

GOOD TO GREAT FAMILIES

"GOOD TO GREAT PARENTING"

DEUTERONOMY 6:1-9

This Week's Core Competency

Faithfulness – I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships. Proverbs 3:3, 4

*3Let love and faithfulness never leave you;
bind them around your neck,
write them on the tablet of your heart.*

4Then you will win favor and a good name.

Faithfulness amounts to obedience in Deuteronomy 6:1-25, in particular, the obedience of parents to impress God's commandments on their children. Moses told the Israelites, "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 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 upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. *Talk about them* when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (vv. 4-7 italics added).

An obvious way for parents to do this is by having spiritual conversations with their children, simply talking to them about spiritual things. Younger children love to hear stories, and the

If parents cannot embody the faith and inculcate it responsibly to their children, the very existence of that faith community is in jeopardy.

– Duane L. Christensen

Bible is full of them, which makes reading Bible stories one way to have such a conversation. But children love to hear "parents' stories," too, so tell them stories about your experiences with God. If you became a Christian as a child tell them about it; if you attended Sunday School and church or Vacation Bible School as a kid, tell them about it. If their grandparents are Christians, tell them stories about Grandma and Grandpa that have left an indelible impression on you, stories that reflect your parents' love for God and for Christ. Kids seem to like stories about themselves the best, so don't overlook telling them about what God has done for your family and various ways he has blessed them.

Another obvious way is to answer their questions. While children may ask questions at inopportune times, their questions are never inopportune. Questioning indicates their readiness to learn, and parents can make the most of these too-few opportunities by giving thorough answers. Moses puts it this way: When your son asks you a 17-word question (v. 20), give him a 121-word answer (vv. 21-25). In other words, don't give him a trite answer that might discourage him from ever asking another question; instead, give him a thoughtful answer that will challenge his thinking and do just the opposite, provoke more asking of questions. And if your children are older, ask them questions, too—not true/false, multiple guess ones, but open ended ones, questions that challenge their thinking and invite them to express their opinions.

For Discussion

Ida just finished listening to her pastor's recent sermon on the Christian home. In it he emphasized that parents were the ones God would hold responsible for teaching their children the ways of the Lord and scolded those who thought they could pass their responsibility off on the private school or the Sunday school. Ida sacrificed to send her two kids to a Christian school and was a little miffed at her pastor for suggesting that she was trying to avoid her responsibility as a parent. She thought the exact opposite was the case. What's more, she faithfully took her kids to Sunday School, thinking she was doing the right thing, but now she wasn't so sure. If putting kids in Christian schools, taking them to Sunday School, and sending them to camp in the summer wasn't enough, what was she to do? After all, she wasn't a teacher; if she had been she would have homeschooled the kids. What is Ida missing?

day 1 ENCOUNTER – read God's word to put yourself in touch with him.

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, 2so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. 3Hear, O Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, promised you.

4Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 7Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. 8Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Cf., vv. 20-25

20In the future, when your son asks you, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?" 21tell him: "We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. 22Before our eyes the LORD sent miraculous signs and wonders--great and terrible--upon Egypt and Pharaoh and his whole household. 23But he brought us out from there to bring us in and give us the land that he promised on oath to our forefathers. 24The LORD commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the LORD our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. 25And if we are careful to obey all this law before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, that will be our righteousness."

EXAMINE – what the passage says before you decide what it means.

- * Circle "commands," "decrees," and "laws" in v. 1.
- * In the margin of v. 1 write, "See 5:22, 23; cf., v. 31."
- * Box so that" indicating purpose in vv. 2, 3.
- * Circle "fear" in v. 2.
- * Box "by" indicating means in v. 2.
- * Bracket "Hear, O Israel" in vv. 3, 4.
- * Highlight what is known in Jewish tradition as the *Shema* in v. 4.
- * Underline "sit" and "walk" with one line, and "lie down" and "get up" with two lines in v. 7.
- * Bracket "impress them," "tie them," and "write" them in vv. 7-9.

day 2

EXPLORE – the answer to these questions to better understand what the passage means.

Consult the explanation of the message and the notes to follow if you need help.

1. Read Deuteronomy 4-6. What recurring theme or themes did you come across in these chapters?
2. Verse 1 mentions "*these* commands." Do you think God expects *you* to obey the commands to which this expression refers? Explain.
3. What do you infer about God from verse 4?
4. Put what verse 5 means in your own words.
5. Explain what verse 6 means.
6. What's the point of verse 7?
7. Should verses 8, 9 be interpreted *literally* or *figuratively*—what do you think? Incidentally, could taking them *literally* actually undermine their true intent?
8. Who bears the responsibility for teaching children to fear the LORD and obey his commands in this passage (see also 4:9, 10)?
9. If your son asks you, "Why do we follow Christ and obey his commands?" what are you going to tell him? You can use Ephesians 2:1-10 to formulate your answer if you like.
10. **Discussion:** Talk about how parents/grandparents can do what is enjoined in verse 7.

day 3

EXAMINE – an explanation of the message to better understand the meaning of the passage.

