



Deuteronomy 6:4-9 “Parenting 101”

START HERE

A study was once done on two men who lived in the late 1700's, both from the same state of New York. The first, Max Jukes, did not believe in Christ or in Christian training. He refused to take his children to church even when they asked to go. Many fathers today are like Max, they do not follow Christ and they see no value in Christian training. Some even invent ways or make excuses for keeping their family from the true things of God. Max's decision was very destructive to his family and costly to the state of New York. Max had 903 known descendants. One hundred were sent to prison for an average term of thirteen years, ninety were public prostitutes, one hundred forty-five were admitted alcoholics, two hundred eighty-five had social diseases, and three hundred were delinquents. The report estimated that the crimes and care of the Max Jukes' family line cost the state of New York over one million dollars.

“Boundaries reflect who we are and who we are not. When you teach your kids how to live with healthy boundaries you set them up for success in life’s relationships. God has a plan for Parents to use to impart Biblical Truth to their kids - His plan can be accomplished in small steps every day.”
- Pastor Glynn

The second man studied was the great Puritan preacher, Jonathan Edwards. He was an uncompromising theologian and pastor who lived to please God and was a man of prayer. The researcher found 1,394 descendants of Jonathan Edwards. His descendants included thirteen college presidents, sixty-five prominent lawyers, thirty-two noted authors, ninety physicians, eighty-six state senators, thirty judges, three congressmen, one vice-president of the United States and two hundred ministers of the gospel. It has been said that the family of this man of God never cost the state of New York a single penny for rehabilitation or for incarceration.¹

ASK

How would you describe the spiritual legacy that was set by those before you in your family?

What kind of spiritual legacy would you like to pass on to your children?

READ

¹ <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon-illustrations/68507/father-s-day-by-terry-laughlin?ref=TextIllustrationSerps>

DEUTERONOMY 6:4-9

“Listen, Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart, 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. 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.

REVIEW

Context/Commentary/Background

THE BIBLE KNOWLEDGE COMMENTARY

6:4. This verse has been called the Shema, from the Hebrew word translated Hear. The statement in this verse is the basic confession of faith in Judaism. The verse means that the Lord (Yahweh) is totally unique. He alone is God. The Israelites could therefore have a sense of security that was totally impossible for their polytheistic neighbors. The “gods” of the ancient Near East rarely were thought of as acting in harmony. Each god was unpredictable and morally capricious. So a pagan worshiper could never be sure that his loyalty to one god would serve to protect him from the capricious wrath of another. The monotheistic doctrine of the Israelites lifted them out of this insecurity since they had to deal with only one God, who dealt with them by a revealed consistent righteous standard. This confession of monotheism does not preclude the biblical doctrine of the Trinity. “God” is plural (’ēlōhîm), possibly implying the Trinity, and one (’eḥād) may suggest a unity of the Persons in the Godhead (cf. Gen. 2:24, where the same word for “one” is used of Adam and Eve).

6:5. To love the Lord means to choose Him for an intimate relationship and to obey His commands. This command, to love Him, is given often in Deuteronomy (v. 5; 7:9; 10:12; 11:1, 13, 22; 13:3; 19:9; 30:6, 16, 20). Loving Him was to be wholehearted (with all your heart) and was to pervade every aspect of an Israelite’s being and life (soul and strength).

6:6–9. God’s people were responsible to meditate on these commandments, to keep them in their hearts. This enabled them to understand the Law and to apply it correctly. Then the parents were in a position to impress them on their children’s hearts also. The moral and biblical education of the children was accomplished best not in a formal teaching period each day but when the parents, out of concern for their own lives as well as their children’s, made God and His Word the natural topic of a conversation which might occur anywhere and anytime during the day (v. 7).

