



# Central Peninsula Church

...to make and mature more followers of Christ

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Deuteronomy 6:4-24  
Justin Buzzard  
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## Falling in Love Forever

SERIES: *Turning Point: Start Fresh/Stay the Course*

Have you ever fallen in love? I mean truly fallen in love? You're going about life as usual, but then you encounter someone and that person captures your attention in a different way from everyone and everything else and somewhere along the way, before you know it—you've fallen. You fall into a whole new way of life where who you are, what's most important to you, your sense of why you're on the planet...your love, is bound up with this person who's captured your heart.

Have you ever fallen in love like that?

D.H. Lawrence said, "I am in love—and, my God, it's the greatest thing that can happen to a man. I tell you, find a woman you can fall in love with. Do it. Let yourself fall in love. If you haven't done so already, you are wasting your life."

Have you ever fallen out of love? Falling in is a lot more fun than falling out. Somewhere along the way, the love loses its flame. The love fails. Things fall apart. You decide you don't love that person anymore. Or, worse, the other person decides they don't love you anymore. Bess Myerson said, "To fall in love is awfully simple, but to fall out of love is simply awful."

In some way, shape, or form, most of us have experienced that it's possible to fall in love and it's possible to fall out of love. We've experienced the failure of a love relationship that we thought would go the distance.

What if you could experience a relationship, what if you could fall head over heels in love, and never fall out because the object of your love is so stunning, so forever-interesting, so good, so faithful, and so committed to caring for you and shaping you in all the ways you need to be cared for and shaped? What if there was a person who you could fall in love with forever? Well, there is. That's what today's passage is about.

We're in a series on Deuteronomy, the fifth book of the Bible, a big book that's essentially about what it looks like to experience the greatest relationship imaginable—a relationship with God. And today we come to the crown jewel of this book. Today's text is stunning. It shows us God. It gives us a compact manual on knowing God, a demonstration of what it looks like to fall in love with God himself...forever.

Today's passage is called the "Shema." Shema is a Hebrew word. It's the first word in today's passage, the word "hear."

The Shema is about 3,500 years old and it has always been treasured by God's people. To this day, Orthodox Jews still recite the Shema twice a day, during

their prayers in the morning and their prayers at night because the Shema gets to the very heart of what it means to know God. The Shema is the most well known passage in the Old Testament. Many have said that the whole Bible is simply a commentary, a discussion about, an outworking of, today's verses (the Shema).

So, whether you're someone who's known God for decades or whether you're someone who doesn't yet know God, if you dine on what this passage is saying, it can change your life. I felt like I was converted this week under this passage.

Today we're looking at Deuteronomy chapter 6. The Shema is simply verses 4-9 and oftentimes it's recited along with verses 20-25. So today we're in chapter 6, but we're focusing in on and I want you to hear verses 4-9 and 20-25.

**"Hear, O Israel: The LORD 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. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, 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. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates" (vv. 4-9).**

**"When your son asks you in time to come, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules that the LORD our God has commanded you?' then you shall say to your son, 'We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. And the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. And the LORD showed signs and wonders, great and grievous, against Egypt and against Pharaoh and all his household, before our eyes. And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in and give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers. And the LORD commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our good always, that he might preserve us alive, as we are this day. And it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to do all this commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us'" (vv.20-25).**

This passage gives us three keys to experiencing, falling into, a love that lasts forever: Love the Lord, Teach the Lord, Hear the Story of the Lord.

## I. Love the Lord.

The first thing the Shema tells us in verse 4 is that the Lord is "one." This is a big deal because the dominant belief of the time was that there were many gods, the world was full of many gods, there were different gods for different regions, races, and nations. The Israelites had just come out of Egypt where many different gods were worshipped, gods that the people themselves made, gods that the people came up with and designed. And the Israelites were now standing on the sidelines about to enter a new land where things would be the same way, a land with many different people who had created for themselves many different gods.

What Deuteronomy tells us is: "NO, there's one God, there's one Lord of the universe." No matter your race, your nation, your place, your personality, your preferences, or your politics...there's one God.

This isn't a god you make in your own image, this is the God who made us in his image. You don't make this God. You don't design this God. You discover this God. He existed long before you did. You don't make him...you discover him...you encounter him.

And this is how you relate to the one true God. Verse 5 says you love him. You love him! In Egypt the Israelites had to obey Pharaoh who was regarded as a god, as a lord. They had to pay allegiance to Pharaoh. But they never loved him. No other religion says this: "love God!" Other religions say appease god, obey god, do your duty, serve god, earn god's favor, perform. This is something totally different: love God. There's one true Lord and you relate to him by loving him.

