

# BIBLE BRIEFING

## “Walkabout & Talk About”

DEUTERONOMY 6-7

### Introduction

A ‘walkabout’ was originally a *nomadic excursion into the Australian bush made by an Aborigine*. It now describes any walking tour of the countryside.

### The Christian life is the ultimate walkabout!

1. There is action and adventure. For instance, the devil is also about, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.
2. There is warfare. We’re to think of ourselves dressed like a Roman soldier, able to stand our ground.
3. As we go, our feet are shod with the Gospel as we seek to set captives free.

You get the idea. Think of the Christian walk as a walkabout.

As we look at Deuteronomy Six and Seven, we’re going to be encouraged in our Christian **walkabout**, and specifically, we’re going to be told to **talk about** the Lord as we’re walking about. We’ll see it in the famous *Shema* section, in Chapter Six... But I’m getting ahead of myself.

Moses liked to keep things simple. He had a lot to say; but it all revolved around one, simple point. It is these words: **You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.**

Not quite as catchy as *What Would Jesus Do...* But extremely effective. If you want to know how to think, how to act or react; if you want a guide for your beliefs and behaviors, just **love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.**

Let’s see how Moses framed these words.

Deuteronomy 6:1 “Now this *is* the commandment, *and these are* the statutes and judgments which the Lord your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe *them* in the land which you are crossing over to possess,

The Hebrew is emphatic here; Moses is calling attention to **the commandment**. In the following verses, God will boil the law down to the one ruling principle – the one commandment which encompasses all the commandments.

Deuteronomy 6:2 that you may fear the Lord your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged.

Deuteronomy 6:3 Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe *it*, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the Lord God of your fathers has promised you - ‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’

Quite a build up! It certainly grabs your attention. I’m ready to hear it! Before we do, this one other thing we need to be reminded of:

Deuteronomy 6:4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord *is* one!

This is the essential truth about God; He is a Person, not a force. Because He is a Person, we *can* love Him.

The statement **the Lord is one** certainly does not contradict the truth of the Trinity; in fact, it establishes that truth. The Hebrew word for **one** is *echad*, which speaks most literally of a compound unity, instead of using the Hebrew word *yacheed*, which speaks of an absolute unity or singularity.

Even the name of God in **the LORD our God** suggests the plurality of God; the Hebrew word is *Elohim*; and grammatically, it is a plural word used as if it were singular – the verbs and pronouns used with it are generally in the plural.

So here it is – the one thing that encapsulates everything you need to know:

Deuteronomy 6:5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

In Hebrew, this is known as the *Shema* (from the Hebrew word for *hear* in verse four). Jews would recite it several times a day.

It's not just effective in the Old Testament, for Jews. Jesus called this *the great commandment* (Matthew 22:37-38); and He said the second commandment, *you shall love your neighbor as yourself*, was *like* this first, great commandment. When we love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, and mind, we will find ourselves loving our neighbor as ourselves.

We often think God demands a hundred other things from us - our money, our time, our effort, our will, our submission, and so forth - but what God really wants is our love. When we really love the Lord with all of our heart, soul, and mind, then everything else is freely given to the Lord.

This one commandment is entrusted to parents, in order that they share it with their children:

Deuteronomy 6:6 "And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart.

Deuteronomy 6:7 You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up.

Deuteronomy 6:8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes.

Deuteronomy 6:9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

By the time of Jesus, the Jewish people took to wearing wearing phylacteries. Phylacteries are small boxes holding parchment with Scriptures on them, held to the forehead or hand with leather straps.

Jesus condemned abuse of the wearing of phylacteries among the Pharisees; they would make their phylactery boxes large and ostentatious as a display of greater spirituality (Matthew 23:5).

*You shall write them on the doorposts of your houses* has led to the Jewish practice of the *mezzuzah*; the small container, holding a passage of Scripture, to be nailed to a doorpost.

The modern equivalent of the phylactery is the Christian t-shirt. You may have a mezzuzah; but, if not, I'll bet you've got Scripture on your walls. All of that is OK... But the intent of the passage is that the Word of God be constantly in your head, in your heart, in your hands (in the sense of applying it).

The moral and biblical education of **children** is accomplished best not in a formal teaching period each day but when the parents, out of concern for their own lives as well as their children's, make God and His Word the natural topic of a conversation which might occur anywhere and anytime – in fact, all the time, during the day. After all, you always talk about what you truly love!

It all sounds so simple. Why is it so hard to love God, and to pass-on that love to our kids?

Moses tells us why in the remainder of Chapter Six. At least, he gives us several reasons why our love often waxes cold. The first is something we rarely consider: Prosperity can cool your love for the Lord.

