

The Bible addresses the parenting challenge in the “Shema.” This word means to “hear” and “obey.”

1) *Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. 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.*

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

To hear God without obeying God is not to hear God at all. Let us consider the parenting guide God lays down in the Old Testament.

1. Let Your Priorities Guide You

The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. Parents are to allow their relationship with God to determine their priorities. Take a few moments to consider your priorities. List five.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

What priorities do you want to see in your children?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

The Shema teaches parents that the way to teach priorities is through their lives. Review what you are saying and doing. What priorities are you teaching with your words and deeds?

2. Let Your Presence Be Known

Impress them on your children.

v. 7

You are the light of the world...let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in Heaven.

Matthew 5:14, 16

Being present with children makes a major impact on their lives. Children are influenced by people who spend time with them, listen to them, and make them feel important. Parental presence gives security and expresses value. Take time to evaluate what you are doing with your daily presence.

Choosing to be present at mealtime gives opportunity for people-making. Turn off the TV and put the phones away. Could the days of the week guide in teaching prayer? Could the evening meal give time to talk about the day’s “ups and downs?”

Can presence be given by attending important events? What about individual time with each family member once a week or at a special time each month? Giving presence often requires planning and disciplined commitment to focus on one another.

3. Let Your Performance Match Your Promises

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.

v.7

Communicating values properly requires recognizing our values. If we truly believe in our values, we will talk about what we believe and why. If we value each person, we will show our values in our attitudes toward one another and the way we talk with one another (Today’s words easily become tomorrow’s voices in our minds).

We want to live by our values. If integrity is a value, honesty needs to be a practice. If others are important, we need to help one another.

If we want others to behave well, we need to apologize when we fall short of this goal. No one is perfect and acknowledging our failure to live up to what we believe reveals authenticity. If forgiveness is needed, forgiveness should be granted, and consequences enforced. Then, let it go and leave it in the past. When real life struggles come, work together to face them. Difficulty is a part of life no one escapes. Difficulty becomes opportunity when we work together.

The text asks parents to model a godly life. Modeling requires talking about God's values and way of life and walking in that way. What changes do you need to make in parenting?

The New International Version, 1984 is the Bible translation used in this study.

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