



EXODUS

Week 6 Study Guide

Exodus

Week 6: Day 1

Read: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

“That you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long.” **Deuteronomy 6:2 ESV**

At the end of his life President Lyndon Baines Johnson realized something that Moses knew over 3,000 years ago. Weeks before he died, President Johnson, the 36th President of the United States, said this: *“I’d have been better off looking for immortality through my wife and children and their children in turn instead of seeking all that love and affection from the American people.”*

Johnson realized that his family was his ultimate legacy, not his presidency. I was surprised today when I was talking to a young person who did not even know who Lyndon Johnson was. *“Are you kidding,”* I thought, *“He was the president during Vietnam.”* But this kid had no recollection. He was not alive when Johnson was president and had only a vague understanding of the Vietnam War. He seemed to have no interest in either topic, as if they weren’t significant to him.

God knows that the most significant role any of us can play is the impression we leave on the next generation. God’s ways are best. That investment is significant. It is how God intended for His people to pass on the one thing that outlasts everything: a relationship with Him, the Living God. Moses knew that the key to real significance begins with our personal relationship with God, and that as we are filled with reverence and awe, it overflows to those closest to us – especially our children and our grandchildren.

There are many pathways promising significance in today’s world, but God is the only one that leads us to reliable and lasting significance. A relationship with Him lasts forever; therefore, significance comes from impressing the benefits and challenges of that relationship onto the people who are closest to us; inviting people into a relationship

with God and about God is eternally significant. For most of us, those relationships are living under the same roof as us.

Points to Ponder:

1. After reading this devotion, what is one thing you will do this week to deepen your relationship with God?
2. Think of one person in your family that you will invest in this week for the sake of introducing them to God or improving their relationship with God.

Prayer:

Dear Lord, only You can give me a clear understanding of what is lasting, and what is not. Help me to see the duties and accomplishments that I must do every day in an accurate perspective. Give me the words and the opportunities to draw closer to You, and to invite my friends and my family to do the same. Forty years from now, though they may not know my name, may they know Yours because of my significance in You. Amen.

Exodus

Week 6: Day 2

Read: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

“The Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all His statutes and His commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” **Deuteronomy 6:1-2, 5 ESV**

Deuteronomy 5 is called the “*Decalogue*,” which is a fancy way of saying the Ten Commandments. This is one of the most well-known and influential lists in the world. Moses claimed, and we believe, that God gave the Ten Commandments to Moses personally. **Exodus 32:16** says that the tablets were engraved by God Himself, but too often we stop there at the end of the list in **Deuteronomy 5**. But the Ten Commandments were not the only thing given by God. You see, God gave us **Deuteronomy 6** as well!

That means that God did not stop with the *Decalogue*, the list of the Ten Commandments. God continued with the method that He wanted us to use to hand down those commandments to our children and grandchildren. This week we are going to read and think about God’s method, but let’s start with His message in **Deuteronomy 6** because there is a lot more to it than the Ten Commandments.

A fellow confided that he never had a relationship with his dad. It was not because his father had left, nor was it because his dad was never around. As he grew up, his dad got into the habit of making out “*To Do*” lists for him every week and leaving them on the kitchen table. Every Monday when he got home from school, there it was waiting for him, another list. He didn’t resent the added responsibilities. What he did not like was that as the years went by, all his father seemed to be interested in was the list.

Unfortunately, the boy’s father died before he left for college, so his memories of his dad were mainly of the weekly “*To Do*” lists. He never had a meaningful relationship with him. He did not really know who his father was as a man, a mentor, and certainly not as a friend.

If you stop reading at **Deuteronomy 5**, you could see God like this fellow saw his dad, a list giver. Worse yet, you could hand that list of

commandments down to your children and increase the likelihood that they would not want to have anything to do with God. In **Deuteronomy 6**, God tells Moses that He wants His children to have a relationship with him. That relationship has three aspects to it.

Obedience – *“that you may do them (His commandments) in the land...”* An accurate relationship with God tells us that He is an authority to be trusted and obeyed.

Fear – *“that you may fear the Lord your God...”* Sometimes we substitute the word reverence or respect; however, fear is an accurate word because we are dealing with the most powerful being in the universe.

