



Love the LORD Your God

“Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children.” (Deut. 6:5-7a)

Your Children and Their Children

After giving the Ten Commandments, Moses now urges the Israelites to love their God, to take God’s commandments to heart, and to work diligently to pass them down to their children. In this chapter, Moses is straightforward and practical as he empowers mothers and fathers to fulfill their God-given assignment: to raise up children who love and obey the LORD.

The Grim Reality

In his book, *The Great Evangelical Recession*, John Dickerson compiles research about the current state of evangelicals in America. The data has been clear for decades: We are losing our young people. Josh McDowell’s research shows _____ of evangelical teens are leaving the church after high school. LifeWay Research reports that _____ of Christian millennials quit attending church by age 23. Barna estimates that _____ of every 5 young evangelicals will disengage from church by age 29. (*The Great Evangelical Recession*, pg. 99)

“Somewhere along the way, our focus on programs and techniques, dollars, ministry size, and perhaps even powerful worship distracted us from the _____” (pg. 108).

The Basics: Cultivating a Godly Family (Deut. 6)

- **6:1-3.** The purpose of the Ten Commandments is reiterated: that Israel may prosper from generation to generation in a good and bountiful land.
- **6:4.** Known as the *Shema* from the Hebrew word *hear* or *listen*; Moses calls for Israel’s attention before uttering the great confession of faith. The *Shema* is uttered daily in morning and evening prayer by devout Jews.
- **6:5.** Referred to by Jesus as the Greatest Commandment; Jesus paired it with Lev. 19:18, “Love your neighbor as yourself” to sum up all the law and the prophets. (see Mt. 22:34-40)
- **6:7.** Parents are tasked with interweaving the teachings of God into everyday life—God’s preferred and commanded method for raising godly children.
- **6:8.** Interpreted by many to mean whatever we do (with the hand) and whatever we think (with the head) is to be guided by the authority of God’s Word. At some point—possibly as early as the fourth century BC—Jewish rabbis began applying this verse literally and began tying phylacteries on their arms and heads. Jesus condemned the hypocrisy of wearing large phylacteries while the wearer’s heart was far from God. (see Mt. 23:5)
- **6:10-12.** The Scriptures warn often against forgetting God in times of prosperity. In 1886 Theodore Roosevelt warned Americans of such a tragedy when he famously said, “... we must keep steadily in mind that no people were ever yet benefited by riches if their prosperity corrupted their virtue.”
- **6:14-15.** By turning their hearts *toward* God, Israel simultaneously set their hearts *against* sin and idolatry, which stirs up the jealousy of God.
- **6:19.** Christians are to battle against evil, though not against flesh and blood. (see Eph. 6:12)
- **6:20-25.** This story, beginning in Egypt, is a shared testimony of all Israelites and was told regularly in the home, especially during the annual festivals. (see Deut. 16)



Practice of wearing phylacteries on the forehead and arm.
<https://commons.wikimedia.org>

Raising Spiritual Champions

Though God can certainly work outside the norm, his preferred and commanded method of raising godly men and women is within a family unit dedicated to loving and obeying the LORD. The following practices will help you cultivate such a home and work toward raising spiritual champions.

Five Practices from Deuteronomy 6:

1. Lead with the _____ of God. (vs. 1-3)

- The foundation of life is the love *of* God, not your love *for* God.
- “We love because he first loved us.” (I John 4:19)
- All people, children included, want to be led by the one who loves.
- God has _____ for you, a _____ for you, and a _____ for you.



Jim Elliot, 1953,
Missionary to Ecuador
Inspirationalchristians.org

2. Develop whole-hearted, _____ love for the Lord. (vs. 4-6)

- You cannot give what you do not have.
- Heart – (Heb. *lebab*) the inner man, mind, affections and will
- Soul – (Heb. *nephesh*) living being, life, self, person
- Strength – (Heb. *meod*) muchness, force, abundance

3. Weave the teachings of God into _____ activities of life. (vs. 7-12)

- *Sit at home, walk along the road* – in the private space and the public space
- *Lie down, wake up* – as opposed to compartmentalizing our faith
- *Doors and gates* – last thing you see when you leave, first when you arrive home
- This is not free-form spiritual exploration, but grounding children in God’s teachings.
- Revealing God’s truth everywhere, not simply moralizing about everything.

4. _____ and teach your children to do the same (vs. 13-19)

- We desire to raise our children to be widely _____, which often leads believers to make compromises with sin and idolatry.
- To set your heart fully on God is to set your heart fully against sin-which opens you up to persecution.
- “Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted.” (II Timothy 3:12)

5. Tell your children the family _____ (vs. 20-25)

- Who taught you about God?
- When did you decide to confess Jesus as Lord and be baptized?
- Why were you compelled to do so?
- What has God done for you?

“The Lord is One”

Orthodox Jews have used this confession of faith to deny the doctrine of the Trinity. Is referring to God as Triune (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) a violation of this confession of faith?

In this confession (vs. 4), the Hebrew word for one, *echad*, may refer to a compound unity. In Genesis 1:5, the word *echad* describes unity (one day) out of plurality (made up of evening and morning). Genesis 2:24 uses *echad* to describe the one flesh union of man and woman (two becoming one). In Exodus 26:6 the fifty gold clasps are used to hold the curtains together to make the tent *echad* – a unity (one) made up of a plurality (the many parts of the tabernacle).

Thus, to refer to God as Triune (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit) does not violate this great confession but is instead an accurate depiction of God’s nature of one-ness (*echad*), three-in-one.

Answers: 69%; 70%; 4; basics; love; plans; place; purpose; contagious; ordinary; loathe sin; admired; faith story



Dealing with Resistance

Even with your best efforts, some children will show resistance towards spiritual matters. The following list includes steps you can take if you are facing resistance in the home. Remember, surrender the results to God.

1. Check your hypocrisy.

- Your child might not be resistant to the faith but to a disingenuous version of the faith.
- You will certainly step out of bounds at times; repentance (in front of the family) is the act of acknowledging your sin and keeping your faith genuine before God and your family.

2. Check your motives.

- Do you want your children to love the Lord or do you want a picture-perfect family? One motive comes from a place of peace and the other from a place of anxiety.
- Are you teaching your children the Lord's way or are you manipulating them with Scripture? At times that line might be thin, but children seem to detect it quickly and resist manipulation.

3. Check your pace.

- It is important, especially during times of tension, to slow down to the child's pace.
- For example, the child might need to say one or two words during a prayer before feeling comfortable to pray aloud.

4. Balance relationship and rules.

- A home that emphasizes rules over relationship creates rebellion.
- A home that emphasizes relationship over rules creates chaos.
- Focus on balancing the two to restore order.

5. Show interest in your child's spiritual interests.

- Is there a verse, story, topic, or song that your kid is interested in?
- Stay there and explore for a while. Play the song again. Tell the Bible story again.
- Remember you are not teaching material; you are teaching people.
- God could very well be behind the interest himself.

6. Bring back the joy.

- Joy does not mean more entertaining, loud, or flashy.
- To be joyful is to allow your zeal and passion for the Lord to be evident.

7. Shift your focus outward.

- Who is someone your family can serve?
- What is something meaningful you and your kids can do for the community or the church?
- Serving others often connects dots and brings new life into relationship with Jesus.

8. Pray and seek the prayers of others.

- Your child's resistance is nothing to be ashamed of. Seek the support of a praying community who can help you persevere, and who will pray for God to touch the child and soften their heart.