The commands to tie them and write them were taken literally by some later Jewish readers. However, the commands are probably emphasizing symbolically the need for the continual teaching of the Law (cf. Ex. 13:9, 16).²

THE FAITHLIFE STUDY BIBLE NOTES

6:4 *Hear, Israel* The affirmation of loyalty to Yahweh in this verse is traditionally called the “Shema” from this opening call to attention, which in Hebrew is *shema’ yisra’el*. The Shema represents the greatest commandment of Judaism and Christianity, as it represents God’s expectation that God’s people will remain wholly loyal to him.

Yahweh our God, Yahweh is unique The four Hebrew words used here represent the core confession of belief in Yahweh as the one true God. However, the syntactic relationship of these four Hebrew words—*yhwh elohenu yhwh echad*—presents a complicated translation issue. These four words can be understood as a single clause or as two separate clauses.

6:5 *you shall love* The command is not a demand to manufacture false emotion but to cultivate a disposition (see Lev 19:17–18).

with all of your heart and with all of your soul The Hebrew terms *levav* (often translated “heart”) and *nephesh* (often translated “soul”) do not refer to separate components of the human person. Rather, the terms overlap in meaning, conveying the internal life, dispositions, emotions, and intellect.

might The Hebrew word here is not a noun but an adverb meaning “exceedingly.” This description of love of Yahweh thus implies totality: as Yahweh is undivided unity and alone worthy of worship, so the Israelites must have undivided loyalty to Him.

6:6 *these words* The Ten Commandments, which are literally known in the Hebrew as the “ten words” (Exod 34:28). The phrase “these words” and similar ones refer to the entirety of the law (e.g., Deut 4:2, 40; 6:1–2; 19:9; 28:1, 14–15).

on your heart Israelites must take them to heart—commit them to memory and make them an integral part of their life.

6:7 *you shall recite them to your children* The Hebrew phrase here literally means “repeat.” Parents are to rehearse the laws of God to their children. This command presumes that teachers know their content, which in turn presumes concentrated effort and study.

you shall talk about them The practice of constantly repeating and reciting God’s commands also involves committing them to memory so they become applied knowledge for life.

² Jack S. Deere, [“Deuteronomy,”](#) in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 1 (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985), 274–275.

living in your house and at the time of your going These paired, contrasting phrases (and the following ones) are figures of speech indicating totality (merism). In this instance, all of life is the whole. In other words, Israelites are to make the laws of God the focal point of life (see Prov 6:21–22).

6:8–9 Not only must the people of Israel memorize and rehearse Yahweh’s commands in order to internalize them, they must also wear them on the body (compare Exod 13:9, 16) and attach the words to their homes. The Israelites practiced these commands by placing written commandments in leather pouches (tefillin or “phylacteries”; compare Matt 23:5) and then literally binding them on their arms and forehead with leather straps. The command to put the laws of Yahweh on doorposts (mezuzoth in Hebrew; Deut 6:9) likewise resulted in the Jewish practice of writing passages of Scripture on a small piece of parchment that was rolled and inserted in a case affixed to the doors, lintels, and doorposts of private houses. The verses written on those small parchments typically included this passage (vv. 4–9) and 11:13–21.³

Content

Have a volunteer read Romans Deuteronomy 6:4-6

As Deuteronomy is being written, the generation that crossed the Red Sea and wandered in the wilderness has all but passed away. Moses intentionally retells the law and prepares for a transition of leadership to Joshua and Caleb. In a way, it is Moses’ passing on of a spiritual inheritance as the people of Israel prepare to enter the Promised Land. Moses draws attention calling out to the people “Hear” or “Listen.” The words that he is about to share are intended to define the future of the nation and require obedience. In verse 3, he implores the people to take great care in following them. These words he shares are not to be taken lightly nor trivialized.

