Love and Obey God
Deut 6:1-9
SS Lesson for 12/02/2018

Devotional Scripture: 1 John 2:3-11

OUTLINE

LESSON BACKGROUND AND KEY VERSE

Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary
Key Verse: Deut 6:5
Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary

MAJOR THEME ANALYSIS

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- Preparing to reap the future harvest blessing (Gal 6:8-9)
- Preparing for the future reward (Eph 6:6-8)

For the respect of God (2)
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- Respect through being a servant (John 12:26)
- Respect through fear of judgment (1 Peter 1:17)

For long life (2)
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Learn obedience in our end of day reflection (7)
- Through the counsel of God (Ps 16:7)
- Through the remembrance of God's word (Ps 119:55)

Learn obedience in our beginning of day preparation (7)
Through the proclaiming of God's faithfulness (Ps 92:2)
Through our morning prayers (Ps 5:3)

**Learn obedience in our actions (8)**
If we don't do what we know is right, we sin (James 4:17)
Obedient actions through training (Heb 5:14)

**Learn obedience in our thoughts (8)**
By taking every thought captive to Jesus (2 Cor 10:5)
By being delighted in God's word (Rom 7:22-23)

**Learn obedience in our homes (9)**
Obedience should be the rule of the whole household (Acts 16:31-34)
Obedient witnessing starts at home (Mark 5:19)

**Learn obedience in our dealings with society (9)**
At work, work as for God (Col 3:22-23)
Live among others so that they cannot say anything against us (1 Peter 3:15-16)

### CONCLUSION AND OTHER THOUGHTS

**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM BOB DEFFINBAUGH**
**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE NIV STANDARD LESSON COMMENTARY**
**CONCLUDING THOUGHTS FROM THE BIBLE EXPOSITOR AND ILLUMINATOR**
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- Obey God's law (Deut. 6:1-5)
- Live the law (Deut. 6:6-9)

### Lesson Background and Key Verse

**Background from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary**

The book of Deuteronomy records Moses’ farewell address to the second generation of Israelites following the exodus from Egypt. The first generation had perished in the wilderness because of unbelief that God could lead them to conquer the inhabitants of the land of their destination (Numbers 14). With the first generation having passed from the scene, the second generation—on the verge of entering the promised land of Canaan—needed the Law of Moses explained anew. Indeed, the word Deuteronomy comes from two Greek words that mean “second law,” in the sense of “repetition.” Portions of Deuteronomy are similar to what we find earlier in the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament). This is to be expected since God had established his covenant with the first generation of Israelites at Mount Sinai and had given his commandments and laws through Moses to the people (Exodus 24:3–8, 12). For example, the Ten Commandments, which were foundational to the covenant, are recorded both in Exodus 20:1–17 and Deuteronomy 5:6–21. Other laws in Deuteronomy reflect the circumstances that the people would face once they entered Canaan (such as the laws regarding war in chapter 20). Deuteronomy begins with Moses’ review of the history of the nation to the present, including the first generation’s disobedience. But Moses also reminded the people of God’s faithfulness and of the power he had previously demonstrated in helping a portion of the people conquer lands east of the Jordan River (Deuteronomy 2:24–3:11). That same power was to guide the second generation in completing the conquest of the territory west of the Jordan. Those of the second generation, however, were required to avoid the unfaithfulness of their predecessors. Deuteronomy 5 concludes with an exhortation to the people to obey the Lord faithfully and “do not turn aside to the right or to the left” (5:32). The exhortation continues in today’s lesson text.

**Key Verse: Deut 6:5**

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength*

**Commentary from the Bible Knowledge Commentary**

6:1. The legislation in chapters 6-11 may be viewed as an expression of one great command, namely, to “love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, and strength” (6:5). Therefore obedience on the part of the Israelites demonstrated that they loved God. Jesus laid down a similar principle for Christians (cf. John 14:21).
6:2-3. The Law was given so that the people could express their reverence (fear; cf. 4:10) for and obedience to the LORD in a concrete manner. (The need to obey Him is stressed repeatedly in Deut.) By fearing and obeying Him they would find prosperity (on the words so that it may go well with you, see 4:40) and a long life in their new land (cf. 4:10; 5:33) which flowed with milk and honey (see Ex. 3:8).

