

## “Generation Next” Deuteronomy 6:1-9



Michael W. Wright, DMin

### Introduction

Moses was the leader of an inexperienced nation. A previous generation was dead and gone. Forty years prior, his current audience was 20 years old and younger. Looking into the eyes of Generation Next, the 120 year old Moses challenges them to love and live for God. He must speak into their young hearts about God’s expectations for Promised Land living.

Before we probe the given text of Deuteronomy 6:1-9, let’s consider the context of the moment. Deuteronomy is the fifth book in a series of books familiarly known as the Pentateuch (meaning five books). The books contain about 50 major events of Old Testament history which include the creation, fall of man, flood, the beginning of nations, the call of Abraham, the birth of Ishmael and Isaac, Esau and Jacob, Joseph, the journey to Egypt, the march out of Egypt led by Moses, the crossing of the Red Sea, the trip to Mt. Sinai, the giving of the Law, instructions for the tabernacle, the work of Levites and Priests, offerings and feasts, two censuses, the sending of spies, the wilderness wanderings, and now the sermons in Moab (as seen in Deuteronomy) on the east side of the Jordan.

Deuteronomy is a sweeping and powerful sermon (or series of sermons) that is delivered at the end of the ministry of Moses. While he cannot go with the new generation into the Promised Land, Moses can certainly speak into their lives. Moses calls on Israel to remember the sins and failures of the past (and avoid those), and embrace God’s will, ways, and work now and in the future.

The title of the book means “Second Law,” from *deuteron* which means “second” and *nomos* meaning “law.” The original Hebrew title was simply “Words,” which was customary to employ the first words of a book as a title for the work. There have been some clever attempts at helping us to remember the meaning of the book. John Parker, our Worship Pastor, conveyed to me that his son, Jay, says the book of Deuteronomy actually means, “Dude, you better honor me.” That’s not accurate etymology, but it is good theology.

Deuteronomy is an important book. The significance of this fifth book is seen in the NT as it is quoted over 80 times. This same book was the “book of the covenant” discovered in the days of Josiah and was the souse of revival during His reign (2 Chronicles 34:14-33).

Several noted scholars hold up Deuteronomy as a classic. Charles Erdman called Deuteronomy “a masterpiece of oratory.” Earl Kalland held out Deuteronomy as a book showing God to be “personal, eternal, omnipotent, sovereign, purposeful, loving, holy,

and righteous.” According to J. A. Thompson, Deuteronomy’s “influence on the domestic and personal religion of all ages has not been surpassed by any other book.”

Deut 6:1-9

*"Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it, 2 so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. 3 "O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.*

*4 "Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! 5 "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 "These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. 7 "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 "You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 9 "You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.*

1. **Clarity** – *"Now this is the commandment, the statutes and the judgments which the Lord your God has commanded me to teach you, that you might do them in the land where you are going over to possess it..."* (6:1)
  - a. Commands – “an authoritative **proclamation** or directive to a subordinate”

God is clear about His expectations.

- b. Statutes (precepts) – “a clear communicated **prescription** of what one should do”

God has a prescription for living in His will. To follow His ways, to know His will, and to enjoy His work, requires obedience to God.

- c. Judgments – “a legal **decision** over a dispute or case” (God’s mind or decision) This is not a discussion, but a clear decision concerning the life and work of Israel)

God is not at all interested in our opinion about how we are to live. God reveals His mind on the matter through His servant Moses. Today, we have God’s Word, written and living, for clarity about God’s expectations.

2. **Calling** – *“The Lord your God has commanded me to teach you.”* (6:1)

God always uses a person or people to accomplish His work. In every Scriptural case we are able to identify God’s called individual to carry out His plan.

In this case, God calls on Moses to deliver His contemporary message to a new generation of Israel. The word “to teach” means “to cause to learn.” Moses was authoritatively directed by God to teach Israel.

3. **Conduct** – *“That you might do them.”* (6:1)

God has always expected obedience from His people.

- a. Geographical – *“In the land.”* (6:1) Obedience was expected in a particular time and place.

*“...so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.”*

God expects His people to obey right where they live.

- b. Generational – *“So that you and your son and your grandson...”* (6:2)

The purpose of teaching the children is so that God’s Word might be taught and inculcated in every subsequent generation.

- c. Congregational – *“O Israel, you should listen and be careful to do it, that it may be well with you and that you may multiply greatly, just as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey.”* (6:3-4)

**Verses 4 and 5 are called the *shema* meaning “hear.”** *“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.”* (6:4-5)

The Lord holds an entire nation responsible for encouraging biblical and spiritual teaching concerning God’s commands. There are potential implications for all nations, but unquestionable accountability for Israel.

4. **Characteristics** – *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”* (6:4)

- a. Heart – *“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.”* (6:5-6)

Matters concerning devotion to God begin in the heart.

Ref.: Ps 66:18 – *“If I regard wickedness in my heart, the Lord will not hear.”*

Ref.: Ps 119:11 – *“Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You.”*

- b. Mind – *“You shall teach them diligently to your sons.”* (6:7)

The Hebrew word here is **šā-nān** and means “to teach by rote.” The idea is to teach over and over again.

The goal is to inculcate God’s Word into the life of Israel via the hearts and minds of children. Bible drill, Bible memory, and Bible study, repeated over and over again, are God designed methods for learning His Word. It should be noted that memorization alone is not enough. Putting God’s Word into the heart suggests a transformative and mature lifestyle.

- c. Lifestyle – *“You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”* (6:8-9)

Exp.: On the basis of 6:8, some pious Jews wear a phylactery, a small box containing portions of Scripture (cf. Matt. 23:5), on their forehead and forearm during prayer. Many Jewish homes have a *mezuzah*, a small scroll-shaped container, on the doorpost. The point is that the Israelite people were to learn the law and not forget the Lord (Deut. 6:10–12). The home was to serve as the center for religious education (6:20–25). In response to a child’s inquiry, the great truths about God were to be taught. Israel was to remember her redemption (6:12) and not repeat the mistakes of the past in the wilderness (6:16). Jesus quoted 6:16 during his time of temptation in the wilderness (Matt. 4:7).

### **Conclusion**

What will you do to make your family one that teaches God’s Word in the home? What will you do that will spiritually benefit your family for the next three generations?

**Geographically** – You could serve your family right where you are, now, today, by teaching God’s Word in your home every day.

**Generationally** – You could take time to teach your children and your grandchildren.

**Congregationally** – You could decide to serve Generation Next by serving in the preschool, children, or student ministries right here at FBC. By touching this generation, you will potentially reach out to many thousands to come.