

**Successful Christian Parenting
Deuteronomy 6:4-9**

This morning is Mother's Day and it has been our tradition on this particular day to give a message related to Christian parenting. And this is exactly what I will be doing this morning.

So as a backdrop for this message I would like to ask you a question. If we are a Christian parent, what should be of greatest importance to us in respect to our children? Should it be that our children experience what the world would define as the "good life," or in other words a life characterized by health, wealth and prosperity or should it be that our children enter into a personal relationship God through faith in Christ?

In my mind and in your mind, if we are a Christian parent, there should no question as to what should be of greatest importance.

Enjoying a personal relationship with God through faith in Christ allows the deepest longings of our soul to be met; enjoying a personal relationship with God through faith in Christ allows us, even in the most difficult of circumstances, to be filled with praise and thanksgiving; enjoying a personal relationship with God through faith in Christ allows each day to be filled with purpose as we seek to know Him better and to make Him known, and beyond all these things enjoying a personal relationship with God through faith in Christ allows us to be filled with hope knowing that whenever we might pass out of this life into the next we will immediately enter into the presence of Christ and into blessed fellowship with Him, forever and ever and ever.

So if we are a Christian parent, what should be of greatest importance to us in respect to our children? There is only one answer that we should be able to give to this question and what is that answer? Our children at some point in their lives, whenever that might be, would enter into a personal relationship with God through faith in Christ.

So can we make this happen? And what is the answer? No! We cannot make this happen. Salvation is the work of God. But we can, by the grace of God, prayerfully and continuously display the light of God's life to our children, so that they might be able to see Him and what He is offering them through

faith in Christ. And this really is the only measure by which we should measure our success as parents. Why? We have no control over the salvation of our children, that is a work of God, but we do have control over whether or not we, by the grace God, prayerfully and consistently display the light of God's life to them, which now leads us to the question that we will be seeking to answer this morning. And what is that question?

What are some of the keys for displaying the light of God's life to our children (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)?

Deuteronomy 6:4-9, I believe, gives us a great deal of help in answering this question. So now let me now read these verses for you 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. (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 do these verses give us some keys for displaying the light of God's life to our children? I believe they do.

So, what was the occasion that prompted Moses, through the leading of the Spirit, to write these words? The nation of Israel, after having wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, was now on verge of entering into the land that God had promised them, and Moses knew that if God was in the forefront of their minds as well as in the forefront of their lives, as they entered and occupied the land, they would be able to enjoy the blessings of the land. And conversely he knew that if they failed to do this they would not enjoy the blessings of the land. And this was the occasion that prompted Moses through the leading of the Spirit to write these words to the nation of Israel.

So, what does this have to do with us? The thoughts that Moses provided the nation of Israel in these verses to help them keep God in the forefront of their minds and in the forefront of their lives are the very keys to helping us keep the light of God's life consistently displayed before our children, and I believe that we will see this clearly as we go through these verses.

So let us take a look at the first key. And what is that key? The first key for consistently displaying the light of God's life to our children is to be continually reminding ourselves of what is true about God and our special relationship with Him (Deuteronomy 6:4). And I believe the importance of this is supported by the words of Moses to the nation of Israel in **Deuteronomy 6:4.**

So let me now read this verse for you and see if this is not so. **“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!** So, what is Moses doing in this verse as he speaks these words to the nation of Israel?

He is reminding them of the truth about God and their special relationship with God. So let us look at this verse more carefully and see if this is not so. And how does it begin? It begins with these words, **“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God.”** So, what is Moses communicating to the nation of Israel through these words? He is communicating to them about their special relationship with Jehovah God. Or in other words, he is communicating with them how other nations and other peoples had others gods who they were looking to for help and deliverance but that was not true of them. Their God was Jehovah God and their God alone. And should that have comforted Israel as they entered the Promised Land to conquer and occupy it? Absolutely! Why?

Let us continue to read. **“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one.”** Here in this last phrase Moses is reminding the nation of Israel of what is true about their God, or in other words about Jehovah God. And what did He tell them? He told them that He was **“one.”**

The Lord is “one” means that He is the one absolute God to whom no other “gods” can be compared, and I believe that we can find this same emphasis in **Zechariah 14:9** where the prophet declares, **“And the Lord will be king over all the earth; in that day the Lord will be the only one, and His name the only one.”**

So, in light of this reminder by Moses, of the truth about God and their special relationship with God, should this have comforted them as they prepared themselves to enter the Promised Land for the purpose of conquering it and occupying it? Absolutely! In fact, it should not have only comforted them, it should have excited them, and if they could have kept

reminding themselves of these things then what would have happened? They would have kept God at the forefront of the mind and their lives.

And the same thing should be true of us as well. If we can, by the grace of God, throughout each and every day remind of ourselves of our special relationship with God made possible through faith in Christ and the truth concerning God that He is the one and only true God, we also should find ourselves being continuously comforted and even excited, thus making it possible not only to keep God in the forefront of our minds and lives but also making it possible for us to put on display the light of the life of God before our children and others. And this should lead us to our second key. So, what is the second key?

The second key for displaying the light of God's life to our children is by making sure that we are consistently loving God with all our "heart, soul and might" (Deuteronomy 6:5).

Loving God with all our heart means that we are to love him with our mind. This is supported by the LXX where it substitutes the Hebrew word translated "heart" with a Greek word that means "mind."

Loving God with all our soul means to love Him with our entire being. It had the original meaning of "breath" and came to be a general term for life.

The Hebrew word translated "strength" means "very, much, or greatly" and was translated in the LXX by a Greek word meaning "power."

Just as reminding ourselves of the truths about God and the special relationship we enjoy God through faith in Christ, which was the first key, should cause us to consistently seek to love God with all our heart, soul and strength, which was the second key. Our supreme love for God will now lead to the third key. So, what is the third key?

The third key for surrounding our children with the light of God's life is having God's word on our hearts (Deuteronomy 6:6).

How will know if God's word is in our hearts?

If God's word is in our hearts we will be speaking God's word to our children (Deuteronomy 6:7).

If God's word is in our hearts it will impact our personal behaviors (Deuteronomy 6:8).

If God's word is in our hearts it will impact how our family functions (Deuteronomy 6:8).

If God's word is in our hearts it will impact how we live our lives in our community (Deuteronomy 6:9).

May God give us the grace to prayerfully and consistently shine the light of His life on our children so that they also may come into a relationship with Him through faith in Christ.