

# Lesson 5 | January 1, 2023

## Make God's Word Central

**Study Text:** Deuteronomy 6:1–9, 20–25; Psalm 119:9–16; Proverbs 1:8–9; 3:1–4

**Central Truth:** Teaching and practicing God's Word in the home forms a solid foundation for Christian discipleship.

### **Key Verse: Deuteronomy 6:7**

Thou shalt teach them [God's commands] diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up (KJV).

“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” (NLT.)

### **Learning Objectives**

- Students will learn the necessity of God's Word to building strong, godly families.
- Students will appreciate the resources God makes available to help parents engage their children in faith.
- Students will be able to evaluate how they can better teach godly values to others.

## **Introducing the Study**

**Say:** Today's lesson begins a unit on what it takes to build strong families, a critical need in today's society. Healthy families value and prioritize God's Word. Learning what it says and how to put it into practice in daily life lays a foundation that helps families to stand strong.

### **Opening Activity—Becoming Your Parents**

*Ask. What things do you remember your parents saying to you when you were a child? Have you found yourself saying those same things to your children or to other children?*

**Say:** Many people tend to live in the manner that was modeled for them. Thankfully, God's Word can strengthen what is healthy in a family and help us deal with what is unhealthy. Healthy families begin with the foundation of God's Word. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**A church is only as healthy as its families, whether a family consists of a couple with children at home, a single parent with children, or a couple who are empty nesters.**

Building a strong Christian family is impossible without embracing God's Word. Parents must love God and model a love for His Word in order to instill that devotion to God in their children. Parents are the primary teachers of godly values for children, but they do well to combine their efforts with those of pastors, Sunday School teachers, and others. A family and a church that is centered on God's Word is the best tool for developing both healthy families and healthy churches.

**Adrian Rogers said: We should believe in miracles but trust in Jesus. Do you understand what I'm saying? These miracles are not to have us put our faith in miracles. Our faith is to be in the Lord Jesus Christ. If you want a full and wonderful life, and the abundant life that we've been talking about, you must experience life in Jesus.**

## **Part 1—Embrace God's Word Life-Giving Commands**

Deuteronomy 6:1–3

**[Deu 6:1-3 KJV] 1 Now these [are] the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do [them] in the land whither ye go to possess it: 2 That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son's son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged. 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do [it]; that it may be well with thee, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey.**

**Say:** God's desire for His people Israel was that they enjoy long and prosperous lives when they settled in the Promised Land. His desire for us is that we enjoy the eternal life we can receive through Jesus Christ. God has given us life-giving commands through His written Word, His Son Jesus Christ, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Obedience to those commands will lead to spiritual growth for individuals, families, and churches. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**As the people of Israel were camped on the east side of the Jordan River, Moses reminded them of how the Lord had commanded them to live. Embracing God's decrees would show their reverence and respect for Him, and result in His abundant blessings.**

This last book written by Moses in the Pentateuch (the first five books in the Old Testament) is aptly named Deuteronomy, which means “second law.” God had given the Law earlier at Mount Sinai, but over and over, the people had disobeyed. A new generation had endured the wilderness wanderings and was prepared to enter the Promised Land. Moses instructed them in the commands God had given. By living in obedience to God, they would experience His blessings. By teaching those commands to their children and grandchildren, future generations could live in this land of abundance.

Reverence for God would grow as the Israelites saw His promised blessings poured out as a result of their obedience. Disobedience would result in fearing God, for they would experience the judgment He promised.

Christians are not saved by obedience to the Law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. However, like the Israelites, we do experience promised blessings as we live in obedience to God’s Word. Obedience is a way believers show their love for Jesus (John 14:21; 1 John 2:5). We must embrace God’s Word, for it instructs us how to live according to His good, pleasing, and perfect will.

### Is it possible for people to die before their time?

[Job 22:15-16 NKJV] 15 Will you keep to the old way Which wicked men have trod,  
16 Who were cut down before their time, Whose foundations were swept away by a flood?

[Isa 57:1 NLT] 1 Good people pass away; the godly often die before their time. But no one seems to care or wonder why. No one seems to understand that God is protecting them from the evil to come.

One of the greatest blessings of obedience is seeing our faith in God become real for our children and grandchildren. Setting an example of what it means to love God and live for Him may be the most effective way to influence others, both in our families and our communities, to live for Him. While many have never been parents, they have mentored sons and daughters in the faith. What a blessing to see the next generation embrace a strong faith in God.

#### ***Discuss***

? Do you think the expression, “Faith is better caught than taught,” is true? How can you be sure your family does both?

? How would you explain to others that living for God is more than just following the rules (commands) found in the Bible?

