves ensuring they have both the physical space and relational space to teach our children the Gospel. In Matthew 19, the disciples saw the children as a nuisance to Jesus. Jesus told them to let them be and allow the children approach him.
- Discipling Your Kids at Home: Spiritual formation is not only the task of the church, but it is the task of our home. We are the most important spiritual role-model and influence on our children. See Deuteronomy 6:7-9.
- The most important work you will ever do will be within the walls of your own home!
- Spiritual formation begins at home. As we make space to disciple our own children. When we do, hearing and obeying become synonymous. By the grace of God, our children will not only become disciples but “disciple-ers”!

Questions for Personal Reflection or Group Discussion

- What were your key take-aways from the sermon? How can you apply this to your everyday life?
- In what ways does Deuteronomy 6:4-9 set a pattern to relate the Word of God to our daily lives?
- How do you do what these commands require?
- What is the lesson(s) learned from Matthew 19:13-15?
- How can we change our approach to listen with the intent for understanding, rather than listening with the intent to reply?
- What does it mean to be child-like as it relates to our faith?
- In what ways can you be a spiritual role-model for your children or grand children?