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 (ʾĕlōhm), possibly implying the Trinity, and one (ʾeḥād) 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).

Major Theme Analysis

(SCRIPTURAL TEXT FROM THE NEW KING JAMES VERSION; CROSS-REFERENCES FROM THE NIV)

NOTE: Outline and cross-references were copied from a previous SS Lesson dated 08/23/2009

Reasons for Obedience (6:1-3)

1 "Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, 2 so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. 3 "O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.

To be prepared for the future (1)

Preparing for treasures in the coming age (1 Tim 6:18-19)

18 Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. 19 In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.

Preparing to reap the future harvest blessing (Gal 6:8-9)

8 The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. 9 Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up.
Preparing for the future reward (Eph 6:6-8)
6 Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. 7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, 8 because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free.

For the respect of God (2)

Respect through love (John 14:15)
"If you love me, you will obey what I command.

Respect through being a servant (John 12:26)
Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

Respect through fear of judgment (1 Peter 1:17)
Since you call on a Father who judges each man's work impartially, live your lives as strangers here in reverent fear.

For long life (2)

Through working out salvation with fear and trembling (Phil 2:12)
Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed-not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence-continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling.

Through living God's word (Deut 5:33)
Walk in all the way that the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live and prosper and prolong your days in the land that you will possess.

Through not forgetting God's word (Prov 3:1-2)
My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, 2 for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity.

To be successful (3)

Success through faithful obedience (James 1:25)
But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it-he will be blessed in what he does.

Success through delighting in God's word (Psalm 1:2-3)
But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night. [3] He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.

Success through love (Proverbs 8:21)
bestowing wealth on those who love me and making their treasuries full.

To have a blessed family (3)

Blessings for walking in God's ways (Ps 128:1-3)
1 Blessed are all who fear the LORD, who walk in his ways. 2 You will eat the fruit of your labor; blessings and prosperity will be yours. 3 Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your sons will be like olive shoots around your table.
Blessings for keeping God’s commands (Deut 4:40)
Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the LORD your God gives you for all time.

Obedience to God Starts with Love (6:4-5)

4"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.

There is only One God (from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator)
This declaration has been variously translated. It could read, “Yahweh our God is one Yahweh” or “Yahweh is our God; Yahweh is one” (Deut. 6:4). However it is rendered, it includes the truths that Yahweh is Israel’s God, that He is the only God, and that He is unique among all beings. He alone is the absolute One. This ruled out for Israel polytheism, the worship of many deities, for their God was a unity. It also ruled out the possibility of defining the one God in tribal or national terms, varying His name and attributes to suit the fancy of a given people. He is who He is not only for Israel but also for all nationalities, whether they care to recognize Him or not. His name, “Yahweh,” also identified Him as the one who is eternally existent and faithful to His word.

The Shema (from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator)
Shema’ yisra’el: ‘adonay ‘elohenu ‘adonay ‘echad! These words, recited at least twice a day by devout Jews, form the opening of Judaism’s most basic statement of faith, the declaration known as the Shema (from its initial word). In its developed form, the Shema consists of three paragraphs: Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41. The first of these passages forms a major portion of our lesson text. The Hebrew words quoted above represent the original text for Deuteronomy 6:4: “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord,” or, as Jews often translate it, “The Lord our God, the Lord is one.” The declaration is the core statement of Jewish faith and practice. Jesus underscored its primary importance by quoting it when asked to specify the greatest commandment in the law (Matt. 22:37).

Loving God with our hearts (5)
Heart is the center of the physical, mental, and spiritual life of humans. The heart is spoken of in Scripture as the center of the moral and spiritual life. The conscience, for instance, is associated with the heart. The moral character or understanding.

