



God Calls Israel to Love through Obedience

Deuteronomy 6



LESSON GOAL

Students will learn, meditate on, and obey God's Word.

BIBLE TRUTHS

- The children of Israel were called to love God with all their heart, soul, and strength.
- Parents were told to teach their children God's Law.
- Followers of God are to study, memorize, and apply God's Word to their own lives.
- Nothing else should be more important to us than God.

KEY VERSE

"Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength"
(Deuteronomy 6:4–5).

APPLICATION

- Memorize Scripture to meditate on throughout the day.
- Apply the truth in God's Word to your life today.
- There is only one God, so check your life to be sure that there is nothing that has taken God's place.

NEXT WEEK

God Promises to Bless or Curse
Read Deuteronomy 11:8–17.

Symbol Key



Craft



Finger Play



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Center



Activity



Q & A



Age Group

PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul.... You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

Bible Background

This week’s lesson brings us to one of the most sacred sections of Hebrew Scripture to the Jewish people. Deuteronomy 6:4–9 is known as “the Shema.” It is named after the first Hebrew word in verse 4, which is *shema*, meaning “to hear.” It addresses the oneness of God and how we are called to love Him.

The Shema begins with a call to Israel. Moses is saying, “Listen up because these are important words that I am about to tell you.” What is the message the people are to hear? “The LORD our God, the LORD is one!” This also reveals the character of the Lord. Although God is three distinct persons, He is only one God. Belief in one God distinguished Israel from the other nations. The people of Israel were called to be different, separate from the outside world. They were called to eat differently, live differently, and worship differently. Everything about their lives was to be separate. They were called to be different because of the uniqueness of the God whom they were serving. Most other nations had many gods, each for a different occasion. Israel had only one God, the Lord. Israel also stood out from the other nations by the way they acted. Their lives were to reflect their God. They were to demonstrate God’s laws as though they were written on their bodies.

Israel was called to “love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.” This passage is also found in the New Testament. The Pharisees questioned Jesus in an attempt to trick Him. One of the religious leaders, who also was a lawyer, attempted to stump Jesus with a question. He asked Jesus, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?” (Matt. 22:36). Jesus answered him by quoting Deuteronomy 6:5: “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength [mind].” Jesus then went on to speak of loving your neighbor and declared that on both of these commandments “hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matt. 22:40). The Shema is an integral part of the believer’s understanding of God and of a relationship to God.

The command to “love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37) encompasses a person’s entire being. If someone claims that he truly loves God, he must love with his entire being.

This obedience was not meant to remain only with the living generation of Israel but was to be passed down to their children and their children’s children. Instruction in God’s law was to be a routine part of life. It was to be passed down from generation to generation through speech, action, and instruction. It was to become a total way of life. The intention was that these laws would never be forgotten. They were to be indelibly inscribed on the hearts of all the people. In the Old Testament, the heart included the mind. To be “on the heart” meant to be constantly part of one’s conscious reflection. The parents of the nation of Israel were called to teach to their children all that God had brought them through in the past. God’s Word was to be spoken about constantly so that the children would be immersed in the truth. God’s character was to be remembered and obedience to His laws observed.

Additional Reference Materials

The Message of Deuteronomy by Raymond Brown

The MacArthur Study Bible by John MacArthur

The New American Commentary by Eugene H. Merrill

The Jews took this passage very literally. They went to the extent of actually wearing the laws on their bodies. In Jesus' day, pious Jews would wear small boxes containing Scripture on their heads and left arms. They did this to fulfill the letter of the law (Deut. 6:8–9). These boxes were called phylacteries. They were made of leather from the hides of clean animals, and they contained four strips of parchment with passages from the Pentateuch written on them (Ex. 13:1–10; 13:11–16; Deut. 6:4–9; 11:13–21). These boxes were strapped to the heads and left hands of males who were 13 years old and older and were worn during prayer, but not on the Sabbath or holidays. The phylacteries are still worn by orthodox Jews today.

Phylacteries are mentioned only once in the New Testament. Matthew 23:5 says, "They [the scribes and Pharisees] make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments." Jesus criticized the actions of the religious leaders who wanted to impress people with their piety.

