

1. In our last study together we talked about the greatest need your child has and said it was salvation.
2. Tonight I want to talk about another important need that your children have and that is for them to be taught to love and obey God.
3. Please turn with me in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 6.
4. It is here where we find the greatest instruction concerning obedience and love for God.
5. **Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NASB77)** ⁴"Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! ⁵"And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶"And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; ⁷ and 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 "And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. ⁹"And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.
6. The book of Deuteronomy was written to the new generation, those under twenty years of age when they came out of Egypt¹ and is commonly referred to as the "second law."

¹ Norman Geisler, A Popular Survey of the Old Testament, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1977). 78.

7. But that designation as the second law resulted from a mistranslation of Deuteronomy 17:18 in the LXX and the Latin Vulgate.
8. It is not a second law but rather a record of Moses' words of explanation concerning the law.²
9. The Jews identified the book by its first words—*elleh haddebarium* (“These are the words”)—or by the phrase in 17:18, “a copy of this law,” or by “The Book of Admonitions” or reproofs or corrections. It is also known as “the Fifth” or “Fifths of the Law” (*Expositors Bible Commentary: Deuteronomy*)³ and was given the second time by Moses on the plains of Moab to the new generation before they entered the Promised Land.⁴
10. Deuteronomy is a book of sermons. Israel is gathered on the east bank of Jordan, ready to enter the Promised Land. It had taken them thirty-eight years to get there since their rebellion at Kadesh-barnea. Verse 2 indicates that the journey would normally have taken eleven days. But they had wandered in the wilderness, led by a cloud during the day and by a pillar of fire at night. Now Israel is physically ready to enter the land, but Moses realizes that they must

²John Jr MacArthur, *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville: Word Pub., 1997, c1997). Dt 1:1.

³ *Expositor's Bible Commentary, The*, Pradis CD-ROM:Deuteronomy/Introduction to Deuteronomy/Name of Deuteronomy, Book Version: 4.0.2

⁴ Norman Geisler, *A Popular Survey of the Old Testament*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker, 1977). 77.

also be ready spiritually. The time of year is the Jewish eleventh month, or March according to our calendar.⁵

11. In the first three chapters Moses reminds the people of God's guidance.
12. He talks about their journey from Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea (1:1-46), the nations they avoid in 2:1-23 and the nations they defeated in 2:24-3:29.
13. Then in chapters 4 and 5 he reminds them of God's glory and greatness and instructs them concerning three dangers: the danger of forgetting the word (4:1-13); the danger of turning to idols (4:14-49); and the danger of neglecting His Law (5:1-33).
14. Now when you come to chapter 6 he reminds them of God's goodness and instructs them to obey and love God wholeheartedly.
15. He says in verse 1 of chapter 6 that "this is the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which the LORD your God has commanded me to teach you."
16. This is referring to the Law, the Ten Commandments, he has just reiterated to them in chapter 5.
17. He's giving this to them so that they "might do them in the land where [they] are going over to possess it."

⁵*KJV Bible Commentary* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1994). 326.

18. In other words, he's giving them practical instruction to fit them for life in Canaan.⁶
19. Notice those words again as we look at them tonight.
20. In verses 4-9, he gives the Israelites 4 truths that they must be committed to as they enter the Promised Land.
21. I believe we can and must apply these 4 truths today.
22. In fact, the first three we are to teach to our children.
23. The first truth is found in verse 4 which says, "Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!"
24. The first basic truth they were to know and believe was that ***God is one.***

⁶William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Dt 6:1.

I. God is One (v.4)

This verse is referred to by Jews by the Hebrew word that occurs at the beginning of the verse: “hear” or Shema and included verses 4-9.

Jews would cite this section of Deuteronomy 6 twice a day as a creed or confession along with Deuteronomy 11:13-21 and Numbers 15:37-41.

Here in this section contains the summary of the greatest commandment which also summarizes the first four commandments, namely, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.’ This is quoted by Jesus later as the greatest commandment⁷ in Matthew 22:37 and Luke 10:27.

A. Scripture Repeatedly Teaches that God is a Monotheistic God

When Israel was in Egypt they were exposed to the Egyptians belief in *many* gods. They were polytheistic but when they were brought out of Egypt they were taught that there is only one God who is to be loved and obeyed.

