

Love

OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS DEFINED BY LOVE.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9,20-25

1 “This is the command—the statutes and ordinances—the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, so that you may **follow them in the land** **A** you are about to enter and possess. **2** Do this so that you may **fear the LORD** **B** your God all the days of your life by **keeping all his statutes and commands** **C** I am giving you, your son, and your grandson, and so that you may have a long life. **3** Listen, Israel, and be careful to follow them, so that you may prosper and multiply greatly, because the LORD, the God of your ancestors, has promised you a land flowing with **milk and honey**. **D** **4** **Listen**, **E** Israel: The LORD our God, **the LORD is one**. **F** **5** Love the LORD your God with **all your heart**, **G** with all your soul, and with all your strength. **6** These words that I am giving you today are to be in your heart. **7** Repeat them to **your children**. **H** Talk about them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. **8** Bind them as a sign on your hand and let them be a symbol on your forehead. **9** Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your city gates. (. . .)

20 “When your son asks you in the future, ‘What is the meaning of the decrees, statutes, and ordinances that the LORD our God has commanded you?’ **21** tell him, ‘We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but **the LORD brought us out** **I** of Egypt with a strong hand. **22** Before our eyes the LORD inflicted great and devastating signs and wonders on Egypt, on Pharaoh, and on all his household, **23** but he brought us from there in order to lead us in and give us the land that he swore to our ancestors. **24** The LORD commanded us to follow all these statutes and to fear the LORD our God for our prosperity always and for our preservation, as it is today. **25** **Righteousness will be ours** **J** if we are careful to follow every one of these commands before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us.’”

Exploring Key Words

- A** God’s instructions were designed to teach Israel how to live in the promised land. He never issues rules for the sake of having rules. He always has a purpose.
- B** Reverence. It is an attitude of respect that acknowledges who God is and His authority.
- C** Obedience to the Lord’s commands is a demonstration that one truly “fears” Him.
- D** Agricultural bounty. “Milk” refers to an abundance of cattle, while “honey” refers to food supply. God was giving Israel a land where life could be enjoyed, not merely survived.
- E** The Hebrew term *shema* means “to listen to, embrace, and obey.” Deuteronomy 6:4, commonly called “the Shema,” has long served as a creed recited by Jewish families at home and as a part of their corporate worship.
- F** A statement of monotheism, affirming the Lord as the only true God. It also implies that He alone is worthy of worship and honor.
- G** The center of the person’s being, where one thinks, makes decisions, and holds affections. Along with “soul” and “strength,” it highlights active and absolute love for God.
- H** Parents are responsible for demonstrating what loving God looks like. They are to impress His truths into their children’s lives by “repeating” them in various, practical ways.
- I** Parents can respond to spiritual questions by recounting God’s acts. Redemption stories are powerful for building lasting spiritual legacies.
- J** The Old Testament does not define salvation as being “lost” or “saved,” but by a right standing with God (Gen. 15:6). Prosperity and preservation were important (Deut. 6:24), but righteousness is always God’s ultimate purpose for His people.



Fear the Lord (Deut. 6:1-3)

- Moses instructed the Israelites to follow God's commands. Following His statutes would demonstrate their fear of the Lord.
- In return, God would bless them with prosperity and a fruitful land in which to live.

Devoted (Deut. 6:4-9)

- Moses explained that the Lord alone is God, and He is one God.
- The Israelites were commanded to love the Lord with all their hearts. They were to repeat His commands to their children, discussing them intentionally throughout daily life events.
- They were to be devoted to God's Word.

Righteous (Deut. 6:20-25)

- When asked by their children about the meaning of God's statutes, they were to share what God had done in the past for the Israelites. God brought them out of Egypt to lead them to the land promised to their ancestors.
- God's commands were for their prosperity and preservation. They would be counted righteous if they followed God's ordinances.

Summary Statements

Our relationship with God is defined by love.

- Believers demonstrate their love for God by obeying His commands.
- We are to be intentional about putting God at the center of our lives, making everything else revolve around Him.
- Remembering God's past faithfulness helps us to follow God's commands today.

Memory Verse

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Key Doctrine

Family

Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. (See Ephesians 6:4; 2 Timothy 1:5.)

ENGAGE

What's an effective way to help a child learn? Why is this method effective? (PSG, p. 82)

- Decades ago, some parents began putting labels on items around their house. If you visited the home, you might see a label with the word "Curtain" pinned at the window. Or "Toybox" in the playroom. Or "Switch" beside the door. Labels were on many items in the house: "Chair," "Table," "Bathtub," "Bed," and "TV."
- This is a type of passive information saturation. Studies showed that the system helps children incorporate reading into their lives without realizing they are learning.

Bonus: Can you learn God's principles passively? Why or why not?

EXPLORE

1. FEAR THE LORD (DEUT. 6:1-3)

Bonus: How do you show people that you love them? How do you show God that you love Him?

- Deuteronomy 5 contains the Ten Commandments. In chapter 6, Moses shifted his focus to the first command, which called God's people to serve no other gods (5:7).
- To "fear the Lord" means to revere Him. The external evidence of that reverence would be keeping His commands. Heart-motivated obedience would result in God's blessing, namely "a long life."
- God promised that His people would "prosper" and "multiply greatly" in Canaan. This echoes His promise to Abraham that his descendants would outnumber the stars (Gen. 15:1; 26:4). The description of a "land flowing with milk and honey" served as a reminder that God lavishes His blessings extravagantly on those who honor Him.