Loving God reveals itself in doing the things that please Him (1 John 3:21-22)
21 Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him.

Loving God with a heart that is fully committed (1 Kings 8:61)
But your hearts must be fully committed to the Lord our God, to live by his decrees and obey his commands, as at this time.”

Loving God with our souls (5)
Soul designates the feelings, the wishes, and the will of humans.

Loving with our souls is being steadfast (Joshua 22:5)
But be very careful to keep the commandment and the law that Moses the servant of the Lord gave you: to love the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to obey his commands, to hold fast to him and to serve him with all your heart and all your soul.”

Loving with our souls is knowing that all things will work out for the good (Romans 8:28)
And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.
Loving with our souls is realizing that we are His children (1 John 5:2-3)
2 This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. 3 This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome

Loving God with our might (5)
Might is applied to the "amount (quantity)" of a thing

Loving with our might is waiting on God to provide power (Jude 1:21)
Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.

Loving God with our might is giving our total self to Him in obedience (Proverbs 23:26)
My son, give me your heart and let your eyes keep to my ways,

We Must Learn God’s Commands to be Obedient (6:6-9)

6"These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.
7You 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.

Using all situations to communicate devotion to God (from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator)
To speak of God’s laws while sitting in the house, walking along the road, lying down, and rising up (Deut. 6:7) does not mean turning every activity into a formal teaching session. It means, rather, using every natural occurrence in family life as an opportunity to communicate one’s devotion to God. The Hebrew child should have considered it normal that God was included in whatever the family did. Only a genuinely godly father would have been able to convey this message.

Learn obedience in our speech (7)

Realize that it is what comes out of the mouth that can be unclean (Matt 15:16-20)
17 "Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? 18 But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man \'unclean.\' 19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. 20 These are what make a man \'unclean\'; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him \'unclean.\'"

Be slow to speak, and when we do, let it be righteous (James 1:19-21)

19 My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 for man’s anger does not bring about the righteous life that God desires. 21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.

Learn obedience in our lifestyle (7)

Lifestyles that walk in the light (1 John 1:5-7)

5 This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. 6 If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.
Lifestyles that reflect we are slaves to righteousness (Rom 6:16)
Don’t you know that when you offer yourselves to someone to obey him as slaves, you are slaves to the one whom you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness?

Learn obedience in our end of day reflection (7)

*Through the counsel of God (Ps 16:7)*
will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me.

*Through the remembrance of God’s word (Ps 119:55)*
In the night I remember your name, O LORD, and I will keep your law.

Learn obedience in our beginning of day preparation (7)

*Through the proclaiming of God’s faithfulness (Ps 92:2)*
to proclaim your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night,

*Through our morning prayers (Ps 5:3)*
In the morning, O LORD, you hear my voice; in the morning I lay my requests before you and wait in expectation.

Learn obedience in our actions (8)

*If we don’t do what we know is right, we sin (James 4:17)*
Anyone, then, who knows the good he ought to do and doesn’t do it, sins.

*Obedient actions through training (Heb 5:14)*
But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Learn obedience in our thoughts (8)

*By taking every thought captive to Jesus (2 Cor 10:5)*
We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ

*By being delighted in God’s word (Rom 7:22-23)*
22 For in my inner being I delight in God’s law; 23 but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.

Learn obedience in our homes (9)

*Obedience should be the rule of the whole household (Acts 16:31-34)*
32 Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33 At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. 34 The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God—he and his whole family.

