

**With All Your Heart**

## God Knows Your Heart

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Week 4

Deuteronomy 6:7-9

Father's Day is a day we acknowledge our fathers, fathers-in-law, and spiritual fathers. We show them our appreciation through a card, a gift, or treat them to dinner! These are common ways that we express our love for the people we are close to. But what does it mean to love God, especially since God is not someone who you can write a card for and go get him a steak and call it a day?

Last week, Dave Faust walked us through the first half of the Shema. How do we follow and love the Lord with all our hearts? We give Him praise. We prioritize time with Him. We turn our affection into action.

In John 14:15, Jesus says, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. He is not asking for a card or a gift but asking that we do what He says. Now our obedience to His commands isn't because He's mad at us, but it comes from a place of love. Did dad get a gift from you today because you're scared of him, or because you love him?"

**1. In what ways do you see how obedience to God as an act of love toward Him?**

Deuteronomy includes the central text of Judaism--The Shema. It is built on the foundation for loving God upon this: "Hear, O' Israel: The Lord 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. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart" (Deuteronomy 6:4-6).

The Shema may seem like something that we already do as Christians or at least know we should do. It's foundational to how we are to love God. It is about the condition of our hearts. This is why so much of Jesus' ministry was spent calling out the religious leaders of Judaism who had forgotten that proper condition of the heart is imperative for proper display of obedience. The heart matters, motives matter, and honestly, we do a good job of focusing on that in modern Christianity. Even though there

may be no evidence that someone has died to the ways of the world, you might hear them say, “well, God knows my heart.”

**2. When can the statement, “God knows my heart,” become a way of justifying our behavior instead of honestly evaluating whether we are obeying God? Any specific examples in your life?**

What does a heart that loves God produce? The second half of the Shema, which remember, is the central passage in the Jewish mind, answers very clearly: “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)

There is a weighty burden in teaching. You are claiming some authority on a topic that will influence the way others perceive that topic which should not be handled lightly. There is time, and sacrifice, and humility involved in teaching. But when done with due diligence, it can be rewarding. This is why we should take the charge to teach our children the words of God very seriously!

Psalms 127 says: “Behold, children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward. Like arrows in the hand of a warrior are the children of one’s youth. Blessed is the man who fills his quiver with them!” To teach children the word of God is to sharpen the arrows in your quiver. You are readying them for the purpose in which they were created. And what is our purpose biblically? “Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man” (Eccl. 12:13, ESV). How else then are they to live this purpose if they don’t know who God is. Which means someone needs to teach them.

**3. So, who do you think is responsible for teaching children God’s commands? (Read again Deut. 6:7 for some clues).**

We are called to pray with our kids, read Scriptures with our kids, but also teach them about God in the everyday scenarios of life. It doesn’t have to be eloquent or super theologically precise. There are some basics we should know when we teach about God, but don’t let that be a barrier. A heart that loves God speaks of Him.

But as much as the word needs spoken, it must also be displayed. “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes” (Deuteronomy 6:8). Because the Jewish people take this law so seriously, they found a way to bind it to their hands and heads. They had little leather

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boxes, called Tefillin. And inside these boxes are specific portions of the Torah, so that during morning prayer they would wrap these to their heads and hands, so they could literally have the Law bound to them. We don't do this in Christianity, and we might even think it's a bit silly. But just because this verse is speaking figuratively, does it mean there isn't a physical application.

Our worship of Christ should be so apparent in our lives that it is as if we're wearing a big leather box on our foreheads. A heart that loves God shows Him. Not only does a heart that loves God show Him but also shows others. Our workplaces should clearly see that we love Christ. Our communities should understand that we know Christ. Our family knows we follow Christ.

#### **4. What are some ways that you are able to show others your love for Christ?**

Lastly, verse 9 says, "you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (Deuteronomy 6:9, ESV). This isn't the first time Israel was to put something on their doorposts. We read in Exodus 12, of the Passover. God is going to kill every firstborn boy in Egypt, unless the blood of a lamb was spread on the doorposts of the home. If they believed that the blood of the lamb was sufficient to save them, they would be saved. So, they are now commanded to put the word of God on their doorposts, which the Jewish people literally do, primarily, to show the outsider the identity of those the home belongs to.

The spoken word of God was given to the people instructing them to be saved by the blood of a lamb, then the written word of God was given to the people so they would have an identity through it that separates them from the world. And then, about 1500 years later, this theme is fully realized in the fulfillment of Christ. Like a lamb that was slain, He gave His own blood to save us from the punishment of sin. And then He sent His Holy Spirit to seal our identity. The writer of Hebrews quotes this from Jeremiah: "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my laws into their minds, and write them on their hearts, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Hebrews 8:10, ESV). In the Old Covenant, the Law, and ultimately redemption, was written on your doorframes. Now, it is written on your heart through the Holy Spirit. A heart that loves God is shaped by Him.

#### **5. How has God shaped your identity through His written Word?**

So, again, what does a heart that loves God produce? You speak of Him. You show Him. You are shaped by Him. If you look into your heart and see any of these three, it isn't because you've had a heart for following the rules. Christ died that you would be given a new heart that can actually live out the Shema, not from obligation, but from love.

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**6. What next step is God calling you to take to speak of Him, show Him, and be shaped by Him through love?**