In what way(s) has God lavished His blessings in your life? When have you been particularly aware of those blessings? (PSG, p. 85)

2. DEVOTED (DEUT. 6:4-9)

Bonus: What heirloom has passed through multiple generations of your family? What makes that item so special?

- Verses 4-9 are known as the *Shema*. This is the Hebrew verb for "hear" or "listen," reflecting the first word of verse 4. Jews consider the *Shema* one of the most important Old Testament passages. Jesus used it to answer a question about the greatest command (Matt. 22:34-39), and orthodox Jews still quote it at least twice a day.
- To refer to the Lord as "one" stood in contrast to Egyptian and Canaanite beliefs. It does not negate the doctrine of the Trinity, which emphasizes the unity shared by the three members of the Godhead.

- Our love for God is to be comprehensive. The "heart" referred to one's will or intellect. The "soul" involved a person's being and desires. "Strength" emphasized passion and priorities. Taken together, they highlighted the totality of a person's existence.
- The verb "repeat" is imperative. The Lord's command was to be a consistent topic of conversation at home and beyond, in the evening and the morning. Members of God's family were to pass His ways to the next generation.
- Verse 7 calls us to recite God's commands verbally, while verses 8-9 tell us to remember them visually. Having God's words before us will not happen passively. Having them in one's heart (v. 6) requires an intentional effort.

What is a practical way we can keep God's Word and commandments at the forefront of our lives? (PSG, p. 87)

3. RIGHTEOUS (DEUT. 6:20-25)

How does our behavior reflect what we believe about God? (PSG, p. 89)

- Parents were to explain God's covenant in the form of a story. The story would begin with Egyptian bondage. It might include the acts of Joseph, Moses, or other godly heroes. But the main focus would be God's mighty "signs and wonders," as well as His expectations.
- God's expectations included obeying Him and fearing (revering) Him. Fearing and following God's commands would result in "prosperity" and "preservation" in Canaan.

What does walking in righteousness look like in the life of a believer today? (PSG, p. 89)

CHALLENGE

As a group, share ideas and tips for explaining faith to children and grandchildren.

How ready are you to explain your faith to your children and/or grandchildren? What would you tell them if they asked? (PSG, p. 90)

Take time to reflect on how well your life demonstrates wholehearted love for God.

What changes can you make in order to deepen your love for Him? (PSG, p. 90)

FURTHER DISCUSSION



Scan here for additional discussion questions for this week's study.

BIBLE SKILL (P. 89, PSG)

Read and reflect on a Bible passage.

Read the *Shema* (Deut. 6:4-9) slowly and reflectively. Note how it encourages God's people to love Him with all they are, to pass the faith to the next generation, and to observe carefully His commands and decrees. Also read Mark 12:28-33, where Jesus declared the *Shema* the greatest commandment. ***What does it mean to you to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, and strength?*** Consider Matthew 5:16 and 1 John 2:5-6. ***How does faithful obedience to God's commands bless both us and others?***

Direct adults to work in pairs to complete the Bible Skill (PSG, p. 89). After a few minutes, lead a brief discussion about the similarities and differences between Deuteronomy 6 and Mark 12. Include the content from Matthew 5:16 and 1 John 2:5-6.

OBJECT LESSON: MONSTERS

Prior to the session, print pictures of several classic monsters from the internet. You also can include some real-life scary things, such as snakes, spiders, and so forth.

During the session, encourage adults to talk about their favorite scary movies. Allow a few volunteers to share what makes scary movies so enjoyable. Show adults the pictures printed and talk about why each image might create fear.

Point out Moses's command to fear the Lord in Deuteronomy 6:2. Lead a brief discussion about how the fear of monsters or spiders is different from fearing the Lord. Challenge adults to examine their lives during the week ahead and to ask God to help them learn how to show greater fear and reverence for Him each day.

DIG DEEPER

LOVING GOD

In today's terms, "love" is a feeling, an inner desire. Books, movies, songs, and television shows emphasize romantic, sexual love. Although Scriptures affirm this kind of love in its proper context, biblical love primarily involves "doing" more than "feeling." In this passage, Israel was commanded to love God. Since you can't command a feeling, God was making it clear that "love" was something deeper.

Our relationship with God is defined by love, and this passage teaches us what loving Him "with all your heart, soul, and strength" looks like. Those who are fully committed to the Lord will obey Him faithfully (Deut. 5:32-6:3). They display their love through their lives and routines (6:6-9). They remain faithful when things go well (6:10-13), when surrounded by pagan values (6:14-15), and when times are tough (6:16-19).

First and foremost, our love for God is demonstrated at home. Moses taught that parents are called to be the chief spiritual instructors of their children (6:6-9, 20-25). Faithful living must be rehearsed and practiced each and every day.

Children need to see living examples of a heart devoted to God. Reading and talking about God's Word should be a normal part of life in the home, not just a sabbath activity. Parents should demonstrate their

faith during times of crisis and joy. Seeing parents who live out their faith guides children to understand the reality of God's presence in every aspect of life.

In essence, Deuteronomy 6 teaches that children learn to love the Lord when they see love for God rehearsed every day. According to God's plan, the spiritual growth of the child becomes a natural part of their development. Every godly parent should long for their children to know God and to take ownership of their faith—and to pass that faith to future generations.

Though everyone needs a Savior, those raised in a godly home learn early who that Savior is and what He has done for us. Every child must personally appropriate faith; but if parents live out God's teachings each day, such personal decisions become easier to make.

BONUS CONTENT



Prayer Boxes

Learn more about how God's people have taken His instructions from Deuteronomy 6:8 to heart.