## **Wholehearted Commitment**

Deuteronomy 6:4–9

**[Deu 6:4-9 KJV] 4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God [is] one LORD: 5 And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6 And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7 And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. 8 And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. 9 And thou shalt write them upon the posts of thy house, and on thy gates.**

**[Deu 6:4-9 NLT] 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. 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.**

**Say:** Many people grew up learning that the Bible tells them that Jesus loves them from singing "Jesus Loves Me," a song written by Dr. William B. Bradbury in 1862. (Go ahead, sing it now!) This truth became foundational to the understanding of who God is for generations who learned the song. **Not only does Jesus love us, but He longs for our love in return. He wants our relationship with Him to be reflected in our daily life so it impacts the next generation.** (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**In this passage, Moses presented a confession of faith for the people of God by which they could acknowledge the one true God and know what their relationship with Him should be. Deuteronomy 6:4–9, known as the Shema, became the starting place for Jewish parents to teach their children about their faith in God and their relationship to Him. Every aspect of life was to be related to their faith in God and how it was expressed as they lived in wholehearted commitment to Him.**

**The Shema provided Jewish parents foundational truths to teach their children. It declares the God of Israel is the one true God who is to be loved with all one's being and obeyed wholeheartedly. Jesus reinforced this foundational truth by**

quoting the first verse of the Shema when asked about the greatest commandment (Mark 12:29).

[Mar 12:29 NLT] 29 Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The LORD our God is the one and only LORD.

Everyday activities provide opportunities to talk about God with children. As parents relate God to the things they do, children can come to see how He is a part of daily living. Connecting Scripture to activities helps children recognize the relevance of God's Word. Pictures and other items around the house serve as reminders of God and make children aware of His love and presence. Parents need to intentionally relate God to decisions they make. For strong and healthy families, loving and obeying God's Word must be a natural part of daily life. If our children don't know sin bothers us...

### Resource Packet Item 1: Peer Support

Prearrange for a panel of three or four experienced people from different backgrounds and ages. Give them a copy of the work sheet prior to class, then give a copy to students to take notes. Or distribute the work sheet to students and use it as a guide on how parents can teach children about their faith.

### *Discuss*

? Describe one example of how your parents (or a spiritual mentor) taught you about God and living for Him.

? What is involved in wholehearted commitment to God and His Word?

## Part 2—Teach God's Word

### Promote Righteous Living

Deuteronomy 6:20–25

[Deu 6:20-25 KJV] 20 [And] when thy son asketh thee in time to come, saying, What [mean] the testimonies, and the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD our God hath commanded you? 21 Then thou shalt say unto thy son, We were Pharaoh's bondmen in Egypt; and the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand: 22 And the LORD shewed signs and wonders, great and sore, upon Egypt, upon Pharaoh, and upon all his household, before our eyes: 23 And he brought us out from thence, that he might bring us in, to give us the land which he sware unto our fathers. 24 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 [it is] at this day. 25 And it shall be our righteousness, if we observe to do all these

**commandments before the LORD our God, as he hath commanded us.**

**Say: Children must be taught both how to live righteously and why they should do so.** Children ask lots of questions. While this may get tedious at times, parents should encourage questions about spiritual matters. If we don't teach God's Word to our children, particularly how it affects our choices, children may come to see the Bible only as a set of rules they are expected to follow rather than God's message of love to them. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Moses instructed Israelite parents to answer their children's questions by showing them that righteous living was tied directly to their identity as people chosen by God. He had redeemed them from slavery and provided a land for them to live in. Obedience to God's Word would result in right living that pleased God and in His continued blessings to them. When we recognize and celebrate our relationship with God and His work in our lives and in the lives of others, we help our children establish a pattern of trusting God for themselves.**

#### **Resource Packet Item 2: Title**

Distribute the case study and discuss the questions. You may choose to have read the case study aloud, then ask the questions and discuss them.

#### **How do we answer children's questions about why we obey God?**

The Israelites could answer their children's questions about why they obeyed God's commandments by drawing on their history. Their ancestors were slaves in Egypt. God redeemed them from their bondage while bringing judgment on their captors. God then brought the Israelites into the land He had promised to their forefathers. God's goodness to them would continue as they did what was right in His sight by following His commandments and showing reverence and love for Him.

**Parents and grandparents can draw on their spiritual history to help children see why they love God and live for Him. Whether you are a first-generation believer or come from a long line of faithful Christians, you can use your personal testimony to teach your children what life was like before coming to know Jesus and how you changed because of Jesus. Our obedience should be fueled by love and gratitude for who God is and what He has done. This is a much more effective example than grudgingly following the rules out of a sense of duty.**

#### ***Discuss***

? How can parents show that what they do is out of love for Jesus, not something they do out of a sense of duty?