The Bible lists many “foreign gods” (1 Sam.7:3) that people worshiped. Here is a list of some of them:

⁷ Gerard Chrispin, *The Bible Panorama*, (Leominster: Day One Publications, 2005). 98.

The list from Mesopotamia, a center of idol worship, is the longest: Adrammelech and Anammelech (2 Kgs 17:31), Bel (also known as Marduk, Is 46:1; Jer 50:2; 51:44), Kaiwan (Am 5:26), Nebo or Nabu (Is 46:1), Nergal (2 Kgs 17:30), Nisroch (19:37; Is 37:38), Rephan (Acts 7:43), Sakkuth (Am 5:26), Succoth-benoth (2 Kgs 17:30), Tammuz (Ez 8:14), and Tartak (2 Kgs 17:31). The Syrians were devoted to Ashima (v 30) and Rimmon (5:18), who was also worshiped under the compound name Hadad-rimmon (Zec 12:11). Israel's eastern neighbors, Ammon and Moab, worshiped Milcom or Molech (1 Kgs 11:5–7, 33; 2 Kgs 23:13) and Chemosh, respectively, although the Moabites also worshiped a local manifestation of Baal (Nm 25:3–5). The Philistine gods were Dagon and Baal-zebub (2 Kgs 1:2–3, 6, 16), who is the equivalent of the NT Beelzebul (Mt 12:24; Lk 11:15). One Canaanite god, Baal, and two Canaanite goddesses, Asherah and Ashtoreth, are mentioned frequently in the OT; Ashtoreth was the same as the Mesopotamian Ishtar, also known as the “Queen of Heaven” (Jer 7:18; 44:17–19, 25). The gods of Egypt are represented by only two names in the Bible: Amon (Jer 46:25) and Apis (v 15). Nibhaz (2 Kgs 17:31) was probably an Elamite god.

At least three Greco-Roman deities are mentioned in the NT: the Greek goddess Artemis (Acts 19:24–28, 34–35), known as Diana by the Romans, and the Greek gods Zeus and Hermes (Acts 14:12–13), known as Jupiter and Mercury, respectively, by the Romans.

The Bible clearly teaches that the gods of the nations have no objective reality (Jer 2:11), even though their

worshippers sincerely believe that they actually exist (v 28). But the Lord proclaims that “they are no gods,” (Jer 2:11; 16:20) or “gods that are not gods” (5:7, NIV). The NT further declares of idols that “an idol has no real existence” (1 Cor 8:4) and that “gods made with hands are not gods” (Acts 19:26). It is not surprising, then, that when the Israelites began to encounter other nations in significant ways—that is, as early as the time of the exodus—they were told repeatedly that the Lord is greater than all other gods (Ex 15:11; 18:11; Dt 10:17; 1 Chr 16:25; 2 Chr 2:5; Pss 86:8; 95:3; 96:4–5; 97:7–9; 135:5, 136:2; Dn 2:47; Zep 2:11).

Such so-called gods were not worthy of Israel’s attention or veneration⁸ because there is only one God. And to believe that there were more than one God was blasphemy and idolatry against the One God.

1. **1 Corinthians 8:6 (NASB77)** ⁶ there is *but one God, the Father*, from whom are all things, and we *exist* for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we *exist* through Him.
2. **1 Timothy 2:5 (NASB77)** ⁵ For there is *one God*, and one mediator also between God and men, *the man Christ Jesus*,

NIV New International Version

⁸Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary*, Tyndale reference library (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001). 544.

3. Jesus prayed in **John 17:3 (NASB77)** ³ "And this is eternal life, that they may know Thee, ***the only true God***, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent.
4. **Isaiah 45:5 (NASB77)** ⁵ "I am the LORD, and there is ***no other; Besides Me there is no God***. I will gird you, though you have not known Me.

Elisha Coles said, "There can be but one Infinite."⁹

Because Israel lived in the midst of a polytheistic society, it was vital that they give their allegiance to the one true God.

B. Scripture Also Repeatedly Teaches that God is a Unity

The Hebrew word for "one" in verse 4 is significant, viewed in the light of the fuller revelation of the New Testament. It stands, not for absolute unity, but for compound unity, and is thus consistent with both the names of God used in this verse. Jehovah (LORD) emphasizes His oneness. Elohim (God) emphasizes His three persons. The same mysterious hints of trinity in unity occur in the very first verse of the Bible, where "Elohim" is followed by a singular verb (created) and in **Genesis 1:26**, where the plural pronouns *us* and *our* are followed by the singular

⁹I.D.E. Thomas, *The Golden Treasury of Puritan Quotations*, electronic ed. (Simpsonville SC: Christian Classics Foundation, 1996).

nouns *image* and *likeness* (*Daily Notes of the Scripture Union*).¹⁰

God is one, yet exists as three distinct persons. That is revealed in the Bible from beginning to end.

