

**The Heart of Christian Parenting
Deuteronomy 6:4-9**

When Lynn and I chose to have children I don't believe that we could ever have imagined how truly challenging this very rewarding but difficult task would be. I am sure that all parents here this morning would say, "Amen!" to what I have just said.

So how difficult is it? It can be overwhelmingly difficult, for good parenting not only requires that we provide our children the basic necessities of life but it also requires that we successfully pass on to our children our values and beliefs. This is in fact one of the primary reasons we have children, so that our values and beliefs might be passed on and perpetuated to our children, and then to their children, and so on and so on.

So, what belief would a Christian parent want to pass to their children and then to their children's children beyond any other belief or value? It would be that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God, who through His atoning death on the cross of Calvary opened a door to heaven so that all those who desire to be set free from sin and the consequences of that sin might, through a simple act of faith, enter through the door that Christ has opened and be saved.

This is the belief that we, apart from any other belief or value, would want to pass to our children and then to their children, for it only through this belief that any person can pass from spiritual death to spiritual life with all of its accompanying benefits and blessings.

And this brings us to the question that we will be seeking to answer this morning. What can we do as Christian parents to put our children in the best position to exercise faith in the person and work of Christ and be saved (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)? There is a passage in **Deuteronomy 6:4-9** that I believe can help us to answer this question.

So let me now read these verses for you. **"Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! (5) You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (6) These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. (7) You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and**

when you rise up. (8) You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. (9) You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

So can these verses help us to answer the question that we are seeking to answer this morning concerning what a Christian parent can do in order to put their children in the best position to exercise faith in the person and work of Christ and be saved? I believe that these verses do.

So, what is going on here in these verses? Moses, in giving these instructions to Israel just prior to them entering the Promised Land, was exhorting them to do certain things so that their children as well as their children's children, based on **Deuteronomy 6:1-3**, might be put into the best position possible to embrace God as He deserved to be embraced and thus to enjoy all the benefits and blessings of such an embracing within the Promised Land. This is what is going on in **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**.

So, what is the first thing a Christian parent must do based on these verses if we are going to put our children in the best possible position to exercise faith in the person and work of Christ and be saved?

The first thing is that Christian parents need to love God supremely (Deuteronomy 6:4-5). We can't be just half-baked loving God haphazardly or carelessly. It must be an all consuming love transcending every other love in our life, for if we do not have this we will not have placed our children in the best position to exercise faith in the person and work of Christ be saved.

So now let me read for you **Deuteronomy 6:4-5** and see if this is not so. **“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! (5) You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”** So do we see in these verses an exhortation for Israel to love God supremely? Absolutely! Clearly within these two verses we see this exhortation. But now let us take a closer look at these verses and see what else we can learn.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is known as the “Shema,” meaning, “hear.” It starts with a fundamental statement of truth about God followed by a fundamental duty to God.”

So, what was the fundamental truth about God that Moses wanted Israel to hear and that he recorded for us in **Deuteronomy 6:4**? **“The Lord is our God, the Lord is one.”** This was the fundamental truth about God that Moses wanted the children of Israel to hear. So, what exactly does it mean?

When Moses told the people of Israel that the Lord was their God, he was pointing out to them how truly special they were in light of the fact that no other nation had Jehovah as their God. This is what Moses meant.

So if this is what Moses meant when he told the nation of Israel that the Lord was their God, what did he mean when he told the children of Israel, **“the Lord is one?”**

When Moses told the nation of Israel that the Lord was one, he meant that their God (Jehovah) was the only one true God and there was no other God besides Him.

So, what fundamental truth did Moses want Israel to hear? He wanted them to hear this the Lord was their God, and He was the one and only true God and that there were no others.

So if this was the fundamental truth about God that Moses wanted Israel to hear, what was the fundamental duty that he also wanted Israel to hear? The fundamental duty that he wanted them to hear is recorded for us in **Deuteronomy 6:5**. **“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”** In other words, Israel was being commanded to love God supremely, and it was this commandment that Jesus referred to as the greatest commandment in **Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:29-30; Luke 10:27**).

So why would God expect Israel to love Him in this way? He would expect Israel to love Him in this way because He, as the one and only absolute God, had chosen to make them the object of His love and His affection. That is why.

And we, the church, are no different than the nation of Israel. The one absolute and true God has also chosen us before the foundation of the world to be the recipients of the gift of salvation, made possible through the death, burial and resurrection of His Son. And how should we respond to His infinite greatness and His unfathomable kindness toward us? We like Israel

should commit ourselves to love Him with all our heart, soul, and strength. Or in other words, in light of all that we believe God to be, and in light of all that we believe God to have done on our behalf through His Son, we should find ourselves loving God. How? Supremely, with all our heart, soul and strength.

So how will we and others know if we in fact love God in this way, or in other words supremely, with our whole heart, soul, and strength?

This question brings us to the second thing we as a Christian parent must do if we are going to put our children in the best position to exercise faith in the person and work of Christ and be saved. So, what is this second thing?

Christian parents need to love God's word supremely (Deuteronomy 6:6-9). Let me now read for you **Deuteronomy 6:6-9** and see if this is not so. **"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. (7) You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. (8) You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. (9) You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates."**

So is it fair to say, in light of these verses, that if we do in fact love God supremely with all our heart, soul and strength that our supreme love for God will manifest itself in a supreme love for His word? Absolutely!

And doesn't this make sense? For how in the world could we love God supremely without loving His word supremely? They are tied together, very much like we see them tied together here in **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**. Therefore if we truly want to put our children in the best position to exercise faith in Christ and be saved we must not only be concerned about loving God supremely but we must also be concerned about love His word supremely, for they are two sides of the same coin. So now let us look more carefully at **Deuteronomy 6:6-9** and see if what we just said is not so.

And we will begin with **verse 6**. **"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart."** So, what does Moses mean when he speaks of **"these words?"**

When Moses refers to “**these words**” he is certainly referring to all the words that were written in the Book of Deuteronomy. But even though this is true we can easily apply what Moses said here about “**these words**” to all the words in the whole of the Bible.

And what did Moses mean when he told the Israelites that “**these words**” would be on their “**heart?**” In the LXX the Hebrew word for “**heart**” used in **Deuteronomy 6:5**, as well as here, was translated “**mind.**” Therefore, when Moses told the nation of Israel that they as an expression of their supreme love for God and therefore their supreme love for His word would have His commandments written on their hearts, these commandments would be continuously on their minds. This is what he meant.

And how would this constant meditation on the commands of God express itself in their lives? The constant meditation on the commands of God in response to our supreme love for God and His word will impact the way we communicate with our children (Deuteronomy 6:7).

The constant meditation on the commands of God in response to our supreme love for God and His word will impact every facet of our lives (Deuteronomy 6:8-9).

It will impact us when we are alone. It will impact us when we are with our families. It will impact us when we are in the community.

May God give us the grace to love Him and His word supremely, so that we might place our children in the best position to exercise faith in the person and work of Christ and be saved.