Love – *“love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”* Jesus said this is the greatest commandment of all. Keep in mind God is not asking for something He does not deserve. We love Him in response because He has first loved us.

Points to Ponder:

1. If you put the amount of Bible knowledge you have on one side of a scale, and the depth of your personal relationship with God as defined by your obedience, fear, and love on the other side of the scale, what would the balance look like?
2. How does a healthy fear of God influence our obedience?
3. How does a deep love of God influence our obedience?
4. What does my life reveal to my friends and family about my relationship with God?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, help me build upon the faith that I have learned from _____ (fill in the blank with the person who was the most positive example of Christianity to you). Thank you that they are the example You have given to me. Please help me to deepen my relationship with You so that I can enjoy You more, and so that I can lead others by my example. Amen.

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Week 6: Day 3

Read: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

“And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.”

Deuteronomy 6:6 ESV

When the Bible uses the word “*heart*” it is referring to far more than people’s emotions. Your heart includes your inner thoughts (**Deuteronomy 7:17**), your motives (**Psalms 20:4**), and even the place where belief is centered (**Romans 10:9-10**).

God knows that our hearts reveal who we are at the core. If we harbor bitterness, our words and actions will be critical and harsh. If we fill our hearts with hope, our outlook will be optimistic. In light of this reality, the words of **Deuteronomy 6:6** are absolutely essential, if we are going to hand off “*God-faith*” to our children and grandchildren. What is “*on your heart*” determines what flows out of your life.

Before God gives any instructions for the “*How To’s*” of parenting, He starts with a “*Where From.*” A relationship with God, i.e., fearing His power, obeying His commands, and loving His character, has to be in us before we can pass it on to others.

Here is an illustration: “*For as long as I can remember we had ham for Thanksgiving dinner with the end trimmed off. One year, my wife asked me why we trimmed the end off of the ham. You see, for as long as I can remember, the last half inch of the ham was trimmed off before it was served. No one ever thought to ask why. So, we asked my mom. Her reply was puzzling. She did not know either. All she knew was as long as she could remember her mother, my grandmother, had served ham with the end trimmed off.*”

It was a mystery for a while until someone discovered the original pan that grandma used to cook the ham in, so many years ago. You see, the pan was about a half-inch shorter than a standard ham. So, Grandma always cut off the end of the ham so it would fit in the pan and not drip its juices into the oven. For all those years we had continued to trim off the end, not realizing that we did not need to.

They say that most anything you want your kids to know is more caught than taught. The ham is a perfect illustration of this principle. Ham trimming survived for two generations without anyone knowing why it was done. How much more powerful will it be when the habits of a relationship with God are practiced regularly, and children are also told why we do those things because they come from our heart. That is **Deuteronomy 6:6**. When your relationship with God is on your heart first, your children are more apt to pick it up!

Points to Ponder:

1. What specific habits, actions, or attitudes do you have that point to God as their source and motivation?
2. What happens when we neglect or skip this important step in handing “*God-faith*” to others?
3. What did you catch from observing and being around others who were your “parents” in the faith?
4. What is one new habit you would like to cultivate that God could use to point others to Himself?

Prayer:

Dear Lord, search my heart. Look into my life and help me see any obstacle that is hindering me from drawing closer to You. Please give me the wisdom and the insight to remove obstacles and go deeper with You as my Savior and my King.

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Week 6: Day 4

Read: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

“You shall teach them diligently to your children, 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.” Deuteronomy 6:7 ESV

Knowing a relationship with God includes obeying, fearing, and loving Him, keeping that relationship upon our hearts now gets us ready to use God’s “*How To’s*” to hand off the baton of faith to others. God gives two simple tools in **Deuteronomy 6:7**. They are teaching and talking.

You might be thinking, “*Come on! Really? How are these anything special? Don’t you talk when you teach? Aren’t these the same thing?*” Well, no, not really. Teaching refers to more prepared environments where you are telling the stories of Scripture and then discussing truths about God’s character. Attending a small group, listening to a sermon, having family devotions, and practicing a daily Bible reading routine are all examples of this kind of interaction. It is planned, regular, and may even follow a curriculum. Using this tool builds a storehouse of knowledge and understanding for both adults and children. To “*teach them diligently*” means regular and planned instruction, or filling the storehouse, which becomes well-stocked with scripture that can be drawn from for life.