Placing the laws on the body was to be taken not literally, but figuratively. The law was to be meditated on throughout the day. It was to rule Israel's private and public lives. It was to be "as frontlets between [their] eyes" (Deut. 6:8). That illustrates the necessity for God's Word to be at the forefront of the mind all day long. The people were told to bind the law to their hands as a sign. That illustrated the leading and guiding of God's Word in their lives.

POINT TO THE TRUTH

"Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth" (Psalm 78:1).

This section includes questions to review last week's lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week's lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



Review Questions

Use these questions to review and reinforce key truths.

How long had the Israelites been wandering in the desert?
40 years.

Why were they wandering?
They did not obey God when He told them to go into the land and conquer it. They were punished for their disobedience.

Why was it important for Israel to obey?
They would be blessed in the land that God was about to give them. They were God's chosen people and were told to obey as an example to others. If they obeyed, they would not worship or be led astray by something other than the one true God. Because God is unique and because He is the one and only God, He deserves to be worshiped.

How can you show God that you love Him by the way you act?
[Answers will vary.]



Listening Games

In today's lesson, we will study the Bible passage called "the Great Shema." It is called this because it begins with "Hear, O Israel." *Shema* is the Hebrew word for "hear." Use any one of these listening games as you begin class. Talk about the purpose of listening and paying attention when someone speaks.

Operator: Choose one student to whisper a phrase or Bible verse to the student sitting next to him. Continue down the line through 4–8 students. Have the last student say the final phrase out loud to see how well it matches the original.

Tongue Twisters: Tell tongue twisters, and have the students try to say them back five times fast.



One

Materials: stamp of the number "1," stamp pad

Directions: As each student enter the classroom, stamp his hand with the number "1." Tell the students that in today's lesson, they will learn that our God is one God.



Treasure Walk

Have a small group of students follow directions to find a treasure. Give specific directions to be followed, such as "Start at the door, take ten giant steps toward the poster of a flower, turn left and walk to the wall," etc. Compare following the directions to obeying and the reward to God's promises of blessing.

PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done" (Psalm 78:4).

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

Bible Lesson

Last week, we learned about the things that Moses told the Israelites before they went to the Promised Land. Moses reminded them of something. Does anyone remember what he was reminding them of? He was reminding them that it is very important to obey God. He gave them four reasons to obey God. This week, we will learn about something else that Moses taught the Israelites just before they were to go to the Promised Land.

Moses gathered the Israelites and gave a speech. This speech is known as "the Shema." *Shema* is the Hebrew word for "hear." Hebrew is the language spoken by the Israelites. Moses began by telling the Israelites to hear what he was about to say. He said, "Listen up! These are important words I am about to tell you!" The first thing Moses said to them was, "The LORD our God, The LORD is one!" (Deut. 6:4). Why did Moses say that? What did he mean? He meant that God was the one true God. Other people in the world served gods that they made up. But those

gods were not real. The God of the Israelites is the only real God. Because the Israelites served the only true God, they had to act differently than the rest of the world. They were separate from everyone else. God set up rules and laws about the way they ate, lived, and worshiped.

Moses also said, "Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:5). What did Moses mean when he said that? He meant that every part of you is to love God. Your mind, how you think, your emotions, how you feel, and all that you do are to be focused on your love for God. You have to choose to love God.

Moses told the Israelites that they were to never forget God's laws. They had to make sure their children knew the laws so that when their children grew up, they could one day teach their own children God's Word. So, they were to talk about the law, think about the law, and obey the law all the time. That way, they would never forget.

Moses knew it was very, very important for the Israelites to know God's law so that they would obey then and in the future. It is the same for us today. Your parents teach you what God's Word says because God commanded them to. You are here at church today so that you can learn more about what God says to us in the Bible. It is your job to think about what His Word says and to choose to obey it in how you behave.



Lesson Questions

What does the Hebrew word *shema* mean?
It means "hear" or "listen to what I am about to say."

What did Moses want the people of Israel to hear?
Moses had some important instructions from God. The first was that there is only one God. The second was that they were to love Him with all their heart, soul, and strength.

What does it mean to love God with all your heart, soul, and strength?
That is everything inside and outside of you. You are to love God by what you think and what you do.

How can you love God today?
You can love others, make sure you do what is right, and obey your parents when they ask you to do something.

Presentation Ideas



A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



The Lord's Time

Materials: a large clock

Directions: Have the students tell you what they do at different times of the day.