? Why is it important for children to learn both what they should do and why they should do it?

## **Positive Influence**

Proverbs 1:8–9

**[Pro 1:8-9 KJV] 8 My son, hear the instruction of thy father, and forsake not the law of thy mother: 9 For they [shall be] an ornament of grace unto thy head, and chains about thy neck.**

**Say:** When God created the family structure, He planned that parents would have a lasting and positive influence on their children. This begins with adopting and practicing a Christian worldview in which reverence for God is foundational (Proverbs 1:7). God's Word is the basis of what is right and wrong. We must take time to study God's Word with our children. Instruction and correction are part of training up children so they will know what is good and what is evil. While there are no "spiritual insurance policies," teaching God's Word to our children is essential. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Parents are to be the primary teachers of their children. Often education is all about academic learning, and children, whose parents are involved in their academic experience, generally do better than children whose parents aren't. But children need to learn so much more than what is taught in an academic classroom. Children learn social skills from parents and grandparents and other caregivers very early in life. Attitudes and priorities, both good and bad, are modeled to children by them.**

**Spiritual instruction is an essential part of training up children. What children learn in the church setting should build on what they learn at home about God. Together, parents and church leaders can teach children about who God is and how they can live in a loving relationship with Him.** When children do not have the benefit of a two-parent household, or when parents are unbelievers, it is imperative for other believers to assist by providing support and loving instruction.

**Instruction includes positive reinforcement and correction. Both help children understand what is godly and beneficial, and what is sinful and harmful.**

**Throughout the Bible, blessings are promised for those who live godly lives.** (Psalm 1 is one example.) Proverbs 1:8,9 speaks of grace and honor being bestowed on those who follow the godly instruction of parents.

***Discuss***

? What are ways your parents or someone else were positive influences on your walk with God?

? What are benefits you have experienced from godly living?

## **Part 3—Obey God’s Word**

### **A Pure Life**

Psalm 119:9–16

**[Psa 119:9-16 KJV] 9 BETH. Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed [thereto] according to thy word. 10 With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. 11 Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. 12 Blessed [art] thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes. 13 With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. 14 I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies, as [much as] in all riches. 15 I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. 16 I will delight myself in thy statutes: I will not forget thy word.**

**Say:** The ability of parents to positively influence children is more difficult now than it was for earlier generations. Technology makes information and influencers readily available to children of every age. They are exposed to worldviews and lifestyles that are diametrically opposed to biblical ideals. We can minimize such exposure and counter it by adopting a godly lifestyle based on God’s Word as a model for our children. We can teach them that everything they encounter must be compared with the truth of God’s Word and the character of God. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Psalm 119 is an acrostic poem that focuses on how the Word of God is essential for believers to have an ongoing, vibrant relationship with God. Raising the question of how a young person can stay pure, verses 9–16 answer it with the clear instruction to internalize God’s Word. The investment we make in discovering what the Bible teaches and learning to put it into practice will pay eternal dividends. To summarize, we can: Embrace. Teach. Obey.**

**The best way to form a solid foundation for Christian discipleship in the home is to teach and practice God’s Word. Does this mean every child raised in a godly home will choose to love and serve God? Absolutely not! But the likelihood is greater than it would be if their influence comes primarily from the Internet or television.**



**Children will not know what is right and pure in God’s sight unless parents or other caring adults teach them. How can they obey what they do not know?** Note the purposeful choices the Psalmist speaks of in learning God’s Word and developing a heartfelt delight for it. (Look for “I have” or “have I” phrases in these verses.)

**Like anything worthwhile, teaching children to know and do God’s Word requires an investment of time, resources, and effort.** Developing consistent practices, such as having family devotions and attending worship services, will help instill godly values in children. As parents demonstrate joy in spending time with God, children will more likely follow that same pattern.

### **Resource Packet Item 3: Ideas and Suggestions for Discipleship Practices**

Distribute the information sheet to students. Briefly review the information provided, then allow students to share things that have helped them develop good discipleship practices in their homes.

#### ***Discuss***

? What can parents do to help develop a “get to” rather than a “have to” attitude as it relates to spiritual matters?

? How can children learn that purity is more than following certain rules?

## **A Satisfying Life**

Proverbs 3:1–4

**[Pro 3:1-4 KJV] 1 My son, forget not my law; but let thine heart keep my commandments: 2 For length of days, and long life, and peace, shall they add to thee. 3 Let not mercy and truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck; write them upon the table of thine heart: 4 So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.**

**Say:** Christian parents want their children to grow up to be good people who love and serve the Lord. When we teach our children to obey God’s Word, we lay the foundation for this outcome. We cannot make a decision for our children to follow Christ, but we can provide the example and opportunity for them to make their own choice to obey Him. (Share your highlights from the following text.)

