

Love
November 2, 2025
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Deuteronomy 6:1-9, 20-25

Everyone is “into” something – something or someone that dominates their thoughts or their free time and brings them enjoyment. We might say it is their “obsession.” What are some examples of those obsessions? How can you spot someone’s obsession?

Those are examples of good, happy, and healthy obsessions; things we love. 42 years ago, this month I had a new obsession named “Susan.” ☺ In the last 10 days our family has been obsessed with our third grandson! A love for family is a good obsession (within healthy boundaries.) For Christ-followers, loving family and loving all people (even unlovable people) is a good thing to be obsessed with because it is a commandment; but it is not the Greatest Commandment. What is?

The point: The Greatest Commandment was given by God, through Moses, to the Children of Israel (and us) in the speech we read in our text today. The concept is simple. To steal a line from a song by Steven Curtis Chapman, loving God should be our “Magnificent Obsession.”

Deuteronomy 6:1–9 (NLT) — 1 “These are the commands, decrees, and regulations that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you. You must obey them in the land you are about to enter and occupy, **2** and you and your children and grandchildren must fear the Lord your God as long as you live. If you obey all his decrees and commands, you will enjoy a long life. **3** Listen closely, Israel, and be careful to obey. Then all will go well with you, and you will have many children in the land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you.

- Two weeks ago, when we studied Numbers 33 and in last week’s study of Deuteronomy 4, we talked about the blessings of obeying God’s commands.
- The theme continues. God said to His people, obey me and you will be blessed as you go into this land, I have promised you. That applies to us today.
- Some people are naturally wired to obey the rules [Illustration: Board games]. Why do most people obey the rules? Why SHOULD God’s children WANT to?

4 “Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. **5** And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.

- Verses 4&5 are The Great Commandment known to our Jewish friends as the Shema (which in Hebrew means “hear” or listen closely and obey.)
- Verse 4 makes a clear statement: “*The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.*”
- Why was that clarification important as they moved into Canaan? Why today?
- Yahweh is the ONE TRUE GOD and to quote commandment #1 of the Ten: “*You shall have no other gods before me.*” (Exodus 20:3).

- Verse 5: Love God with ALL your “heart, soul, and strength.”
 - **Heart** – We think of the heart as emotional, however we are told, “In biblical Hebrew, the *heart* was less the seat of the emotions...[it was]...the intellect and will. [When Jesus quoted this in Mark 12:30 He said,] “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and *with all your mind* and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30, italics mine).ⁱⁱ
 - Loving God should dominate both our emotions and our THOUGHTS.
 - A.W. Tozer: “*What comes into our minds when we think about God is the most important thing about us.*”ⁱⁱⁱ
 - **Soul** – the whole self—[not] just emotions or thoughts; ...loving God with everything that makes up who you are...total devotion and surrender.^{iv}
 - **Strength** – “...not so much a person’s physical power as his intensity.”^v
- Imagine what could be accomplished if done with ALL our heart, soul, and strength!
- D.L. Moody said, “*No one can sum up all God is able to accomplish through one solitary life, wholly yielded, adjusted, and obedient to Him.*”^{vi}
- Loving God should be the “magnificent obsession” of every Christ-follower.
- If it is, we will want to obey Him, not just for the blessings; because we love Him.
- What does a magnificent obsession look like?

6 And you must commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands that I am giving you today. **7** Repeat them again and again to your children. Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. **8** Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. **9** Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

- Verse 6: Loving and obeying God STARTS with the WHOLE heart!
- No one admires someone doing things “half-heartedly.” If that is true for human activity, how much MORE important is it to be whole-hearted toward God?
- Verse 7: How should our talk reflect our magnificent obsession with loving God? How can we speak in a way that draws people TO God not pushing them away?
- Verse 8: Later the Jews took this literally with the custom of wearing “Phylacteries...small, square leather boxes containing portions of Scripture...worn in pairs—one... strapped on the left arm, and one is strapped to the forehead...during weekday morning prayers. They also placed a small Scripture portion inside a small box (a *mezuzah*) attached to the entry door frame of the household.”^{vii}
- Jesus later criticized this practice (Matt. 23:5) as a hypocritical religious show.^{viii}
- It is wonderful to use physical reminders like Bible verses displayed at home, scripture cards, or phone reminders to keep God’s promises and commands forefront in our minds. It is MORE IMPORTANT to model a life that has been changed by our magnificent obsession with loving and obeying God.
- Don’t do it just for SHOW. Don’t put a “fish” on your car and be a jerk in traffic! ☺
- One more point that takes us back to last week’s lesson. We must teach our children about our magnificent obsession with loving and obeying God.

