



THE SH'MA SERIES
“LISTEN AND LOVE”

SPEAKER: BRAD WILLIAMS
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help lead your group through a progression of engagement with the Bible passage(s) and the speaker's message. They can help you understand and apply the teaching.

BIBLICAL TEXT(S) + MESSAGE SUMMARY:
DEUTERONOMY 6:4-5

In 2020, our lives were systematically and thoroughly disrupted. We lost the public and private rhythms that normally mark our days, weeks, and months. We can lean into this and invite God to grow and transform us, but that requires that we respond to him in ways that encourage spiritual growth. One way to do that is to rediscover and adopt sacred rhythms—what used to be called liturgy.

Many people stopped liturgical practice because it had come to represent a lifeless religion. However, the ancient prayer God offers us in Deuteronomy 6 has the potential to revitalize a daily practice or prayer, focusing our response to God's love.

LEAN IN: *These are icebreakers and warm ups, mostly to get the group talking and start the flow of conversation. Choose one and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. What daily, weekly, or monthly rhythms that you'd come to count on in the past have been disrupted this year?
2. What do you feel like has been lost to you in that disruption?
3. What has replaced those familiar rhythms for you?
4. What example or story stood out to you in Sunday's sermon? Why was it significant to you?

LOOK DOWN: *These are questions about the Bible passage(s) and observations about what's been read. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. What is the first thing God says for Israel to do, and what does he reveal about himself in the process?
2. What do you understand God to mean when he says “hear” or “listen”?
3. What three qualities of our selves does God relate to loving him?
4. What do you think it means to “impress” a command on someone like a child? How might you make a good impression on someone as you talk about and heed a command from God?
5. Where does God say his commands are to be placed? (Hint: verses 6 +9) Why do you think he says that?
6. Why do you think Jesus quotes the Sh'ma as the greatest commandment?

LOOK OUT: *These questions help connect the world of the Bible to today. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. Where do you see the need today for sacred rhythms? Maybe you don't see that at all. If so, why not?
2. How do you see people's desires, or their loves, shaping their own lives

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or the world around them? Is that a good thing and why, or why not?

3. What kind of rhythm and habits do you see in the lives of people around you that are positive? Why do you see them as positive?
4. On the flip side, what kind of rhythm and habits do you see in the lives of people around you that are negative? Why do you see them as negative?
5. How might the world change if everyone heeded God's words in the Sh'ma, to love him, and follow that up with what Jesus added: to love our neighbor as ourselves? Try to think of a specific example from something you've observed directly.

LOOK IN: *These are questions that help you consider how to apply the teaching personally. Spend about 15-20 minutes on three questions max.*

1. How do you think you "hear" or "listen" to God as the message defined hearing and listening?
2. What prevents you from the hear-obey connection that is meant by the Hebrew word *sh'ma*?
3. Paul talks about competing desires, or loves, in Romans. He writes about an internal fight between god-given desires and those that might lead us to sin. How do you relate to that idea? Does the Sh'ma give you a different perspective on that struggle?
4. What godly desires do you see and want to encourage in yourself?
5. What do you think will help encourage those godly desires?

LIVE IT OUT: *These action steps help apply this week's message to day to day life. Choose one question and talk it over for 5-10 minutes.*

1. Try reciting the Sh'ma twice daily for two weeks, once in the morning as you wake and once at night before you go to sleep. Remind yourself about God's love for you and your love for him twice a day, then note how it impacts your day. Record your observations each day for the two weeks.
2. Adopt a "sacred" rhythm like a daily Bible reading, perhaps the *Lectio Divina* or reading through the Bible in a year.
3. Pick someone who you believe could benefit from a daily practice and pray for them, specifically that they would adopt a godly rhythm of praying Scripture. Don't tell them, just pray for them.