

down **TO** *earth*
PARENTING



DOWN TO EARTH TO PARENTING ·

BUILDING A FUTURE FRIENDSHIP WITH MY KIDS & GRANDKIDS ·

DEUTERONOMY 6:1-12 · 02/04/2018

MAIN POINT

Parents are called to teach their children Christ-like behavior and morals by leading by example.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What were some of your favorite Bible stories as a kid? Why were these so special to you? What Bible stories do you recall not hearing about until you were older?

Who was the primary teacher of Bible truths in your life? When you became a Christian, was there anyone whose example you sought to follow?

For many Christians, it's teachers at church, friends, or a pastor who taught them spiritual truths from God's Word. However, God has called parents to be the primary disciplers of children, raising them to love and honor God. Today we will discover how we might cultivate a love for God in our own hearts and model the importance of loving God and His church. We have an important calling to lead our families and be an example for them to follow.



UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

This scene in Deuteronomy 6 took place immediately after Moses told the Israelites about the Ten Commandments. After relaying to them God's expectations for obedience, Moses reminded the people that the spiritual training and health of future generations rested on their shoulders. The person whom God will hold primarily responsible for the wise spiritual training and instruction and development of your kids is you. With that reminder, Moses gave them a final challenge to love God wholeheartedly.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DEUTERONOMY 6:1-5.

What was the main command that Moses gave Israel? What does "hear" mean in this context?

Why was it important for the Israelites to proclaim the oneness of God?

How was the religious climate of Israel different from the religious climate of our community? In what ways might it be similar?

The chief command of Moses was “hear,” meaning to take notice, listen, remember that the Lord is God and that the Lord is one. It is simple and to the point. Israel had lost focus before. Remember Mount Sinai; they thought God and Moses had abandoned them, so they built a golden calf and worshiped it. They had just come out of Egypt where they worshiped many gods, such as the river, the sun, the ground, animals, and much more. Israel needed to remember that the Lord is God, and no one else.

What are some common objects and relationships that rival God for our devotion?

How does the truth of God’s oneness relate to the truth that we should have an undivided heart for the Lord?

“The Lord is One.” This means that God has no rival, no substitute, no peers. The only appropriate response to God’s revelation of Himself is total devotion. It is not enough to know there is only one God. (Even the demons know that and shudder.) Instead, this is a foundational truth we must live by. The truth of God’s oneness reminded the Israelites that they could have no competing loyalties—whether idols or other people—when it came to loving God.

Since God is one, what did Moses tell them to do?

What does it look like in practical terms to love God with your heart, soul, and strength?

Why do you think this command was a big deal? How did Moses tell them it was a big deal?

Moses told them that they should love God with all their heart, all their soul, and all their strength. That is the whole deal—Moses told them to love and worship God with all they had. The idea was so important that they were told to teach their children this command, write it on doorposts, and make signs. But these commandments need to be first etched in our hearts before they’re displayed in our homes.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DEUTERONOMY 6:6-9.

What does it mean to have the Word of God “on your hearts”?

How does having the Word of God on your heart impact your parenting, especially the way you teach your children about God?

What do you think it means to “impress” God’s commandments on your children (v. 7)?

Moses told the Israelites that they needed to pay attention to the words of God and to put them into practice in their lives. It’s not enough to simply lecture our children about God’s love and following Him. We have to show them how to pursue a relationship with God. Matt described “impressing” God’s commandments on our children as first modeling obedience to Him and talking about this concept over and over and over again.

In verse 7, Moses specifically mentions the following situations when we might impress God’s truth on our children: when you sit at home, when you walk along the road, when you lie down, and when you get up. Of these opportunities to teach your children about God, which time is the most challenging for you, and why?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ DEUTERONOMY 6:10-12.

If we don’t love God wholeheartedly and daily teach His principles to our children, then we are in danger of drifting away from Him altogether. The effect has devastating consequences on our lives and the lives of our children and grandchildren.

What things in your daily life tempt you to avoid pursuing God and making Him a priority in your home?

Have you ever experienced a drift away from God? What had to happen to draw you back to Him? If you had a family at the time, how were your children affected?