The next tool is, “*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.*” All of the talking here is happening in the course of a day. This does not mean that you blab constantly at your family and friends nonstop, all day, about God. That would be overwhelming. The rich tool here is that throughout the day God arranges opportunities to bring Scripture into the discussion. The answers to life’s daily questions and challenges are in God’s Word. We call these “*teachable moments.*” But remember, if you are not filling the storehouse regularly when questions arise you will not be ready or prepared to apply the truth of Scripture to the situation.

So that got me thinking... so often when we think about discipling our children, we prioritize the formal things like classes, sermons, even family devotions, when in fact **Deuteronomy 6** places a big priority on the ordinary. A question at the store, seeing a sunrise, even running an errand around town are all opportunities that God has prepared for me to invest in my son or daughters. So, I have been on a journey of rediscovering the wonder of the ordinary. It is in those times that my impact as a parent is the greatest.

Points to Ponder:

1. When during the week do I have time set aside with the goal in mind of building the storehouse of God's Word in my children, grandchildren, or someone else?
2. What stories from Scripture do I want my family to be sure to know?
3. What are ways that I can be better at spotting and investing in those teachable moments when they occur?

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Week 6: Day 5

Read: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

“You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” Deuteronomy 6:8-9 ESV

How you live your life may be the most powerful tool that God has given you to lead your children to Him. In **Deuteronomy 6:8-9** God gives us a tool that is like a coin. On one side of the coin are those personal habits and attitudes which are evidence that we are in relationship with God. On the other side of the coin are those actions and attitudes which are shown to the public as evidence of the same thing.

Personal habits which point to God might be our children seeing us regularly reading our Bibles. It may be in how we lead the family to pray at meals and other times. It certainly is shown by how we manage our time and our money. Our relationship with God is revealed most in how we treat our spouse and our kids. When these habits or attitude have their source in our personal relationship with God, they serve as road signs for our children and grandchildren, leading them to their own journey with Him.

The other side of the coin is how we react and respond to the variety of situations outside of our homes. It may be our kindness in response to people who are rude or careless. It is definitely seen in how we treat service staff in restaurants, grocery stores, or at the bank. It will be evident in our business dealings if we are fair, trustworthy, and God-honoring. All of these have a tremendous impact on our kids when they see it firsthand, and when other people speak respectfully or admirably about our character in our dealings with them.

Don't get the wrong idea. God knew that we would make mistakes at home and in public, but even those mistakes can point to God. When I own my mistakes and apologize, the impact on my children is huge. When I greet the officer with a smile and admit that I was speeding, my children see God in my life more than all the talking in the world can convey.

When I was considering Christianity as my life philosophy, and leaning toward a more worldly lifestyle, this tool of personal and public witness turned me toward God. As I stood on the fence, one image kept me from jumping off into a life of sin. It was the picture of my grandfather studying his Bible at the kitchen table on Friday and Saturday nights. I can remember when I would go on vacation out to his place in Kentucky, watching him thoroughly engrossed in what he was studying. He enjoyed it. He was moved by it. He was drawn to someone that I could not see in the room, but I knew that if there was a God, he was there with my grandfather.

What made it more powerful was the other side of the coin. I know my grandfather was not perfect, but in the community, others knew him for his kindness and generosity. His personal habits and his public witness matched each other, making it hard for me to walk away without seriously considering the things that he believed about the Bible and about Christ. Years later I discovered that what my grandfather had done to draw me to Christ was part of the tools that God gave us in **Deuteronomy 6**. They have worked for thousands of years, and they are all still available to us today.

Points to Ponder:

1. Parents and grandparents are not perfect, but God still uses us. As a messiah we try to save our kids, but as a messenger we reveal the Gospel to our children. Who is better at being a messiah, Jesus, or you?
2. How can you be a more confident and committed messenger of the Gospel?
3. What is one habit that you already have in place that points your children to Jesus?
4. What is one habit that you would like to establish that would point your children to Jesus?

Prayer:

Dear God, help both sides of my coin to point my children to You. I need a Savior just like they do. Help me be a good messenger and let you be their Messiah. Amen.

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