How? What kind of love? The Shema says you're to love God with all your heart and all your soul and all your might. That's just a way of saying, "love the Lord with everything you've got." Love him from the inside out with all of you, with all of who you are. Total allegiance. Total affection. Total commitment. No rivals. Your heart...with all of your heart.

In other words, fall into this love. Fall in love with the Lord. Love him with everything you've got, have no rivals, never look back. What the ancient Israelites realized and what we need to realize is, the Shema calls for an over-the-top kind of love. Reckless abandon. This love, it's more than a feeling, it's heart-captured total commitment. Total heart. Total soul. Total might.

What kind of relationship does the Lord want with you? What kind of relationship is the Lord worthy of? The Lord is one. Don't think you can love the Lord with a lesser love than you'd give to a spouse.

On my wedding day I didn't say "I do" to several women—to Taylor, Tonya, Terry, and Theresa. I said "I do," "I love you," to one woman—to Taylor. No rivals. I didn't give Taylor half my heart, a portion of my soul,

and some of my might. I spoke my vows and gave her all of me, all of my love, my heart. Reckless abandon. All of me committed to one woman.

Why? Why'd I do it? Why did I commit to loving one woman with all my heart? Because I "had to?" Because I felt like I "should?" Because it was my duty? It was a difficult choice, I wrestled with it, and eventually I decided I better marry the girl? No! I wanted to. I had fallen in love. I had fallen for Taylor and I wanted to make a commitment to her and her only.

Do we know the Lord like this? Do we love him, are we committed to him, because we want him, because we've fallen for him? Many of us here know about the Lord, but do you know the Lord? Do you know him? Do you love him with all your heart? Your heart. Is your heart involved?

Honey. There's a difference between knowing about honey and actually tasting honey. There's a difference between being told that honey is sweet and actually tasting sweet honey on your lips. To be told is different than to taste. The Bible doesn't invite us merely to know about the Lord, but to taste, to know, to love the Lord. Psalm 34:8 says, "**Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good!**"

I have a good relationship with my wife, I love her with all my heart, not because I know some facts about her (blond hair, energetic personality, really sweet). I love her because I know her. I've tasted honey! I've experienced, I've been captured by her sweetness. I've fallen for her.

But have I fallen for the Lord? Do I merely know about him, or have I tasted him? Is my commitment to him that of a man in love or that of a man trying to do his duty?

What about you?

There are three types of people in the world: Rebels, Taxpayers, and Lovers.

**Rebels:** don't want to obey God, therefore they disobey...they run their own life.

**Taxpayers:** also don't want to obey God, yet they usually end up obeying because they feel like they should, they're afraid of what happens if they don't. They're duty bound. (most of us)

**Lovers:** want to obey God. These are the people who have fallen in love. These are the people who've tasted the honey. These are the people who've discovered the one true Lord.

The Shema, all of Scripture, invites us to become this third type of person, to become lovers of the Lord, not taxpayers.

## II. Teach the Lord.

Do you remember the first time you saw the Grand Canyon, or Yosemite, or Niagara Falls? When you first saw that beauty, that grandness, you didn't have to force yourself to talk about it. You couldn't

help but talk about and express your excitement over this place that you loved being at.

A gal in the twenties group falls in love with a guy in the twenties group. It's not a chore for that gal to talk about her guy. She can't help but talk and talk about her new love. When you love something, when you love someone with all your heart, you can't help but talk about it. What we love most is what we communicate about the most, what we most want to share with others.

Long ago, the Shema called for every adult Israelite to teach, to communicate about, the Lord and his ways because this was the natural outflow of a love relationship with the Lord and because teaching the Lord passed this relationship on to others, particularly the next generation. A relationship with the Lord is a relationship that's meant to be shared, that's better shared.

This passage isn't addressed to an individual. The Shema is addressed to a community, a community that was falling in love with the Lord together. As a community we're summoned to teach one another what it means for us to love the Lord with all of our heart in every nook and cranny of our lives, and to pass this love on to the next generation.

These next few verses of the Shema, verses 6-9, have a lot to say to us as a whole church, but first...raise your hand if you're a parent who has one or more children still living under your roof.

Parents, you are a missionary to your kids. Your mission is, as this passage charges you, to teach the Lord to your children. Verse 6 says "you" shall teach the Lord to your children, not "they" shall teach the Lord to your children. "You" not "they." This isn't a job for professionals and preachers and Sunday school teachers. This is your job.

At the absolute center of what it means to be a Christian parent stands this exciting responsibility to teach your kids about the Lord, to talk about this love that you've fallen into, this love that's changed your life.

