

Deuteronomy 6:1–9, 20–25 — Study Questions (NKJV)

1. Why does Moses emphasize both “commandments” and “statutes” at the beginning of Deuteronomy 6, and what does this reveal about the purpose of God’s law?

Moses distinguishes **commandments** (moral obligations) from **statutes and judgments** (specific applications). Together, they reveal that God’s law was not arbitrary but designed for **reverent relationship** — to teach Israel how to live under His rule as a holy nation. The phrase “*that you may fear the Lord your God*” (v.2) shows that obedience flows from awe, not compulsion. The law was given for **human flourishing, longevity, and legacy** — “you, your son, and your grandson” (v.2) — grounding obedience in generational blessing rather than mere regulation.

Cross-reference: *Psalms 111:10* — “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.”

2. What is the theological significance of the Shema (“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one!”)?

The Shema is the **core confession of Israel’s faith**, affirming that the Lord (YHWH) is not one among many, but the **exclusive, unified God** of creation and covenant. This confession demands loyalty — no divided worship or dual allegiances. The Hebrew implies both *oneness* and *uniqueness*: He alone is God, and His nature is undivided. This single statement anchors all of Israel’s moral, civil, and religious life. To confess “The Lord is one” is to renounce every rival authority and to live as if **God alone defines truth, morality, and destiny**.

Cross-reference: *Mark 12:29–30* — Jesus identifies this as the greatest commandment, binding love of God with total devotion.

3. What does loving God with “all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength” require of a believer?

This love calls for **complete devotion — emotional, spiritual, and practical**.

- “Heart” signifies the **center of will and desire**;
- “Soul” encompasses the **whole inner life**;
- “Strength” extends love into **action and resource**.

It’s a love that consumes every aspect of life. In ancient covenant terms, to love the Lord meant to **pledge loyalty**—to cling to Him alone as King. In New Testament terms, it anticipates the **transforming love of Christ** that compels obedience (John 14:15). Such love is not sentimental; it’s **exclusive allegiance born of gratitude for redemption**.

Cross-reference: *1 John 4:19* — “We love Him because He first loved us.”

4. Why does Moses command that God's words be "in your heart," and what danger arises when obedience becomes external only?

Placing God's words "in your heart" signifies **internal transformation** — not mechanical observance. True obedience springs from inward conviction shaped by God's Word. External obedience without inward devotion leads to hypocrisy (cf. Isaiah 29:13). Moses is teaching that covenant faithfulness requires **meditation, remembrance, and affection**, not ritualistic performance. God's commands are to be **lived**, not merely recited.

Cross-reference: *Psalms 40:8* — "I delight to do Your will, O my God, and Your law is within my heart."

5. What does it mean to teach God's commandments "diligently" to one's children, and how does this shape the spiritual culture of Israel?

To teach "diligently" (*Heb. shanan*, to sharpen) means **repetition that engrains truth**. Parents were to embed God's Word into ordinary moments — meals, travel, rest, and rising — so that **the home became the first sanctuary of faith**. This practice made God's Word the rhythm of life, not a separate category. The command shows that **faith transmission is relational and continual**, not institutional or occasional.

Cross-reference: *2 Timothy 3:15* — "From childhood you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation."

6. What does binding God's words "on your hand" and "between your eyes" symbolize spiritually, beyond the literal practice?

The imagery teaches that **God's Word should guide every deed ("hand") and every thought ("eyes")**. Later Jewish practice developed *phylacteries* (small boxes with Scripture), but Moses' intent was spiritual — to mark **identity, perception, and behavior** by God's truth. The command to "write them on the doorposts" (v.9) reminds that **the home itself should proclaim allegiance** to the Lord.

Cross-reference: *Colossians 3:17* — "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

7. When children ask about the meaning of the commandments (vv. 20–21), why does Moses direct parents to recount the Exodus rather than just explain the rules?

Because obedience must be rooted in **redemption, not regulation**. The story of deliverance from Egypt teaches that Israel's identity is founded in **grace and rescue**, not merit. By grounding law in story, Moses ensures that future generations understand: *We obey because He first saved us*. This principle echoes the gospel—salvation precedes obedience.

Cross-reference: *Titus 2:11–12* — "For the grace of God that brings salvation... teaches us that, denying ungodliness... we should live soberly, righteously, and godly."

8. How do verses 24–25 connect obedience to righteousness, and what does this reveal about faith and works in the covenant relationship?

Moses teaches that obedience is both **for our good always** and the **expression of covenant righteousness**. Under the Old Covenant, righteousness was demonstrated through faithful adherence; under the New, it's fulfilled in Christ's perfect obedience (Romans 10:4). Yet the principle remains: obedience reveals trust. God's commands are life-giving boundaries that align the human heart with His holiness. To obey is to live in harmony with God's nature.

Cross-reference: *Romans 3:21–22* — “But now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed... through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.”

9. What is the context of “prosper” (Deut. 6:9) and “prosperity” (Deut. 6:24), and what is its intended scope?

In Deuteronomy, “prosperity” and “prospering” describe **covenant blessing** — a holistic sense of flourishing that comes from living in right relationship with God. That includes:

- Provision (rain, crops, land security)
- Health and long life
- **Peace and stability**
- Community well-being

While “material prosperity” could be part of it, the emphasis is not on accumulating wealth but on **life going well in every aspect — moral, social, physical, and spiritual — under God's favor**. Our study guide is based on the CSB translation. The CSB's translation choice (“prosper” / “prosperity”) communicates the general idea of well-being, but in modern English it can sound like financial success. Older translations like the ESV or NASB say “that it may go well with you,” which is closer to the Hebrew nuance.