

Further up, Further in

Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT
MOUNTAIN
PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH

"THE CALL OF COMPLETE DEVOTION"

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: April 23, 2023

SPEAKER: Brian/Aaron

SERIES: Deuteronomy

PASSAGE: Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Family Dinner Table

We are always facing a new generation of children to cultivate, whether it be our own children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, or someone else's, our call is to saturate our homes, our words, our behavior in such a way that the children cannot miss our love for God and his Word. We need to talk more about what we love!

So how can we make loving God the number one priority in our families? Nashville pastor and author, Ray Ortlund, offers the book of Proverbs for direction: "*The book of Proverbs has much to say to parents. One of the primary tasks as parents is to impart to our children this shining awareness and positive expectancy [of God's wisdom] as we walk together through this good world of God's making.*" According to Ortlund, home should be a place to be "happily human." "Even on this side of the fall, 'everything created by God is good' (1 Tim. 4:4). Christian parents instructed by the book of Proverbs delight in that truth, and they impart their settled happiness to their children," making their home a place where it is easy for kids to love and be inspired toward God.³

- How well do we make loving God the number one priority in our homes? Are we just too busy with work, school, and extra-curriculars that focusing on spiritual formation becomes difficult? Ask God for the grace to find ways to make it easy for your kids to love God.

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In Deuteronomy 6:4-9, we reach the centerpiece of Moses' second speech, the *Shema*, spoken to the second generation of Israelites as they stand on the plains of Moab. In the *Shema*, God's people are called to obey and worship Yahweh alone, affirming the monotheistic religion of Israel within a polytheistic culture. Moses maintains that this history and these laws belong to them, not just to their parents' generation. They are commanded to teach these words to their children and their children's children. As God's people, we are **called to complete devotion** to the one, true God, striving to preserve our identity as Christ-centered, counter-cultural, covenant-keepers.

The mandate for complete devotion to the one true God (vv. 4-5)

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one" are well-known words that express complete devotion to God (v. 4). When we confess, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one," it is not an abstraction but a proclamation of covenantal loyalty. And committing to such a singular, whole-person love such as loving "the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might" continues to be remarkable even in a secular age, let alone during the poly-theistic period of Israel's day (v. 5).

- Read Matthew 22:34-40. How does loving God "with all the heart and soul and mind" put everything else in proper perspective?
- As our Creator and Redeemer, God calls for covenantal loyalty. We are to love no thing more than him. Refer back to our studies of the *Ten Commandments* (Deuteronomy 5). What is the first commandment and how does it relate to the *Shema*?
- In his book, *Doctrine of the Christian Life*, John Frame explains covenantal loyalty in the context of suzerain (king) and vassal: "*The fundamental demand of a suzerainty treaty is love, in the sense of exclusive loyalty. The vassal is not to make treaties with any king other than his covenant lord. The same is true in the covenant between Yahweh and Israel. Notice how the term love is used in the great confession of the Mosaic covenant, the Shema...Israel's love for Yahweh is one that allows no competition and tolerates no rivals.*"¹ How does the exclusivity of this love closely parallel marital love? Read Jeremiah 3:20 and James 4:4. How does God describe idolatry?

The method for complete devotion to the one true God (vv. 6-9)

In verses 6-9, Moses lays out the method by which generational devotion can be developed. The truths of Scripture must be written on our hearts (v. 6), impressed within the family (v. 7), and set always before us (v. 8). By forgetting God's law, forsaking it, or failing to pass it on to our children and grandchildren, we endanger multi-generational faith and devotion to the one true God.

- Why is it absolutely necessary to talk about God within your family? (See also 2 Timothy 3:14-15)
- We talk about what we love. Do you know people who love sports? Or love a particular hobby? You know it if they do! More than likely that love gets passed onto their children as well. Can you identify the different ways parents influence their children to love their favorite team or hobby? Discuss how our love for Jesus and his Word could be conveyed to our children in ways that are similar.
- Paul Tripp explains that it is absolutely necessary to talk about God within your family, because God is the basis of true knowing. We cannot fully know anything without first understanding the existence, the character, and the plan of God.² According to Proverbs 8:17, how can we get to know God?

¹Frame, John. *Doctrine of the Christian Life*. 2008. Phillipsburg, NJ, P&R Publishing. 333

²Tripp, Paul D. *Getting to the Heart of Parenting (DVD series)*. <https://www.paultripp.com/getting-to-the-heart-of-parenting>

³Ortlund, Ray. *Make It Easy for Your Kids to Love God: Proverbs for a Happy Home*. April 18, 2018. <https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/make-it-easy-for-your-kids-to-love-god>