When do you do this? Once a week? Once in a while? No. Verse 7 says, "**you shall talk of them [the Lord and his ways] when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.**"

How do you do this? Do you learn how to teach? Do you write up an outline? Do you go to seminary? No. Verse 7 says, "talk." You talk. According to the Shema, a teacher simply means a talker.

Parents, your job is to simply talk about the Lord with your kids. And you do this as you do life, from breakfast to bedtime. Today, tomorrow, and Tuesday. What you're responsible to do, what you get to do, is talk about the Lord and his ways with your kids when you're in your pajamas, when you're eating waffles, when you're running late, when you're stuck in traffic, when you're changing a light bulb, when you're changing a diaper, when you're watching TV, when you're playing catch, when you're cooking dinner, when you're on vacation, when you're brushing your teeth, when you turn out the lights and say "good night." You talk about the Lord as you do life.

Why? Why do you do this? Because you love God and you can't help talking about him and you can't wait for your kids to discover him and fall in love with him. Your kids aren't going to fall in love with a Lord you never talk about, with a Lord they don't see you celebrating and savoring and trusting and loving throughout the week when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.

What are you passing on to your kids? What do you teach, what do you talk about in your home?

There's a saying: "The first generation preaches the gospel. The second generation assumes the gospel. The third generation loses the gospel." Don't assume the gospel, don't assume the Lord in your home. If you do assume the Lord rather than talk about the Lord, don't be surprised when your kids leave your home and seem to want nothing to do with the Lord and one day you find yourself babysitting grandkids who don't know the Lord you know.

Verse 7 says "diligently" teach the Lord to your children. We can't assume the Lord in our homes. It ought to be our joy to diligently, intentionally teach and talk about the Lord.

I'm hesitant to do this, but I'm going to do it, because ultimately I think it will be helpful. I think it will be helpful if I share with you how Taylor and I are attempting to do in our home what this passage talks about. As a dad I'm always looking for models and practical application.

Here's what Shema, here's what trying to teach the Lord to our children, looks like in our home right now. Here's three things we're doing in our home:

1. We're trying to make talking about the Lord in our home a "normal" thing. Right now I just tell Cru what I'm excited about, what I'm enjoying and learning about God. He doesn't understand any of it right now, but it's forging how I relate with my son.

Verse 7 doesn't mean "force it," turn every moment with your children into a sermon, hit the non-stop campaign trail for Jesus. No, the idea is to simply make talking about the Lord a normal thing in your home, a part of everyday life.

2. We have "family worship" 4-ish times a week for a few minutes right before we put Cru to bed. Family worship—focused time meeting with the Lord together as a family—is a lost tradition that many of us should bring back in our homes. It makes Sundays make more sense to kids. A few minutes reading a children's Bible out loud, then a brief prayer.

3. We're teaching Cru to pray—at different times, with folded hands, saying "Thank you Boppa, Amen!"

So, that's our imperfect attempt at putting this stuff into practice in our home.

Hearing this "teach the Lord" stuff is either encouraging or discouraging for you. Some of you are thinking about your past and wishing you had parents

that had done a better job at this. Some of you are thinking about your own parenting and feeling regret. You can't change your past. Don't dwell on the past. Forgive who you need to forgive or repent of what you need to repent of, then simply move on and start where you are.

Parents, your privilege is to teach the Lord to your kids. What is God calling this to look like in your home? Stick with this question this week. And, fathers, you are the spiritual leader of your home. Take the lead in this.

What is teaching the Lord supposed to look like in your home? Whatever the answer, just start talking.

Now, what about those of you who don't have kids, or whose kids have long since left the home—what does this passage mean for you? We're all family here, aren't we? The local church is a family. The Shema was originally addressed to a community that included many people without children—singles, married people with grown children or no children, widows and widowers. All of those people were called to and all of us are called to be caught with a love for the Lord that propels us to talk about him and teach his ways to one another.

As a member of this family, let me speak to my family about this issue of teaching the Lord to one another. I see God at work in you! I see God at work in this family. My week would've been very different had it not been for a member of this family who talked to me about the Lord over a burrito on Monday.

We're in this together. We're family and together we're falling in love with the Lord as we teach him to our kids and to one another. Sometimes that takes place in a big room on Sunday mornings. Sometimes that takes place over burritos. Let's keep at it.

### III. Hear the Story of the Lord.

Love the Lord. Teach the Lord. Now, the third key, the most important key, to falling in love forever: Hear the Story of the Lord. Look at what happens in verse 20.

Verse 20 poses a question: "When your son asks you in time to come, 'What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules the Lord our God has commanded you?' Basically verse 20 says, when your son asks you "why?" Why? Now we're getting to the "why" of this relationship—why love the Lord with all your heart, why teach his ways? Good question.