1. The Old Testament expresses the plurality of the Godhead in its opening words
 - a) Genesis 1:1 - "In the beginning God."

The Hebrew word translated "God" there is Elohim. The plural suffix, *im*, means it's plural and presents a singular God who is expressed as a plurality.
 - b) Genesis 1:26 also presents the plurality of the Godhead which it says, "Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness.'"
 - c) Genesis 3:22 also uses the plural in the Godhead when it says, "Then the Lord God said, "Behold, the man has become like one of Us, to know good and evil. And now, lest he put out his hand and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever."

¹⁰William MacDonald and Arthur Farstad, *Believer's Bible Commentary : Old and New Testaments* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1997, c1995). Dt 6:1.

- d) When the Lord was about to destroy the Tower of Babel, He said in Genesis 11:7, “Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.”
2. Distinctions between members of the Trinity are apparent in the Old Testament
- a) **Genesis 19:24 (NASB77)** ²⁴ Then the LORD rained on Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the LORD out of heaven.

Charles Hodge says, “We . . . find throughout the Old Testament constant mention made of a person to whom, though distinct from Jehovah as a person, the titles, attributes, and works of Jehovah are nevertheless ascribed. This person is called the angel of God, the angel of Jehovah, Adonai, Jehovah, and Elohim. He claims divine authority, exercises divine prerogatives, and receives divine homage. . . . Besides this we have the express testimony of the inspired writers of the New Testament that the angel of the Lord, the manifested Jehovah who led the Israelites through the wilderness and who dwelt in the temple, was Christ; that is, the angel was the Word . . . who became flesh and fulfilled the

work which it was predicted the Messiah should accomplish.”¹¹

b) **Numbers 6:22-26 (NASB77)** ²² Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, ²³ "Speak to Aaron and to his sons, saying, 'Thus you shall bless the sons of Israel. You shall say to them: ²⁴ The LORD bless you, and keep you; ²⁵ The LORD make His face shine on you, And be gracious to you; ²⁶ The LORD lift up His countenance on you, And give you peace.'

3. Distinctions between members of the Trinity are also apparent in the New Testament

a) Matthew 3:16-17—As Jesus is being baptized by John the Baptist, the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove. The Father replied, “is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (v.17).

We see the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit together in the same scene.

b) **John 14:16-17 (NASB77)** ¹⁶ "And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; ¹⁷ *that is* the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him, *but* you know Him

¹¹Charles Hodge, *Systematic Theology* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997). 1:484.

because He abides with you, and will be in you.

- c) **1 Corinthians 12:4-6 (NASB77)** ⁴Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit. ⁵And there are varieties of ministries, and the same Lord. ⁶And there are varieties of effects, but the same God who works all things in all *persons*.
- d) **2 Corinthians 13:14 (NASB77)** ¹⁴The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all.
- e) **1 Peter 1:2 (NASB77)** ²according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, by the sanctifying work of the Spirit, that you may obey Jesus Christ and be sprinkled with His blood: May grace and peace be yours in fullest measure.

Who can comprehend the Trinity? God is three in one, and one in three-an eternal mystery.

J.I. Packer wrote: "Here we face the most dizzying and unfathomable truth of all, the truth of the Trinity. . . . What should we make of it? In itself, the divine tri-unity is a mystery, a transcendent fact which passes our understanding. . . .How the one eternal God is eternally both singular and plural, how Father, Son, and Spirit are personally distinct yet essentially one . . . is more than we can know, and any attempt to "explain" it-to dispel the

mystery by reasoning, as distinct from confessing it from Scripture-is bound to falsify it. Here, as elsewhere, our God is too big for his creatures' little minds.¹²

We cannot comprehend this Triune God, but we do know that He is a Father who loves us, a Son who died for us, and a Spirit who comforts us.