Move the hands of the clock to different times of the day, such as 7 o'clock (time to wake up), 12 o'clock (time to eat lunch), 8 o'clock (time for bed), etc. Then ask the students to tell you when it is time to think about and love the Lord. Spin the clock hands around several times and explain that it is always time. Explain that in today's lesson they will learn more about serving the Lord throughout the day and night.

Praise and Worship

I Love You, Lord

King of Kings

Seek Ye First

Trust and Obey



Love the Lord

Listen, O Israel, and you shall hear

(Cup hands behind ears.)

What the Lord is saying; it's very clear.

(Point up.)

You must love the Lord, heart, soul, and might,

(Hug self.)

And think of Him morning, noon, and night.

(Point to temple; then point to wrist and move fingertip in a circular motion.)

Sitting down, standing up, asleep, or at play,

(Crouch down; stand up; close eyes, turn head to side, and place hands under head; then pump arms as if running.)

Remember God's words all throughout the day.

(Hold hands like a book.)

PRACTICE THE TRUTH

“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Psalm 78:7).

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



Phylacteries

Materials: copies of the “Phylactery” and “Verses for Phylactery” craft pages, scissors, glue

Directions: Copy the phylactery pattern onto heavy paper. Cut the pattern along the solid lines and fold on the dotted lines. Create a small box, which should have two sides with extending pieces. Leave one end open, and insert the four small pieces of paper containing selected Scripture. The box can then be attached to the two long strips of paper to create a headband.

Deuteronomy 6:8 gives instructions to bind the law to the hand and place them on the forehead so that they might be a sign and a guide. Although this was not meant to be taken literally, the Jewish leaders made and wore objects called phylacteries, which contained sections of Scripture, on their foreheads. Today, we will be making phylacteries. These will be a symbol of our need to keep Scripture at the forefront of our minds at all times, to guide us in all that we do.



Gate, Doorpost, House

Materials: copies of the “Gate, Doorpost, House” craft page, scissors, crayons

Directions: Cut out the pattern and memory verse along the dark, solid line. Color the gate and the door, and then turn the paper over. Glue the memory verse to the center of the house. Finally, fold the door and the gate in along the dotted line. This craft illustrates Deuteronomy 6:9. After the craft is complete, remember to talk about the fact that God want us to always think about His truth, as verse 5 says.



Pop-up “1”

Materials: half-sheets of cardstock; “1” cutouts from colored construction paper; glue; pencils or pens; decorations

Directions: Take a half-sheet of cardstock and fold it in half like a card. With the folded edge on your left, fold the top corner down to make a triangle. Open the card and pull the triangle in so that it points forward. Take a “1” and fold it in half. Then glue the bottom of the “1” to the top of the triangle so that it is hidden when the card is closed and pops up when the card is opened. Have older students write Deuteronomy 6:4–5 inside the card.



“Love the Lord”

Materials: copies of the “Love the Lord” page, crayons, other decorations

Directions: Have students decorate the large L using crayons, glue-on decorations, heart stickers, smiley faces, and bones/muscles for heart, soul, and might. Remind the students what it means to love God in these ways.



“Love God with All Your Heart”

Materials: copies of the “Love God with All Your Heart” craft page on cardstock, glue, red tissue paper



Directions: Give each student a copy of the craft page. Read Deuteronomy 6:3 to the students, and instruct them to trace the words on their page. They can then decorate the page with markers or crayons and decorate the heart by gluing wads of tissue paper around it.

Possess the Good Land

Materials: copies of the “Possess the Good Land” page, crayons or markers

Directions: Explain to the students that Israel was told to obey God and possess the land. Give each student a copy of the “Possess the Good Land” page, and read Deuteronomy 6:18 to them. Instruct the students to color the good land that God promised to Israel.

Coloring Sheets

Give each student a copy of the coloring sheets at the back of the lesson. The students can color the pages in class or at home.



MEMORY VERSE

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:4–5).