*Obedient witnessing starts at home (Mark 5:19)*
Jesus did not let him, but said, “Go home to your family and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you.”
Learn obedience in our dealings with society (9)

At work, work as for God (Col 3:22-23)

22 Slaves, obey your earthly masters in everything; and do it, not only when their eye is on you and to win their favor, but with sincerity of heart and reverence for the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men,

Live among others so that they cannot say anything against us (1 Peter 3:15-16)

15 But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, 16 keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Conclusion and Other Thoughts

Concluding Thoughts from Thomas Constable

Verses 1-3

Exhortation to observe the principles (6:1-3)

These verses announce the commandments that follow and give the reason for obeying them: God’s blessing. God’s blessing would come in the form of long life, peace and prosperity, and numerous descendants. The “fear” of God (Deuteronomy 6:2; cf. Deuteronomy 5:29, 35 (Deuteronomy 6:2); et al.) is the respect that comes from an appreciation of His character.

"It is a fear that produces not obeisance but obedience, not worry but worship (Deuteronomy 6:13)." [Note: Sailhamer, p439.]

"Israel’s continued enjoyment of a habitation in God’s land, like Adam’s continued enjoyment of the original paradise, depended on continued fidelity to the Lord." [Note: Kline, "Deuteronomy," p163.]

Verse 4-5

The essence of the principles (6:4-5)

Here the actual exposition of the Decalogue begins with an explanation and implications of the first commandment. Moses presented Yahweh as the one true God who requires complete devotion.

"With this chapter we come to the pivot around which everything else in Deuteronomy revolves-the Shema or Great Commandment, as it has also come to be known (Deuteronomy 6:4-5)... In turn, the statutes and ordinances explicate in specific and concrete ways the meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4-5 for the life of Israel. That is why Jesus can later say that all the law and the prophets hang on this commandment (Matthew 22:40)." [Note: Miller, p97.]

The idea in Deuteronomy 6:4 is not just that Yahweh is the only God, but that He is also one unified person.

"It is possible to understand Deuteronomy 6:4 in several ways, but the two most popular renderings of the final clause are: (1) "The LORD our God, the LORD is one" (so NIV) or (2) "The LORD our God is one LORD." The former stresses the uniqueness or exclusivity of Yahweh as Israel’s God and so may be paraphrased "Yahweh our God is the one and only Yahweh" or the like. This takes the noun "ehad ("one") in the sense of "unique" or "solitary," a meaning that is certainly well attested. The latter translation focuses on the unity or wholeness of the Lord. This is not in opposition to the later Christian doctrine of the Trinity but rather functions here as a witness to the self-consistency of Yahweh who is not ambivalent and who has a single purpose or objective for creation and history. The ideas clearly overlap to provide an unmistakable basis for monotheistic faith. Yahweh is indeed a unity, but beyond that he is the only God. For this reason the exhortation of Deuteronomy 6:5 has practical significance." [Note: Merrill, "Deuteronomy...", p24. J. Gerald Janzen, "On the Most Important Word in the Shema (Deuteronomy VI:4-5)," Vetus Testamentum37:3 (July1987):280-300, believed the second of these meanings was the proper one.]

This affirmation made inappropriate both polytheism (the belief in many gods) and henotheism (the worship of one god without denying the existence of other gods).
"Yahweh was to be the sole object of Israel’s worship, allegiance, and affection.” [Note: Thompson, p121.]

"Deuteronomy more than any other Old Testament book concerns itself not only with the obligation to worship and the rules for doing Song of Solomon, but also with the subjective aspect of worship—with the feelings of the worshipper and the spirit in which he or she worships." [Note: Whybray, p99.]

"The heart (leb) Isaiah, in Old Testament anthropology, the seat of the intellect, equivalent to the mind or rational part of humankind. The “soul” (better, "being" or "essential person" in line with the commonly accepted understanding of nephes) refers to the invisible part of the individual, the person qua [as being] person including the will and sensibilities. The strength (me'od) Isaiah, of course, the physical side with all its functions and capacities." [Note: Merrill, "Deuteronomy . . .,” p25.]

There is no word in Hebrew for “mind” or "brain."

