

The unfolding of your words gives light.

## Nurturing a Multi-Generational Faith

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### Deuteronomy 6

We all want things we value to last. But, try as we might, that is not the way things work in this world. Our toys break. Our children grow up and move away. Our health eventually gives out.

The treasure of Israel was the living God. In this chapter Moses warned the people that this treasure needed to be guarded. It is not that God himself needed to be guarded, but that the people's love for him needed to be guarded. Guarding this treasure involved more than passing on traditions.

The nation was about to enter the land God had given them. What strategy would they use to keep themselves in that land? In our day and age, were we called on to give counsel to Moses and Joshua, our counsel might include beefing up the military, establishing good communication between the tribes (one might say "infrastructure") and, perhaps, building a large wall to protect the borders. God said, "love me."

When you read Deuteronomy 6 you better understand why the Lord Jesus told the Ephesian church in Revelation chapter two that she had left her first love. When you ponder this love, you can understand why Jude ended his very short letter urging people to keep themselves in God's love.

This is the text of Scripture that contains the "greatest commandment." The *Shema*, as this passage is called, is so named because it is the Hebrew word for "hear" or "listen." So the text says, "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might." This command becomes the driving force for everything else we do. Now the question becomes, "What does loving God look like?" Moses tells us in this chapter.

Loving God makes you want to teach others about him. Loving God makes you want to please him. Loving God makes you want to study soteriology. Let me explain.

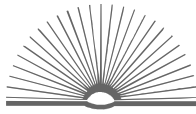
First, **the way to preserve this treasure is to pass it on.** Note that verse two speaks of passing God's Word on to your son and your grandson. You have here what Tedd Tripp (*Shepherding a Child's Heart*) calls a "three generation vision."

Tedd Tripp on Deut. 6:

1. Three generation vision. This makes a difference in the way you instruct your children now (Psalm 78; 145). This is not about resolving who gets to use the bathroom first. It is about why we should treat others better than ourselves. The strength of faith in early America is not credited to our founders as much as it is to those missionaries who evangelized Europe centuries earlier.
2. Engaged in all the time. "Read, pray and sing." "Diligently." "Sit (supper), walk (riding in the car), lie down (bedtime), rise up (breakfast)."
  - a. Formal
  - b. Informal
3. Life through the lens of God's word and God's ways. "The world is structured in such a way that you can get from anywhere to God" (Tripp). The whole earth is full of his glory.
4. Spiritual, not just conceptual. Loving and being dazzled (satisfied) by God drives the obedience to God. It is not enough to merely believe in God. We must delight in God.
5. Embeds life in a redemptive framework. When they ask "Why? You have an answer (6:20-25). We do this because this God has been so good to us. He brought us out to bring us in. This is the way we respond.

Second, **this treasure is shown to be treasure when, more than anything else, you want to please God.** This shows up in commandment keeping. Many people who claim to love God call commandment keeping legalism. Jesus called it love. Verse 17 says, "You should diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, and his testimonies and his statutes which he has commanded you."

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Finally, **this treasure is shown in studying soteriology** (the biblical doctrine of salvation). That does not mean you need to buy more theological books. It does mean you are increasingly amazed that God would rescue you. It does mean that, like Israel, you stand in awe that God brought you *out* in order to bring you *in* (verse 23).

We are left to answer the question, *How does this affect the way we live?* At least three ways:

1. It makes us view home as a training ground instead of a place to escape responsibility.
2. It makes us all of life springing from God rather than God being "very important to us."
3. It makes us view education in church as the central activity rather than one arm.

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