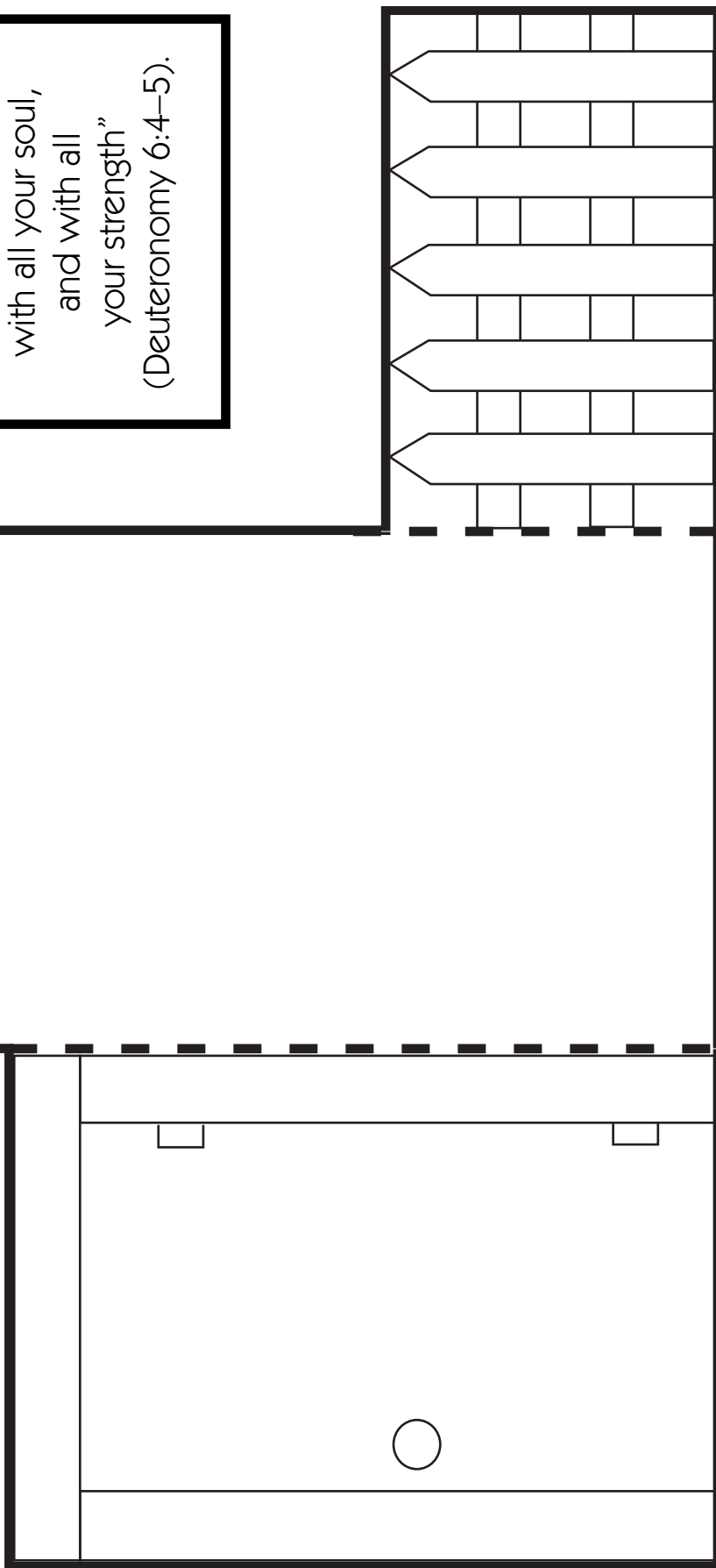
Pass It Along

After previewing the verse several times, pointing out key words and concepts, have the students say the verse together a few times. Then, moving down a row, have each student say one word from the verse. The first few times, the students may look at the verse written on the chalk board or poster board, but then they should try to do it without much help. Pictures of the concepts may also be helpful (e.g., a heart for love).