"The demand [in Deuteronomy 6:5] "with all the heart" excludes all halfheartedness, all division of the heart in its love. The heart is mentioned first, as the seat of the emotions generally and of love in particular; then follows the soul (nepesh) as the centre of personality in Prayer of Manasseh, to depict the love as pervading the entire self-consciousness; and to this is added, “with all the strength,” sc. [that is to say] of body and soul. Loving the Lord with all the heart and soul and strength is placed at the head, as the spiritual principles from which the observance of the commandments was to flow (see also chap. xi 1 , xxx6).” [Note: Keil and Delitzsch, 3:323.]

"First and foremost of all that was essential for the Israelite was an unreserved, wholehearted commitment, expressed in love for God.” [Note: Schultz, p40.]

The only individual in the Old Testament of whom it was said that he turned to the Lord with all his heart, soul, and might was King Josiah ( 2 Kings 23:25). Jesus Christ quoted Deuteronomy 6:5 as the greatest of all God’s commandments ( Matthew 22:37-38; Mark 12:28-30; cf. Luke 10:27).

"The verse does not invite analysis into ideas of intellectual, emotional, and physical parts. The words behind heart, soul, and strength basically relate to what a person is or how a person directs himself toward another person. It Isaiah, therefore, not inaccurate for the NT writers to quote (or translate) the Hebrew words, which are often synonymous, by differing Greek words, which are also often synonymous, since the words taken together mean to say that the people are to love God with their whole selves." [Note: Kalland, pp64-65. See Merrill, Deuteronomy, pp165-66 , for further explanation of the variations that exist in the Gospel references to this verse compared with the Hebrew text here.]

The statement begun here ( Deuteronomy 6:4-5; cf. Deuteronomy 11:13-21; Numbers 15:37-41) became Israel’s basic confession of faith. This is the “Shema” (lit. "Hear," from the first word). Pious Jews recite it twice daily even today. [Note: Isidore Epstein, Judaism, pp162-63.]

"If the Ten Words are the heart of the stipulations as a whole, the principle of the Words is encapsulated in the Song of Solomon—the called Shema ( Deuteronomy 6:4-5), which defines who the Sovereign is and reduces the obligation to Him to one of exclusive love and obedience.” [Note: Merrill, "A Theology . . .,” p78. Cf. E. W. Nicholson, Deuteronomy and Tradition, p46.]

"The Shema” should not be taken out of context and interpreted as a great monotheistic confession. Moses had made that point in Deuteronomy 4:35; Deuteronomy 4:39: "For Yahweh (alone) is God; there is none beside(s) him.” Nor is the issue in the broader context the nature of God in general or his integrity in particular—though the nature and integrity of his people is a very important concern. This is a cry of allegiance, an affirmation of covenant commitment in response to the question, "Who is the God of Israel?" The language of the Shema” is "sloganesque" rather than prosaic: "Yahweh our God! Yahweh alone!” or "Our God is Yahweh, Yahweh alone!" This was to be the distinguishing mark of the Israelite people; they are those (and only those) who claim Yahweh alone as their God.” [Note: Daniel I. Block, "How Many Is God? An Investigation into the Meaning of Deuteronomy 6:4-5 ,” Journal of the Evangelical theological Society47:2 (June2004):211.]

**Verses 6-9**

Exhortation to teach the principles (6:6-9)

This section contains instructions for remembering and teaching these great truths to the following generations.

"In the psychology of the Old Testament the heart is not the center of emotional life and response but the seat of the intellect or rational side of humankind. To "be upon the heart" is to be in one’s constant, conscious reflection.” [Note: Merrill, Deuteronomy , p167.]
"The reason for this emphasis on the children is clear. Deuteronomy is always aimed at the next generation. It takes the present (next) generation back to the past and brings the past afresh into the present. The children are now the ones before whom all the choices are laid, and some day their children will be there and the divine instruction will confront them (e.g., Deuteronomy 30:2). Can they learn afresh what it means to love the Lord wholeheartedly?" [Note: Miller, p107.]

Note the emphasis in Deuteronomy 6:6-9 on the importance of parents diligently using opportunities, as they arise daily, to equip their children to live dependently on God.