Throughout Deuteronomy 4-6 Moses instructs Israel to obey the commands God gave them when he entered into a covenant relationship with the nation at Sinai. In particular he reiterates their responsibility to avoid idolatry (4:15-31) and obey the Ten Commandments (5:1-21).

Chapter 6, the focus of this study, contains what is known in Jewish tradition as the Shema', which expresses the fundamental truth of true religion, that the God of the Bible is one, and the fundamental duty of mankind, to love the true God with all one's heart, soul, and strength-which, by the way, Jesus called "the first and greatest commandment" (Mt 22:37). It also contains instructions regarding children. Children and their children after them are to be taught the commands of the LORD so that one generation after another might fear the LORD. This instruction is to take place when seated and when walking, when lying down and when getting up; in other words, in all places and at all times. Clearly parents bear primary responsibility for the religious instruction of their own children in their own home. They must be prepared to explain their faith and way of life to their sons and daughters whenever they ask, "What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the LORD our God has commanded you?" (v. 20).

But is it the parents' job alone? Does the community of faith not share in the responsibility as well? Moses' words suggest it did. When he mentioned "your children and their children after them" in verse 2 and "your children" in verse 7, he wasn't *just* talking to parents about their own children. It appears he was talking to the nation, to one generation about the next one in Israel, which indicates that adults in the community who loved and obeyed the LORD their God were responsible to pass their faith on to the next generation. Religious instruction began in the home, but it continued outside the home in the extended family, throughout

the tribe, and ultimately throughout the nation.

This responsibility to pass the faith along might easily be neglected by parents and the community. Moses warned, "When the LORD your God brings you into the land . . . be careful that you do not forget the LORD" (v. 12). Prosperity, it seems, does not inspire diligence. The land Israel was to inherit was filled with good things: cities the Israelites did not build, houses full of stuff they did not provide, abundant water from wells they did not dig, vineyards and groves they did not plant. They were moving into a "ready-made land," which meant they didn't have to move in and go to work. They could move in, and sit back and relax. When they did, they were to "be careful" to remember all God had done for them, and pass that knowledge on to the next generation. Otherwise, things would not go well for them (v. 18).

While every word of Moses doesn't apply directly to Christians today, some do, while others apply indirectly. The first and greatest commandment surely applies to us. And while, generally speaking, Israel demonstrated its love for God by obeying the commands contained in the covenant, we, on the other hand, demonstrate our love for him by obeying the law of Christ contained in the New Testament. Furthermore, like them, we are responsible for the religious education of our children. Parents must instruct their own children in their own homes, but that instruction must continue outside the home to the extended family, a community of believers, the local church, and ultimately the body of Christ. One way for parents to do that is by having spiritual conversations with their children, by talking with them about spiritual things. They are to tell their children stories about the LORD and explain to them what they believe about him. What's more, they are to exploit their children's natural curiosity and readiness to learn by patiently and fully answering their questions.

The Message of the Passage

Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength, and teach the next generation to do the same.

day **4** **EMBRACE** – how God spoke to you in his word.

Our desire is to not be merely hearers of the word, but doers of the word as James suggests in James 1:22. Try some of the challenges below to apply what you have learned this week.

- **Journal your thoughts on the passage:**

–Write about what God wants you to know . . .

–Write about how God wants you to feel . . .

–Write about what God wants you to do . . .

“Good to Great Parenting”
(Use the space below for Sunday’s message notes)

notes **N** STUDY – the commentaries to answer the questions.

v. 1 **These** "These three verses function as a bridge, to conclude the larger section on the 'Ten Words' (4:44-6:3) and to introduce the next major section (6:4-7:11), which contains what Jesus called the 'first and greatest' commandment, 'to love God (Matt 22:37-38)" (Duane L. Christensen, *Word Biblical Commentary*, vol. 6a, *Deuteronomy 1:1-21:9*, 135).

v. 1 **fear** To fear the LORD is to acknowledge that he alone is God and hence to lovingly worship and obey him.

v. 4 **Hear, O Israel** "Verses 4-9, known in the Jewish tradition as the *Shema*', contain what have been called 'the fundamental truth of Israel's religion' and 'the fundamental duty founded upon it.' The fundamental truth has to do with the nature of God as one (v. 4); the fundamental duty is the response of love which God requires of man (v. 5). Both themes are taken up in the teaching of Jesus (Mark 12:29-30; see also Matt. 22:37 and Luke 10:27)" (Peter C. Craigie, *The Book of Deuteronomy*, NICOT, 168).

v. 4 **one** This verse can be translated in a number of other ways: "The LORD is our God, the LORD is one" (NASB); "The LORD is our God, the LORD alone" (NRSV; cf. TEV); and "The LORD our God is one LORD" (see *The NIV Study Bible* **tn** on Dt 6:4). It implies the *unity* as well as the *uniqueness* of God (cf., "Yahweh our God is the one, the only Yahweh" [NJB]). "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" (Jack S. Deere, "Deuteronomy" in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: Old Testament*, 274).