We find a second truth in verse 5. Not only are we to believe and teach our children that God is one but we are to also:

II. Love God Wholeheartedly (v.5)

Deuteronomy 6:5 (NASB77) ⁵ "And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

A. Loving God is the Greatest Commandment

When a lawyer asked Jesus which is the greatest commandment in the Law, Jesus answered him in **Matthew 22:37-40 (NASB77)** ³⁷ And He said to him, "YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND."³⁸ ***"This is the great and foremost commandment."***³⁹ "The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.'⁴⁰ "On these two

¹² J.I. Packer, I Want to Be a Christian (Wheaton, Ill.: Tyndale, 1977). 29-30.

commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Loving God was not the usual emotion towards a deity in the ancient Near East; fear was much more common.¹³

But Moses calls for Israel to devote themselves to this One God in this way. They are to love God completely, wholeheartedly, without any reservations; it is a love that includes emotion, intellect, will.¹⁴

B. Loving God is the Only Motive for Obeying His Commands

Loving the Lord with all the heart and soul and strength is placed at the head, as the spiritual principle from which the observance of the commandments was to flow (see also Deut. 11:1; 30:6). It was in love that the fear of the Lord (Deut. 10:12), hearkening to His commandments (Deut. 11:13), and the observance of the whole law (Deut. 11:22), were to be manifested; but love itself was to be shown by walking in all the ways of the Lord (Deut. 11:22; 19:9; 30:16).¹⁵

¹³David F. Payne, *Deuteronomy*, The Daily study Bible series (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001, c1985). 48.

¹⁴Robert G. Bratcher and Howard Hatton, *A Handbook on Deuteronomy*, UBS handbook series (New York: United Bible Societies, 2000). 138.

¹⁵Carl Friedrich Keil and Franz Delitzsch, *Commentary on the Old Testament*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2002). 1:885.

1. Jesus said in **John 14:15 (NASB77)** ¹⁵ "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.
2. He said in **John 15:14 (NASB77)** ¹⁴ "You are My friends, if you do what I command you.

Love from the heart is the issue in all we do.

3. **Deuteronomy 10:12 (NASB77)** ¹² "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.
4. **Deuteronomy 11:13-14 (NASB77)** ¹³ "And it shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, ¹⁴ that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil.
5. **Deuteronomy 13:1-4 (NASB77)** ¹ "If a prophet or a dreamer of dreams arises among you and gives you a sign or a wonder, ² and the sign or the wonder comes true, concerning which he spoke to you, saying, 'Let us go after other gods (whom you have not known) and let us serve them,' ³ you shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your

God with all your heart and with all your soul. ⁴
"You shall follow the LORD your God and fear Him; and you shall keep His commandments, listen to His voice, serve Him, and cling to Him.

6. **Joshua 22:1-6 (NASB77)** ¹ Then Joshua summoned the Reubenites and the Gadites and the half-tribe of Manasseh, ² and said to them, "You have kept all that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, and have listened to my voice in all that I commanded you. ³ "You have not forsaken your brothers these many days to this day, but have kept the charge of the commandment of the LORD your God. ⁴ "And now the LORD your God has given rest to your brothers, as He spoke to them; therefore turn now and go to your tents, to the land of your possession, which Moses the servant of the LORD gave you beyond the Jordan. ⁵ "Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God and walk in all His ways and keep His commandments and hold fast to Him and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul." ⁶ So Joshua blessed them and sent them away, and they went to their tents.
7. **1 Timothy 1:5 (NASB77)** ⁵ But the goal of our instruction is love from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.
8. **2 Timothy 2:22 (NASB77)** ²² Now flee from youthful lusts, and pursue righteousness, faith,

love *and* peace, with those who call on the Lord
from a pure heart.

CONCLUSION

1. Do you believe that God is One and love Him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?
2. Are you teaching this to your children?
3. This is where it all begins.
4. I cannot express this enough—doctrine matters and forms behavior.
5. What you believe affects how you live.
6. Teach your children about God and be specific, especially in a world that expresses polytheistic gods.
7. Remember the heart is always the issue. You must put in the right stuff in order to have a right heart.
8. We'll look more at this text in Deuteronomy next time because there are two more truths we need to see.
9. If you're here tonight and have not come to believe in this One, triune God, I want to call you to Him now.
10. **Acts 17:30-31 (NASB77)** ³⁰ "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all everywhere should repent, ³¹ because He has fixed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness through a

Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by raising Him from the dead."

11. Repent and come to Him now as we pray.