God gave the command in figurative language. The point is that the Israelites were to meditate on these words without ceasing. The fact that they sought to fulfill this command literally with Scripture holders on their bodies (Heb. tefillin; Gr. phalakterion, phylactery) and on their doorframes (Heb. mezuzot, mezuzahs) was commendable. The Lord Jesus later condemned their pride in these physical objects and their reliance on them to produce godliness (Matthew 23:5), not their use of them.

Observant Jews still often mount little holders on the frames of their front doors into which they place a small parchment scroll. Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Deuteronomy 11:13-21 and the name Shaddai appear on these papers as a sign and reminder of their faith. In addition, sometimes Jews place the Decalogue and or Exodus 13:1-16 and or Numbers 10:35-36 in these holders. They call the scroll and its holder a mezuzah (lit. doorpost).

The fact that God commanded the Israelites to "write" (Deuteronomy 6:9) reveals that literacy was widespread in Israel.

"Ancient Hebrew written documents, recovered by archaeology, demonstrate both that there were readers and writers in ancient Israel, and that they were by no means rare. Few places would have been without someone who could write, and few Israelites could have been unaware of writing." [Note: Alan R. Millard, "The Question of Israelite Literacy," Bible Review 3:3 (Fall 1987):31.]

Israel’s king was to write his own copy of the Torah, but at this time most kings in the ancient Near East were virtually illiterate. [Note: Sailhamer, p454.] Thus there seems to have been a higher level of literacy in Israel compared to her neighbor nations.

(Adapted from URL: https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/dcc/deuteronomy-6.html)

Concluding Thoughts from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary

God’s desire for the Israelites was that his commandments be passed from generation to generation. This was to happen through the faithful, consistent teaching and modeling of those commandments in various settings. This is a key principle within today’s text. Western culture at one time was characterized by such a respect for teaching biblical principles. I grew up in the late 1950s and the 1960s, when much of children’s television programming featured occasional references to the teachings of the Bible. One example is the old “Mickey Mouse Club.” I can remember playing records of songs from that show on our phonograph at home. Those songs included titles such as “Do What the Good Book Says” and “Proverbs” (referring to the biblical Proverbs). The lyrics of such songs can be heard on file-sharing websites. Many of us are aware that the Charlie Brown Christmas special of 1965 featured a discussion of Luke 2:8–14. Of course, no such material would be permitted on a network children’s program today! Some have offered this comparison: the church at one time possessed the “home-field advantage” where the culture for the most part was “on our side.” Today, the church is in the position of the “visitors,” and it is often treated with great contempt and scorn. The increasing secularization of Western culture has made the teaching of biblical principles more challenging, but certainly not impossible. It means that parents must become much more deliberate and intentional in seeing to it that their children are exposed to the virtuous and praiseworthy things that Paul, in Philippians 4:8, says should characterize a Christian’s thought life. This includes exercising discernment regarding what children are allowed to watch on television, how they use social media, etc. So much that is available for public viewing is clearly at odds with the principles of loving God and his words that are emphasized in today’s text. In these times that are awash in spiritual darkness and confusion, it is critical that Christian parents take Moses’ instructions in today’s text to heart—using every opportunity available to reinforce biblical truth to their children and help them see its relevance to daily living. The most influential translation of the Bible for children is the one they see communicated by their parents’ example and speech. We should remind ourselves that today’s lesson is from the passage that sets forth what Jesus declared to be the “greatest commandment,” the focus of which is our love for God (compare Matthew 22:34–40; Mark 12:28–34).
**Concluding Thoughts from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