Gate, Doorpost, House

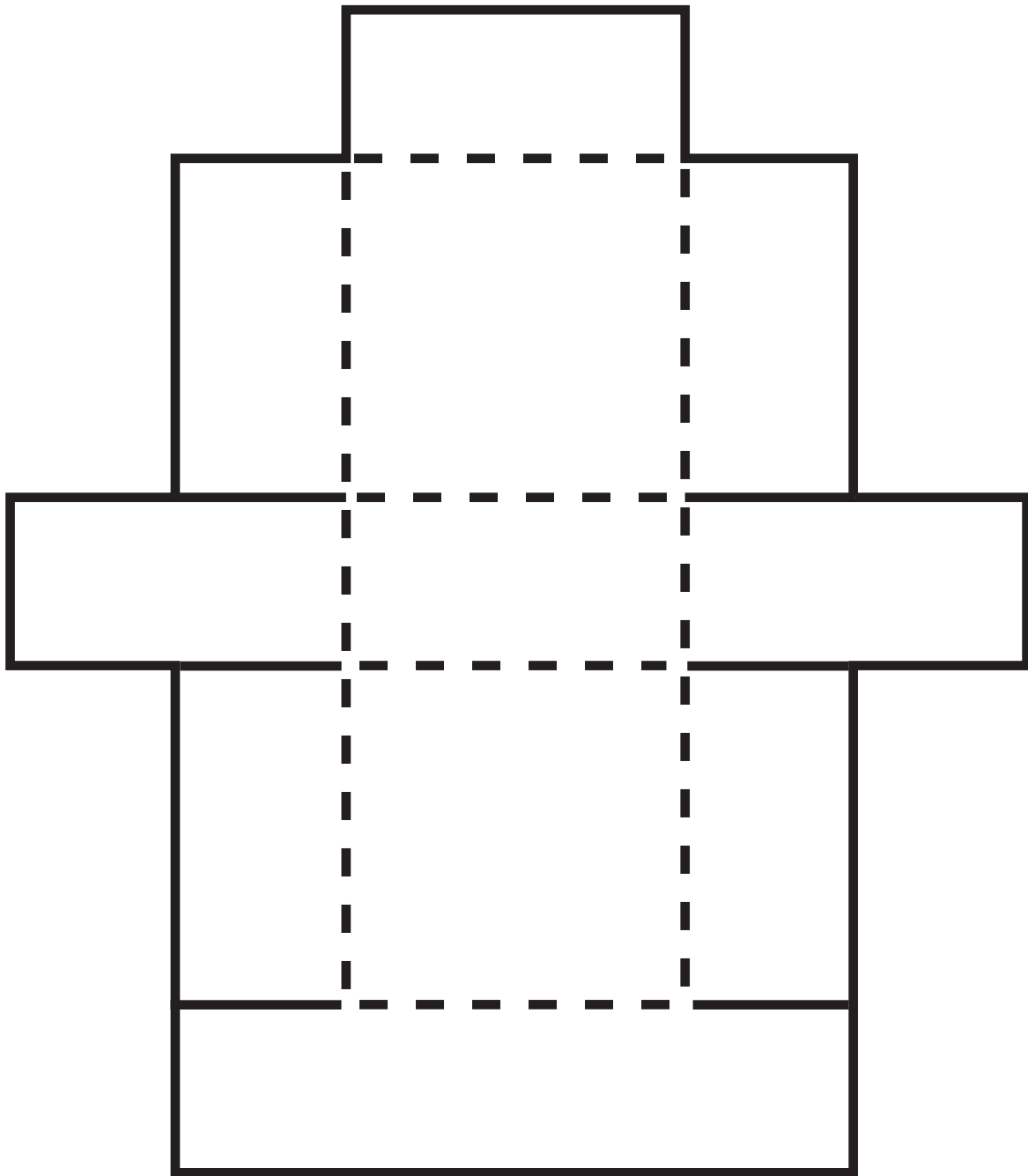
Cut out the pattern and memory verse along the dark, solid lines. Color the gate and the door, and then turn the paper over. Next, glue the memory verse to the center of the house. Finally, fold the door and the gate in along the dotted line.

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:4–5).



Phylactery

Cut the pattern along the solid lines, and fold on the dotted lines. Create a small box, which should have two sides with extending pieces. Leave one end open, and insert the four Scripture references cut out from the next page. The box can then be attached to two long strips of paper to create a headband.



Love the Lord

Deuteronomy 6:4–5:

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God,
the LORD is one! You shall love the LORD
your God with all your...”



Heart

Soul

Strength

Love God with All Your Heart



**“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength”
(Deuteronomy 6:5).**

Possess the Good Land



“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength”
(Deuteronomy 6:5).



**“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul,
and with all your strength” (Deuteronomy 6:5).**



**The Israelites were called to daily teach God's Word to their children
(Deuteronomy 6:6-9).**

