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MINISTRIES

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Parashah Points: Vayechi – Blessings and Encouragement

Welcome to another episode of Parashah Points—short thoughts from the weekly Torah Portion.

This week’s Parashah Point comes from Vayechi, which is Hebrew for “and he lived,” and it goes from Genesis 47:28 to Genesis 50:26.

This parashah tells the story of Jacob’s request to be buried in Canaan when he dies (Genesis 47:28-31)

It also tells of Jacob’s blessing over Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Manasseh, followed by Jacob’s blessings over each of his own sons (Genesis 48:1-49:27).

Then we learn about Jacob’s death and burial (Genesis 49:28-33).

The parashah concludes with Joseph forgiving his brothers followed by Joseph’s death (Genesis 50).

There’s a lot we can talk about in this Torah Portion. Today we’re going to present just a thought on blessings.

When Jacob blessed his grandchildren, Ephraim and Manasseh, he said something interesting:

Genesis 48:20

So he blessed them that day, saying, “By you Israel will pronounce blessings, saying, ‘God make you as Ephraim and as Manesseh.’”

Did you catch that? He said, “By you Israel will pronounce blessings.” That is to say, the people of Israel will pronounce blessings upon their own children. And when they do, they will say, “God make you as Ephraim and as Manesseh.”

A beautiful tradition in Judaism and in many Messianic homes is for parents to bless their children at the opening of Shabbat every Friday evening. Daughters receive the blessing, “May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, and Leah.” And the blessing for sons is based on this verse when Jacob blessed

Joseph's sons: "May God make you like Ephraim and Manasseh."

The point of this blessing for sons is not that Ephraim and Manasseh are the role models that we hope our sons would emulate, but that they would be blessed with the same blessing that Ephraim and Manasseh received from Jacob. It's a declaration of their identity and inclusion in God's plan, that they would be blessed and be a blessing to the nations—the very heritage and purpose given to Abraham.

Genesis 48:16

And in them let my name be carried on, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.

While this is simply a tradition that many families do on Shabbat, it illustrates an important principle—that is, parents ought to bless their children. It's so important that children hear words of encouragement and love from their parents.

A parent's encouraging words are key to a child's emotional and spiritual health and even their success in life. Indeed, what we believe about ourselves significantly impacts our behavior. It's just common sense. A positive attitude leads to positive behaviors leading to positive results, while a negative attitude can often lead to self-defeating behaviors that lead to negative results. And parents have a key role in helping form their kids' attitudes through love and encouragement or a lack thereof.

Now, this not only applies to our children, but to everyone. Do the people in your life feel loved and valued by you? How often do you go out of your way to encourage others with your words and acts of kindness?

This week, we would encourage you to make it a point to speak life and love, not only to your children, but to everyone in your life. You never know—someone might really need to hear it from you.

1 Thessalonians 5:11

Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.

Thank you for joining us for another Parashah Point!

We pray you have been blessed by this teaching. Remember, continue to test everything. Shalom! For more on this and other teachings, please visit us at www.testeverything.net

Shalom, and may Yahweh bless you in walking in the whole Word of God.

EMAIL: Info@119ministries.com

FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/119Ministries

WEBSITE: www.TestEverything.net & www.ExaminaloTodo.net

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