v. 5 **strength** Obedience to this command to "love" demands effort. "In terms of modern depth psychology, we would say that our love for God is to embrace the whole of our mind, both conscious and unconscious. Self-discipline is required, in that we are to love God with all our might as well" (Christensen, 143).

v. 7 **sit, walk** *Merism* is a figure of speech that uses extremes to refer to totality. Sit and walk, lie down and get up, at home and along the road in effect mean "at all conceivable times and places."

vv. 8, 9 **tie, write** These injunctions that were probably intended to be taken *figuratively* were later taken *literally*. *Phylacteries* and *mezuzot* were small containers holding parchments on which selected biblical verses were written—usually Ex 13:1-10; 11-16; Dt 6:4-9; 11:13-21 and sometimes the ten commandments. Many Jews who take them literally tie *phylacteries* to their foreheads and left arms and attach *mezuzot* to the doorframes of their houses. Travelers to modern Israel will see various kinds of *mezuzot* on hotel room doorframes. "Whether taken literally or metaphorically, the signs described in vv. 8-9 indicate that the individual (v. 8), his home, and his community (v. 9) were to be distinguished in their character by obedience to the commandments as a response of love for God" (Craigie, 171).

v. 20 **son asks** "The continuity of faith within the context of a religious community depends on the observance of that faith within the context of individual families. Though it is probable that parents carried a greater responsibility in general for the education of their children in ancient Israel than is the case today, the principle remains true. *If parents cannot embody that faith and inculcate it responsibly to their children, the very existence of that faith community is in jeopardy*" (Christensen, 151 italics added).

Family Talk

Encouragement from one parent's heart to another

Special note to parents: From April 7 to May 26, your children will be learning about families in the Old Testament in our series, Family Road Trip. During this series we will be on a journey to discover important biblical principles we can apply to our families today. Please note that the scriptures kids will be studying are different than the ones in the adult *Scrolls*.

The story of Abraham and Isaac in Genesis 22 is a rich story that presents many opportunities for teaching godly character. Obedience, faithfulness and trust are manifested in both Abraham and Isaac and God proves Himself to be the Trusted Provider He is. Next week we will teach kids that Isaac could trust his father because Abraham trusted God. What a comforting thought for our kids to know that as parents, we trust God! Take advantage of the nice spring weather and plan a family outing for your family. Decide ahead of time on a place (your neighborhood or a local park) where you could set up a trust walk for your kids. Use natural obstacles, like trees, or set up your own. Blindfold your kids and tell them they will have to trust your voice to lead them through the course. Remind your kids that you follow God's voice to lead your family and He will always provide for all your needs.

What Does The Bible Say

Weekly Verse: Ge 22:1-18

1. What did God ask Abraham to do?
2. Did Abraham obey?
3. What question did Isaac ask his dad?

What Do You Think

1. Look at verse 8. What did Abraham believe about God?
2. Do you think Isaac trusted his father?
3. Why did Abraham name the mountain they were on "The LORD Will Provide"?

What R U Going To Do

It's the Great Obedience Challenge!! Abraham obeyed God's instructions immediately when he received instruction. This week, decide to obey immediately when your parents ask you to do something. If you do, ask them to write it on your *Scrolls* page and you will receive an extra token!

MEMORY TIME

Core Comp

Faithfulness - Sticking with God, no matter what, makes me a winner

Memory Verse

Genesis 22:14 – "Abraham called that place The LORD Will Provide. And to this day it is said, 'On the mountain of the LORD it will be provided.'"

KIDPIX COUPON

I memorized CC _____ and Verse _____. Family completed **Say** _____ **Think** _____ **Do** _____

Child's name _____ Grade _____ Parent's signature _____

Earn tokens by completing the Bible study portion of this page.
Questions: Kids@pantego.org

30 CORE COMPETENCIES

10 CORE BELIEFS

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation By Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9*

I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

10 CORE PRACTICES

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33*

I focus on God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I fellowship with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in my life, others' lives, and in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money

2 Corinthians 8:7

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians*

6:19-20

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 CORE VIRTUES

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, myself, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I have established a good name with God and with others based on my long-term loyalty to those relationships.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I take a long time to overheat and endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

About the Authors

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Wendy Hollabaugh (B.S.W. University of Texas at Arlington) is the Children's Minister at Pantego Bible Church. Wendy has over ten years of experience in Children's Ministry. She has a passion for leading families to connect with God and each other. She enjoys creating compelling environments where kids fall in love with God and His Truth. Wendy and her husband, Greg, are also involved in their own personal youth ministry as they are training their three teenagers, Hannah, Aaron and Noah.



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The mission of THE SCROLLS is to help you develop the beliefs, practices, and virtues of a follower of Jesus Christ called The 30 Core Competencies through your own active reading of the Bible. Send any questions or comments you may have about this lesson to Tom Bulick. His e-mail address is tbulick@pantego.org.