Before we get the answer, parents, a quick word with you. Notice what this verse teaches about the kind of relationship you're called to cultivate with your kids. The curiosity of the child is what drives getting to this "why" question.

Now, the response to the question. A son asks his dad (presumably) the big "why" question, "why love the Lord with all your heart?" And notice what the dad doesn't say. The dad doesn't say, "because." The dad doesn't say, "because God said so." He doesn't answer his son's question with another command. Raw obedience. "God said so, just do it, just obey."

That kind of explanation won't change a heart.

That kind of answer can't change someone from the inside out. That kind of answer might result in some short-term behavior modification...it might get you to pay your taxes, but it won't cause you to fall in love.

So, what does this dad do? How does he answer the question? He tells a story.

Step back for a minute. What was the first command in today's passage? We've had a number of commands: love, teach. But what came first? Shema! Hear! Before the text called us to love, before it called us to teach, it called us to hear.

So, shema. Hear. Listen as this dad tells his son the story of the Lord—the gospel of the Old Testament, the story of the Lord coming in to human history to rescue and love his people. Verses 21-24 give us the story. This is your story, too. Hear it.

Verse 21, "**we were pharaoh's slaves in Egypt.**" *Son, long before you were born, we were enslaved. We were lost. We were stuck. We were dying. We stood in desperate need of help, salvation, love.*

Verse 21 continues, "**And the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand.**" *Son, the Lord took notice of us. We didn't deserve it, but the Lord chose to love us and rescue us. Long before we wrote the Lord's laws on the doorposts of our house, we smeared blood on the doorposts of our house. The blood of a spotless lamb, the Passover lamb, went on our doorposts as a symbol of the Lord's love for us, that he loved us so much he passed over our sins and took away our guilt and shame. I was a little boy then...your age. I remember that night with the blood like it was yesterday.*

Verse 23, "**And he brought us out from there, that he might bring us in.**" *Son, the Lord not only rescued us from a bad place, he brought us in to this good place. He took care of us. He provided us and made us to flourish.*

Verse 24, "**And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always.**" *Son, after he brought us to this good place, the Lord gave us his word as a gift, for our good. Son, everything I've ever taught you about the Lord, it's for your good, so that you might live a good life, a full and fruitful life.*

*Son, that's why I love the Lord with all my heart...because he loved me with all his heart.*

Brothers and sisters, all these years later, there's another chapter to this story. There's another chapter to the Shema. The Lord is one. Yes. And, the Lord is three. The Lord is Trinity. We were slaves to sin. But the Father sent the Son, sent Jesus, to bring about the greatest exodus of all. Jesus the true Passover lamb shed his blood on the posts of a cross so that you and I could know God...forever. Then the Father and the Son sent the Spirit to fill us and enable us to taste the Lord's love.

Here's the Shema: Love the Lord with all your heart because he loves you with all his heart. He loves you! You don't deserve this, but if you've trusted Jesus,

the Lord loves you with all his heart, with all his soul, and with all his might.

Do you believe this? Do you really believe, in your heart, that the Lord loves you with all his heart?

You know what I learned this week? I made a discovery this week: 99% of my problems are a result of the fact that I don't believe the Lord loves me. Deep down, I don't believe the Lord loves me with all his heart. My problems: my fears, my worries, my insecurities, my stress...it's all explained by this...I have an unbelieving heart. Deep down I don't believe the Lord loves me with all his heart.

You know what else I learned this week? You have the same issue. 99% of your problems are a result of the fact that deep down you don't really believe the Lord loves you.

You're going through some hard times right now, the economy's bad, you've failed in some significant ways recently...how could the Lord love you with all his heart? Or maybe you've fallen in love before, thinking it was for your good, thinking it would last, only to have it fail you later. You don't believe in falling in love anymore, you don't believe in a love that's pure and perfect.

But verse 24 says the Lord is committed to "our good always." Friends, the Lord loves you! The Lord loved you in the past. The Lord loves you now. And the Lord will always love you. That's what the story says.

This passage gives us the key to truly knowing the Lord, to truly believe—head over heels—that he loves us: Shema! Hear. The key is to keep hearing this story of the Lord, this gospel of love. You've got to Shema, you've got to hear this story of the Lord and his love for you as often as possible. You've got to taste the honey on your lips every morning.

Because you hear other stories all week long—the story of our economy, the story of your own self talk, the stories of our culture—you've got to get a regular reminder, a way of hearing the story of the Lord and his love for you as often as possible which kindles your love for the Lord.

Hear O CPC, the Lord our God, the Lord is one...is three. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart because the Lord loves you with all his heart.