One cannot stress too much the importance of God and His Word. Because of this, Moses made a key address to the Israelites before two important things took place. First, they were about to cross over the Jordan River to inherit the land promised to them by the Lord. Second, Moses would not be going with them due to his disobedience to the explicit command of God. (God had told him a word spoken to the rock would produce water for the people. Moses had struck the rock instead.) With these facts in mind, Moses wanted them to remember a vital lesson. They needed to focus on how extremely important it is to obey the commands of God. There are ramifications if one is disobedient. Later Moses would tell the people that God’s Word was their life (cf. Deut. 32:47). How many today really believe the Word is that important? Recent polls of professing Christians reveal a less than acceptable belief in the accuracy of the Bible as well as a decline in the belief that it is relevant for life and issues today. Though we may find it easy to point fingers at the respondents in the poll, we need to examine closely our own belief and actual use of the Word. Many believe the Bible is God’s Word but do not live totally by it. Mere lip service is what they offer, coupled with whatever behavior best serves their own plans. When Moses called Israel to hear, they would have understood that it was a call to obey. It was a call to pay close attention so that they could know what the Lord wanted from them. The first truth they were to know concerned the Lord Himself. Their God was not like the gods of Egypt or of any other people. God was one, and in Him was all they needed, quite unlike the false gods of the Egyptians, who had various gods for various needs. Since God was one and not many, He deserved to be the recipient of their complete devotion and love. There was no reason to send part of their love in one direction and part in another. One is reminded of David’s plea that God would unite his heart since He alone is God (Ps. 86:11). How many of us have divided loyalties, which results in our devoting less than our full heart to the Lord? The church must always call people back to the Lord and to His Word. There is a constant need for revival among God’s people. Satan has a way of making so many things seem far more attractive than the Lord. Temptations to sin come so innocently packaged that many fall because they fail to see the hook within the bait. It takes a concerted effort to remember the Lord for who He is and what He has done and to remember that His Word is truth and needs to be known and obeyed. Christians should look at this week’s text and say the word “church” or “Christian” in place of “Israel.” Even better, put your own name there. That personalizes the admonition! Any who look at the text and think this is only for Israel are sadly missing the point of what Jesus called the “great commandment” (cf. Matt. 22:36-38). God is to be loved and listened to.

**Practical Points from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

1. Obedience to the Lord pleases Him and is in our best interests (Deut. 6:1-3)
2. The most important command in the Bible is based on the fundamental truth about who God is (vs. 4-5)
3. God’s Word should be as much a part of our lives as eating, sleeping, and breathing (vs. 6-7)
4. We should keep reminders of God’s declared will constantly in front of us (vs. 8-9)

**Heart of the Lesson from the Bible Expositor and Illuminator**

There are times when parents ask their child to do a chore but the child does not want to obey. He puts it off, goes out to play instead, or "forgets" to do it. When forced to obey, the child will grudgingly do a slapdash job of the chore rather than put his whole self into doing his best. How different it looks when the child wants to please his parent by doing a top-notch job of whatever chore he is asked to do! He will work hard at it, do his very best, and perhaps even do a little extra. What is the difference? The chore was completed by both children, but the one who did it wholeheartedly probably did a better job. Even more, his attitude of obedience and wanting to please his parents shows his love for them.

**Obey God’s law (Deut. 6:1-5)**

God gave His people commands to follow as they finally entered their new land. It was a good land with fertile soil and plenty of water. God promised the people that if they obeyed His commands, they would have a good life. They needed to fear Him—that is, to reverence and respect Him. They would be blessed if they did this. Their numbers would increase, and they would be prosperous. Israel’s God was the one true God. He made a covenant with them, which is a promise for both sides to keep. The Shema was a truth for them to recite twice a day. They were to love the Lord completely, with all their heart, soul, and might. The heart is the seat of the mind, will, and emotions.
**Live the law (Deut. 6:6-9)**

The people were to keep the law in their hearts, not just on tablets. Their love for God was to be the motivating force behind their obedience to Him. The people were to teach God's law to their children as part of their daily lives. No matter what they were doing, they were to talk of God and His provision and love for them. The Israelites were to make the law a prominent part of their physical life. Men wore phylacteries, which were Scriptures written down and worn on a sort of necklace. Families also hung up Scripture on their doorposts.