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How do you think your daily life would be different if you were more committed to treasuring the Word of God in your heart?

How have you seen your view of church passed down to your children and family?

How can we encourage our families to love and serve the church better?

PRAY

Ask God to give each of us the grace we need to lead our families to love and serve Him and His church. Pray that we would see our need to cultivate our own relationship with God, and that His work in our personal lives would overflow into the way we lead our families.

COMMENTARY

DEUTERONOMY 6:1-12

6:1-3. A young generation of Israelites had come of age in the wilderness during 40 years of wandering. They were anxious to enter the land of promise and to enjoy the fruits of the land said to be flowing with milk and honey. Moses sought to prepare this new generation of Israelites for the challenging spiritual adventure ahead of them. Success would depend on their knowledge of and obedience to God's laws. Having reminded the present generation of God's revelation of His law at Mount Sinai, Moses urged the people to keep God's laws and to pass them on to future generations.

6:4. Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is arguably the best-known passage of Scripture in ancient and modern Judaism. Deuteronomy 6:4 begins with the Hebrew verb rendered listen (shema), and these verses are commonly referred to as the Shema. These verses make two important declarations about God and His people's obligation to Him. The first declaration is a statement about the uniqueness of Israel's God. The assertion is that the Lord ... is one. The word rendered the Lord is, of course, God's personal name, Yahweh. Declaring that Yahweh is one denotes there is no other existing Deity. People might worship other so-called gods, but those gods are not real. They are worthless fabrications of human minds (see Isa. 44:10-11).

6:5. The second declaration is that God's people are commanded to love the Lord. When Jesus was asked about the greatest commandment in the law, He responded by quoting this verse (see Mark 12:30). The first thing to analyze in this command is the verb rendered love.

The measure of our love for God is to be greater than all other affections. We are to love Him wholeheartedly (all your heart). The biblical conception and use of the term heart differs at points from modern usage. The term does not refer primarily to the fleshly organ but rather to the core of our inner, spiritual being. Heart refers to the power of the mind to think and remember (see Deut. 4:9). Heart also refers to our volition in making decisions (see Ex. 7:13). Thus to love God with all our heart means to choose Him above all other desires and to make Him our highest priority life. Likewise, we're to love God with all our soul. The Hebrew term rendered soul can refer to physical appetites (see Job 33:20), emotions (see Job 30:25), and the spiritual nature (see Ps. 19:7). A supreme love for God results in submitting every human appetite and desire to His will. Finally, we are to love God with all our strength. This term refers to every talent and resource we possess. We are to give our best efforts in serving and worshiping the Lord.

6:6-7. Families are instructed to bequeath the ways of God to the next generations. However, parents and grandparents cannot teach what they themselves do not know and practice. A passionate devotion to the Lord must first be in the parents' and grandparents' hearts. Only then are they equipped to help instill a genuine love for God in younger lives. Primary responsibility for teaching children spiritual truth cannot be delegated by parents to others. Parents have a unique relationship with their children and a responsibility to teach them about God in daily life (when you sit in your house ... walk along the road, ... lie down and ... get up). Church attendance is vitally important for children's overall spiritual development, but participation in church activities can never substitute for the daily spiritual instruction children need from godly parents.

6:8-9. The need for individuals and families to focus daily on the ways of God is emphasized with the commands to bind God's commands on one's hand and forehead. In addition they were to be written on the doorposts of their houses and gates. In New Testament-era Judaism, these commands were observed literally by attaching small boxes containing various Scriptures to the hand and forehead.

6:10-12. The reference to cities Israel did not build, houses they did not fill, wells they did not dig, and vineyards and olive groves they did not plant is significant in terms of the nature of Israel's conquest of Canaan. With few exceptions, physical structures and agricultural assets were left intact precisely so Israel could take them over and thus more quickly and easily settle the land (see Josh. 11:13; 24:13). On the other hand, the wicked Canaanite populations were to be destroyed because they would become a stumbling block to Israel, an influence drawing them away from the Lord and toward idolatry (see Deut. 7:1-6).