20 “In the future your children will ask you, ‘What is the meaning of these laws, decrees, and regulations that the Lord our God has commanded us to obey?’ **21** “Then you must tell them, ‘We were Pharaoh’s slaves in Egypt, but the Lord brought us out of Egypt with his strong hand. **22** The Lord did miraculous signs and wonders before our eyes, dealing terrifying blows against Egypt and Pharaoh and all his people. **23** He brought us out of Egypt so he could give us this land he had sworn to give our ancestors. **24** And the Lord our God commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear him so he can continue to bless us and preserve our lives, as he has done to this day. **25** For we will be counted as righteous when we obey all the commands the Lord our God has given us.’

- An article suggests to parents an interesting way to teach young children to begin to read simple words. “Write labels like “DOOR, TV, TABLE, BATHTUB, BED” and tape them to those objects around your house. Young children will begin to notice words that start with the same sounds. Some older children will begin to internalize the spelling by seeing it each day. Simply talking about the labels and the different words for each object is great for young kids.”^x (link below)
- What are some ways we can accomplish that same kind of teaching about God?
- At the end of last week’s class, the Lord put something on my heart that I shared with the group. It had to be the Holy Spirit because I’m not holy enough to think it up on my own: “*When your children and grandchildren think about the faithfulness of God, they should hear those thoughts in the voice of their parents and grandparents.*” THAT is a great goal in response to verse 20-25!

So, what’s the TAKEAWAY?

- If we have an obsession (good or bad) people WILL spot it. Especially those who live with us and know what we are like behind the front door of our home.
- Back to that song by Steven Curtis Chapman; listen to these lyrics:

*Lord, You know how much
I want to know so much
In the way of answers and explanations
I have cried and prayed
And still I seem to stay
In the middle of life's complications
All this pursuing leaves me feeling like I'm chasing down the wind
But now it's brought me back to You
And I can see again*

*This is everything I want
This is everything I need
I want this to be my one consuming passion
Everything my heart desires
Lord, I want it all to be for You, Jesus
Be my magnificent obsession^x*

- The point of the Great Commandment is to make loving and obeying God our magnificent obsession. Do we live in a way that displays that as true?
- Jesus said: “...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:16)
- He also said, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” (John 14:15)
- Here’s the rub: Doing both those things is not my NATURAL tendency.
- Here’s the good news: Jesus died to pay for my sins and change me.
- **2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)** says, *...if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*
- **Galatians 2:20 (ESV)** says *if...I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*
- That kind of change makes it possible for me to obey the Greatest Commandment to “love the Lord” [my] “God with all [my] “heart, soul, mind and strength AND to love [my neighbor as much as I love myself]”. (Mk 12:30–31)
- Jesus said: “There is no other commandment ^zgreater than these.”^{xi}
- This week, with the help of His Holy Spirit, let’s go and “do likewise.” (Luke 10:37)

ⁱ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Ex 20:3). (2016). Crossway Bibles.

ⁱⁱ Andrews, S. J., & Bergen, R. D. (2009). *Deuteronomy* (pp. 85–86). B&H Publishing Group.

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/376518-what-comes-into-our-minds-when-we-think-about-god>

^{iv} <https://biblehub.com/commentaries/deuteronomy/6-5.htm>

^v Andrews, S. J., & Bergen, R. D. (2009). *Deuteronomy* (p. 86). B&H Publishing Group.

^{vi} <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/562344-no-one-can-sum-up-all-god-is-able-to>

^{vii} Andrews, S. J., & Bergen, R. D. (2009). *Deuteronomy* (p. 87). B&H Publishing Group.

^{viii} <https://www.gotquestions.org/phylacteries.html>

^{ix} <https://www.writtenandbound.com/blog/vqp092v0y1qnei4qvgk68e0g7kk5uh>

^x Songwriters: Steven Curtis Chapman

Magnificent Obsession lyrics © BMG Rights Management, Capitol CMG Publishing

^z [Matt. 23:23]

^{xi} *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version* (Mk 12:30–31). (2016). Crossway Bibles.