**Proverbs 3:1–4 points to the benefits children can expect as they listen to and follow the godly instructions of their parents. Developing godly living can lead to a full and satisfying life. Pursuit of God and His kingdom contributes to a lifestyle that is not focused on worldly pursuits and possessions. Children learn to value relationships over possessions.**

Keeping these goals in mind can be challenging when trying to get through a chaotic day. Sometimes, getting out of the house in the morning with everyone having clean teeth, combed hair, mostly matching clothes, school bags, and work supplies can be an award-winning feat. It takes focus to keep the urgent from crowding out the important.

**Repetition is the key to learning. Verse 3 indicates that a key is staying watchful for the teaching moments each day provides. Remind children of how the Lord is part of the family's life and why the family serves Him. Point out the blessings the family receives as they remain obedient to His Word. Such reminders help children hide the Word in their hearts so they will "find favor and good understanding in the sight of God and man" (verse 4, KJV).**

### ***Discuss***

? How can parents help children understand that a godly lifestyle is a satisfying lifestyle?

? In what ways is the belief that "true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth" (1 Timothy 6:6, NLT) demonstrated in the lives of Christians?

## **What Is God Saying to Us?**

**Say:** Families that value and prioritize God's Word are more likely to be healthy and happy. We must look for ways to learn what it says and how to put it into practice in daily life. As we model godly living, we will find teachable moments that will allow us to teach our children to embrace, learn, and obey God's Word. Families that lay a biblical foundation can stand strong, even in an evil world.

## **Living It Out**

### **Ministry in Action**

- As you enter the new year, choose one new practice you can use to incorporate God's Word into family living.
- Evaluate the influencers that are speaking into the lives of your children.
- If you are not a parent, or if your kids are grown, look for a child or teenager that you can pray for and influence in a positive manner.

## **Daily Bible Readings**

### **Monday:**

God's Word Taught to Children.  
Psalm 78:1–7

**[Psa 78:1-7 KJV] 1 [[Maschil of Asaph.]] Give ear, O my people, [to] my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. 2 I will open my mouth in a parable: I will utter dark sayings of old: 3 Which we have heard and known, and our fathers have told us. 4 We will not hide [them] from their children, shewing to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and his strength, and his wonderful works that he hath done. 5 For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should**

make them known to their children: 6 That the generation to come might know [them, even] the children [which] should be born; [who] should arise and declare [them] to their children: 7 That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments:

**Tuesday:**

God's Word Instructs Us.

Psalm 119:33–40

[Psa 119:33-40 KJV] 33 HE. Teach me, O LORD, the way of thy statutes; and I shall keep it [unto] the end. 34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep thy law; yea, I shall observe it with [my] whole heart. 35 Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight. 36 Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness. 37 Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity; [and] quicken thou me in thy way. 38 Stablish thy word unto thy servant, who [is devoted] to thy fear. 39 Turn away my reproach which I fear: for thy judgments [are] good. 40 Behold, I have longed after thy precepts: quicken me in thy righteousness.

**Wednesday:**

God's Word Produces Righteousness.

Psalm 119:137–144

[Psa 119:137-144 KJV] 137 TZADDI. Righteous [art] thou, O LORD, and upright [are] thy judgments. 138 Thy testimonies [that] thou hast commanded [are] righteous and very faithful. 139 My zeal hath consumed me, because mine enemies have forgotten thy words. 140 Thy word [is] very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it. 141 I [am] small and despised: [yet] do not I forget thy precepts. 142 Thy righteousness [is] an everlasting righteousness, and thy law [is] the truth. 143 Trouble and anguish have taken hold on me: [yet] thy commandments [are] my delights. 144 The righteousness of thy testimonies [is] everlasting: give me understanding, and I shall live.

**Thursday:**

God's Word Provides Hope.

1 Thessalonians 4:13–17

[1Th 4:13-17 KJV] 13 But I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him. 15 For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive [and] remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. 16 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: 17 Then we which are alive

**[and] remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.**

**Friday:**

God's Word Discerns and Dissects.  
Hebrews 4:12–16

**[Heb 4:12-16 KJV] 12 For the word of God [is] quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and [is] a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things [are] naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. 14 Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast [our] profession. 15 For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as [we are, yet] without sin. 16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.**

**Saturday:**

God's Word Must Be Lived.  
James 1:22–27

**[Jas 1:22-27 KJV] 22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. 23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth [therein], he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. 26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion [is] vain. 27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, [and] to keep himself unspotted from the world.**