

## STUDY 17

### Deuteronomy 6:1-2

**Now this is the commandment, and these are the statutes and judgments which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe them in the land which you are crossing over to possess, that you may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.**

Read the context: Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Notice in these 2 verses that the word commandment or a synonym or pronoun referring to the commandments is mentioned six times. Underline those 6 words. Two verbs are used to show what God wants them to do with the commandments. What are they? 1) that you may \_\_\_\_\_ them; 2) to \_\_\_\_\_ all His statutes and His commandments.

Why did God want the people of Israel to fear Him?

For whom was this instruction given? God is not just thinking about individuals, but of families and generations. These truths were to be passed down perpetually.

But what is to be passed down? It is not just a list of “truths” or facts, but obedience that was to be modeled and passed on. They were not just commands to be memorized or known, but observed and kept. God’s truth is never reduced to (may I be so bold as to say?) doctrinal stances. Rather, God’s truth is inseparably linked with living – how we live out the day-to-day-ness of our lives. Truth is not flat; for truth to be true it must be dimensional; that is, it must be lived, embedded in the warp and woof of the fabric of moment-by-moment actual living. Remember that Jesus said, “I am the Truth.” Truth is a Person, and a Life lived in accordance with God’s ways and commands. We see and understand Truth when we look at Christ and His perfect obedience to the Father.

There is a time dimension to this fear-leading-to-obedience injunction. What is the time factor given in these 2 verses? To ask it another way, for how long did God want the people to keep His commands? This is not a general time frame, but a specific one. It doesn’t say, “all your life,” but rather “all the **days** of your life.” We can only live this day. One day at a time, stoke the fire of the fear of the Lord in your heart and renew your allegiance to obey God and His commands.

What is the heart of God behind why He’s asking us to do this? What does He desire for us (the promise at the end of the verse)? Amazing, isn’t it? This is not for His sake, but for ours. Yet somehow we get to thinking or feeling that the fear of the Lord and obedience to His commands are burdensome or something He is requiring of us for His sake, because He’s The Sovereign – almost as if God has an ego problem. This is so far from the truth that you can smell the stench from the Pit emanating off it: a Lie from the father of lies.

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Imagine telling a child not to touch the hot stove, or not to run into the street. And if after repeated warnings, he or she continued to try to run into the street or touch the stove because he didn't trust your word that it would harm him or because he simply wanted to prove his will was stronger than your will, you would use stronger methods to deter him from this harmful action, like a spanking. It is this fear of a spanking that would then turn his will to obedience and protect him from harm until he came to understand for himself and believe in his own heart that it would indeed harm him. Would you be telling him not to do these things and spanking him if he disobeyed just because you wanted to be The Boss? It's obvious that is ridiculous. It is because you love him. The commands we give our children and the discipline we administer to help them to obey should always be with a heart for their well-being.

I realize that spanking has fallen very far out of cultural acceptance – I see that on fb! Perhaps that is because parental discipline apart from parental fear of the Lord is administered in angry, wrong ways that is motivated out of an “I am The Boss” mentality. That kind of discipline IS wrong! However, God's Word is clear: love and discipline go together; we discipline because we love and we know where the consequences will take them. So it is with God.

His heart for our best interest is reiterated in verse 3. Why does He want us to “be careful to observe” His commands?

Verse 4 could be translated in this way: Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is first!” In other words, it could be a strong declaration of the 1<sup>st</sup> of the 10 commandments. Write out the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment. First place. Top priority. No other gods. I believe it is also a declaration of His essential nature, of Trinity in Unity. Perhaps God meant it to be ambiguous; for both are true: He is One and He is First.

Verses 5-9 give us several more exhortations to strengthen our commitment to God's commands. List them.

The command in verse 5 seems to be overarching. Jesus said it is the first and greatest commandment. When love is in place, obedience is not burdensome but a joy. Notice the *all's* in vs. 5. This is not a half-hearted, partial commitment God is asking for. As we've seen in other verses and in the parenting example above, fear of the Lord and love for the Lord are not antithetical; they are necessarily and inextricably linked.

In vs. 6, where does God want these commands to be? Not just our minds, but our hearts. When something is in our hearts, we desire it and we will go to great lengths to do it.

According to vs. 7, how are we to teach our children these commands of God? Again, it's not haphazard or half-hearted. It's purposeful, continuous, and top priority.

God is quite serious about this! We could almost paraphrase these verses (especially vss. 8-9) by saying, “Do whatever it takes to keep these commands always in front of you!” Yes, put Scripture around your house: hang it on your walls, tape it to your mirror (or like one of my daughters does, write verses with a white board marker across your bathroom mirror), put

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memory verse cards in your kitchen window, or (as one of my daughters-in-law did for me) get an empty picture frame and set it on your kitchen counter and write memory verses with a white board marker on the glass.

This is high-level, all-out intensity all the time! Who is equal to these whole-hearted, all-of-life-encompassing injunctions? First of all, remember that it's one day at a time, "all the **days** of your life." And then pray. None of us is equal to this. Only the work of God and the power of His Spirit within us can do this.

Spend some time praying for this kind of daily, even moment-by-moment, fear of the Lord that leads to trusting obedience that, in turn, cultivates a deep love for God, His care, and the protective wise commands He has given. Ask God to show you some specific ways you can put God's Word before you, before your children, and before your grandchildren – we're not of the hook when our children are grown and flown. The commands are for us, our children, and our grandchildren. Besides, if these things are in our hearts, we won't want to be "off the hook."

Add to your Fear of the Lord list what you have learned from this verse study.