

Neighborhood Group Vision (part 2)

“Love God” - Deuteronomy 6:4-9

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When Jesus was asked to identify the Greatest Commandment, He quoted Deut. 6:4. What's so important about this passage? How does it help us to love God better? Join us as we discover how to love God better.

Intro: When Jesus shares what the greatest commandment is, He is quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5. In Hebrew, these verses are known as the Shema, which means “hear” in Hebrew. Essentially this is Moses’ swan song as he prepares them to enter into the Promised land. If they could get this right, everything else would fall into place. **“What we need is a change in our affections. We need to change not what we feel nor even what we know but what we love.” - Jonathan Edwards.** Would you like to learn how to love God better?

Subject: Loving God

Object: Grow in Your Love for God

A. Gospel: responding to God’s love for us (v.5-6)

4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.[a] 5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.

Before Moses tells us we need to love God, he asks us to consider who God is. **“We love Him because He first loved us.” 1 John 4:19.** The Bible teaches that all of humanity has a major problem called sin that has separated us from God and the life He originally intended for us (Romans 3:23). Jesus lived a perfect sinless life and died on the cross in our place for our sins (1 John 2:2, Romans 5:6-11). This forgiveness and restoration to God (justification) is available as a free gift if only we place our faith in Jesus Christ (Romans 10:9). In addition to being forgiven by God in Christ Jesus, the Bible also teaches that God declares us as righteous (2 Corinthians 5:21). The Christian and the non-Christian alike needs to constantly be reminded of the Gospel (Romans 1:15). In addition, a correct interpretation and teaching of Scripture should always point in some way to the good news of Jesus (John 5:39).

B. Discipleship: making Jesus King in every realm (v.6-7)

6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.

Moses goes on to explain that this love must touch all of the aspects of our life. First he says this value must be in our hearts. In Hebrew, the heart is the very center of who we are. In addition, he tells us we must impart these values to the next generation in all areas of life.

Once we have responded to the Gospel and committed to a gospel centered Christian walk, it is important that we grow as disciples. Essentially, we express our love to Jesus as we follow

Him in obedience, with an attitude of dependence, as His disciples. With a Gospel centered heart, we recognize that we do not obey so that God will love us, but because He already does love us. **Growing as a disciple (and thus expressing our love to God) means that we are continually seeking to make Jesus the King of every realm of our lives: personal, marriage, family, career, calling & community.**

C. Bible Learning + Other Spiritual Disciplines: growing in love for God + developing Christ-like character (v.8-9)

8 Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. 9 Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Finally, Moses says that this value of loving God must be consistently and intentionally before us. **“A farmer is helpless to grow grain; all he can do is provide the right conditions for the growing of grain. He cultivates the ground, he plants the seed, he waters the plants, and then the natural forces of the earth take over and up comes the grain... This is the way it is with the Spiritual Disciplines - they are a way of sowing to the Spirit... By themselves the Spiritual Disciplines can do nothing; they can only get us to the place where something can be done.” - Richard Foster.** Bible learning is arguably the most important spiritual discipline. Other spiritual disciplines include prayer, fasting, giving, confession and repentance, service, solitude and worship.

Conclusion: What are you going to do to love God more in this next season? Drive home the importance of joining a NG to grow in love for God.