The God of Israel stood out as unique among the nations. He alone is the true and living God, creator of the universe and has created us to live in an intimate faith relationship with Him. He is unique among the false gods or baals of the nations surrounding Israel that were considered unpredictable and unrelatable. He is unwavering in His faithfulness, His character, and His righteousness. Moses commands the people to love God wholeheartedly. Jesus, when asked, *“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?”* He replies *“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment.* He goes on to say, *“And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments”* (Matthew 22:36-40, NIV). In emphasizing these words, Jesus implies that before all else, we are called to live in a **relationship**

³ John D. Barry et al., [Faithlife Study Bible](#) (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012, 2016), Dt 6:4–9.

of love, trust, and obedience of our Heavenly Father. 1 John 4:19 reminds us that our very capacity to love is initiated by God (1 John 4:19).

ASK

In verse 2 we find the words “fear the Lord” and in verse 5 we are commanded to “love the Lord.” How do the fear of the Lord and the love of the Lord both serve as important motivators?

What does it mean to you to live out loving God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength?

Are there things that can compete with this?

Are there areas of your life that you need to make adjustments to reflect this command more authentically?

Moses reminds us that generational influence begins with the parent. He stresses that “these words are to be upon your heart.” His words serve as a call to the Israelites to commit the law to memory. In so doing, they are to meditate on it and embrace it in the way they live. When God’s word is in our heart it has the power to mold and transform our lives. The Apostle Paul, stresses the importance of our lives reflecting the transformative work of Jesus Christ through the way we live on a daily basis. In Colossians 3, Paul lists a series of “old-self” behaviors to put to death. He then introduces a series of Christian lifestyle attributes and instructions that are to shape us as a new creation in Christ. As God’s word shapes our life it should be seen in the overflow of a Christlike character, rippling out to touch the generations of our family. As God’s word penetrates our heart, influences our thoughts, and shapes our actions, we are being prepared to take an important step in establishing a spiritual heritage for those that follow us.

ASK

What convictions drive your behavior?

Do you live out God’s commands out of obligation or affection? What is the difference between the two? What is the effect of the two?

Why is it important that God’s Word is ingrained in our heart?

How are you putting this into practice?

READ

COLOSSIANS 3:1-10

When it comes to our role as a parent, what are the negative effects of not “putting to death” the things of the old self?

(We can be seen as hypocrites, children mimic the negative behaviors of our lives, we lose credibility in the things we teach.)

READ

COLOSSIANS 3:12-17

How does Paul’s “put on” list have a positive impact on molding and shaping the lives of our children?

What are some life changes that you may need to make as you seek to influence the spiritual legacy of your family?

READ

DEUTERONOMY 6:7-9

God’s word is to be made an integral part of the home training and instructing children to love and obey the Lord. Moses instructs “repeat them (these words) to your children.” The word repeat (CSB), found in other translations as teach (NASB) and impress (NIV), comes from the Hebrew word shanan (shaw-nan) meaning to whet or sharpen by teaching incisively. It is the image of repeatedly drawing the edge of a knife down the whetstone with the intent of developing a sharp edge. As parents and grandparents, we are called to repeatedly teach the word of God through the everyday ordinary aspects of life – as you sit in your house, walk along the road, when you arise in the morning, and lay your head down at night. We might translate this today – when you hop in the car to take the kids to school, when you wait for soccer practice to begin, when you are preparing dinner, or when God shows up in the most unexpected ways.

Moses transitions from teaching to talking; he is reminding those that are listening that learning is enhanced through an ongoing spiritual dialogue. The progression of discovering, owning, and leading out in faith is complemented by discussions centered around not only the truth of God’s word but also learning to apply it to real-life situations and circumstances.

“No other passage in the Bible defines the family’s role as clearly as Deuteronomy 6. Moses stands before the entire nation as a grandfather and leader to position the family as God’s primary conduit to tell His story of redemption and restoration. During this time of critical transition, Moses highlights values that should transcend time and culture.”⁴ – Reggie Joiner

⁴ Reggie Joiner, [Think Orange](#) (Colorado Springs, CO: David C. Cook, 2009), 74.

“All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

ASK

Considering the words of 2 Timothy 3:16-17, what is the goal of biblical parenting?

In what ways are you teaching your children to love and obey the Lord?

How have you seen the teaching and application of God's Word shape the character of your children?

***What struggles or failures have you experienced along your parenting journey?
What have you learned from this?***

How can you utilize time you already have with your kids to create a rhythm where biblical truth is shared and a spiritual dialogue takes place?

Teaching our children diligently “It’s diligent, daily dialogue about our selfishness and sin but also God’s love for them in spite of that. Parents need to pursue the hearts of their children in the same way God pursues us!” – Pastor Glynn

In verses 8 and 9, Moses goes on to instruct the people to “bind these (words) to their hands and foreheads and to write them on their door posts. While these words were likely spoken figuratively, they serve as an important reminder to the people that these commands are to be bound, fully integrated into daily living. These words, to this day, have been taken very literally by the Jewish people with phylacteries being worn on their forehead and arms along with posting Shema on their door frame. Unfortunately, these items often failed to be reflected in true heart change and action.

Perhaps, today, we might restate verses 8-9 as you “wear a Christian t-shirt, decorate the walls of your home with crosses, place a fish (ichthys) decal on your car window.” Each of these outward symbols can serve as a valuable reminder or testimony of the faith that we profess. However, if they are not reflected through an inward heart change along with our outward words and actions, what good do they really represent? Jesus warns against such hypocrisy in Matthew 23:1-12.

ASK

What is the benefit of such outward symbols (t-shirt, cross on the wall, etc...)?

What is the effect when there is not inward alignment with the outward symbol?

REFLECT

In what ways have you been able to seize teachable moments to convey God's truths and the power of His provision?

How can we encourage one another as a group to dwell on God's word?

How can we spur one another on to live in a way that reflects Christ and sets the course for generational influence?

How are you intentionally helping your child discover, own and lead in their faith?

*"God's plan for parenting is convenient, convictional, constant, and creative."
– Pastor Glynn*

RESPOND

Share this challenge with your Connect Group...

Take time this week to think about your child's spiritual growth. One of the great tools we have available at Mobberly is a series of Faith Talks. These are spiritual conversations focused on where your child is at in their spiritual growth. Check these out at Mobberly.org/Faithtalks and identify one Faith Talk to share with your children / grandchildren this week. Based upon where your children stand in their spiritual walk, you may want to do this with them individually.

Pray that God will transform your heart on a daily basis as you seek to pour into the heart of your children.

ADDENDUM: A word for parents with college aged students, empty nesters, and grandparents.

Our role of parenting may change but our role of being a parent never ends. There will be a shift in the nature of our relationship with our children as they mature, grow in their independence, and raise a family of their own. It should be our goal to raise children that become increasingly dependent while they grow independently as adults. As parents of grown children, we still have the opportunity to walk down the road, sharing in life's journey with them. Our role may at times be that of a friend, a coach, a sounding board, a confidant, or a prayer warrior. Not only this, but as time passes, those that are blessed with grandchildren take on a new and complimentary role of generational influence.

READ

DEUTERONOMY 6:1-2 AND PSALM 78:1-7

ASK

What unique challenges do you encounter in being the parent of adult children? What have been the greatest life lessons you have experienced about taking personal responsibility? Without getting preachy, how can you transfer these to your adult child?

What do these passages teach us about generational influence?

What are some specific ways that you as grandparents can live out these principles?

“The role of godly grandparents is to communicate their faith in Jesus Christ, praying specifically and diligently for their grandchildren. We are also to tell future generations how God has walked with us and demonstrated his mighty works in our lives. Some of our greatest blessings will come after we ask God to use us to touch our grandchildren’s lives and we get to see the results.”⁵ – Lillian Ann Penner

⁵ Lillian Ann Penner, [*Grandparenting With a Purpose*](#) (Bloomington, IN: CrossBooks, 2010), 7.