Deuteronomy 6:10 “So it shall be, when the Lord your God brings you into the land of which He swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give you large and beautiful cities which you did not build,  
Deuteronomy 6:11 houses full of all good things, which you did not fill, hewn-out wells which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant - when you have eaten and are full -  
Deuteronomy 6:12 *then* beware, lest you forget the Lord who brought you out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

We rarely think of prosperity as a danger or a pitfall. It is just a lot easier to **forget the LORD your brought you out... from the house of bondage** when there are no circumstances forcing you to remember Him.

A second cooler is to Envy unbelievers:

Deuteronomy 6:13 You shall fear the Lord your God and serve Him, and shall take oaths in His name.  
Deuteronomy 6:14 You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who *are* all around you

Deuteronomy 6:15 (for the Lord your God *is* a jealous God among you), lest the anger of the Lord your God be aroused against you and destroy you from the face of the earth.

We can feel bound by love, as if we are being restricted. Unbelievers seem so carefree, able to experience so many more pleasures.

God is *jealous* in the sense He knows and wants what is best for us. If you are a parent: Have you set reasonable limits, boundaries, and restrictions for your kids? Isn't it because you love them?

A third cooler is Impatience:

Deuteronomy 6:16 "You shall not tempt the Lord your God as you tempted *Him* in Massah.

At Massah they thought God was trying to kill them because He had brought them to a place where there was no water. Israel *tempted* the LORD by doubting His love and concern for them in their difficulties. They were impatient with His plan when it involved hardships.

We've seen three coolers. Want to keep your love hot? **Walk about** with, and **talk about**, the Lord.

Deuteronomy 6:17 You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God, His testimonies, and His statutes which He has commanded you.

Deuteronomy 6:18 And you shall do *what is* right and good in the sight of the Lord, that it may be well with you, and that you may go in and possess the good land of which the Lord swore to your fathers,

Deuteronomy 6:19 to cast out all your enemies from before you, as the Lord has spoken.

Walkabout with the Lord, doing what is *right and good* in His sight because you realize He is right there with you, and your love will remain hot.

Talk about the Lord – especially with your kids:

Deuteronomy 6:20 "When your son asks you in time to come, saying, 'What *is the meaning of* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which the Lord our God has commanded you?'

Deuteronomy 6:21 then you shall say to your son: 'We were slaves of Pharaoh in Egypt, and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand;  
Deuteronomy 6:22 and the Lord showed signs and wonders before our eyes, great and severe, against Egypt, Pharaoh, and all his household.  
Deuteronomy 6:23 Then He brought us out from there, that He might bring us in, to give us the land of which He swore to our fathers.  
Deuteronomy 6:24 And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, for our good always, that He might preserve us alive, as *it is* this day.  
Deuteronomy 6:25 Then it will be righteousness for us, if we are careful to observe all these commandments before the Lord our God, as He has commanded us.'

This is the second time in just a few verses Moses has reminded us of the awesome privilege of talking to our kids about the Lord. Along these lines, I'm also reminded of the New Testament admonition for leaders to have their homes in order and to raise godly kids.

Even secular sources are admitting that parents are not sacrificing to raise their kids, and that is why kids are out of control. Even Christian kids are being ignored by their parents. Parenting cannot take a day-off, or a back seat to our own pleasures and priorities.

These factors we've discussed go together. For example: We all want what is 'best' for our kids. For many people, that means prosperity. But, as we seek after prosperity, we end up relegating training our kids to others; or think we'll have plenty of time in the future... And we lose them.

Moses thought that loving God was the single most important thing, the foundation and fountain of everything else. And passing it on to your kids was your greatest joy and responsibility.

I think we can look at Chapter Seven from the perspective of helping us pass along love for God to our kids, to the next generation. There are two themes in Chapter seven, two ideas, part of a Christian world view, that we want our kids to 'get' from us as we walkabout and talk about the Lord.

The first theme is **Separation**. From the call of Abraham to the exodus from Egypt, the people of Israel were expected to be a

separated people, not because they were better than any other nation but because they were different. They were God's chosen people.

Separation is not isolation; for if believers are isolated, how can they be "the salt of the earth" and "the light of the world" and influence others for the Lord? Believers can be separated from sin and to the Lord and still be involved in the normal challenges and activities of human life. Abraham was allied with some of his neighbors in Canaan and together they defeated the invaders and rescued the people of Sodom and Gomorrah; yet Abraham never lived or worshiped as his neighbors did. Jesus was the "friend of publicans and sinners," and yet He was "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners." Jesus had contact with the real world and its people but He wasn't contaminated from that contact. True biblical separation is contact without contamination. We're different from the world but not odd. When you're different, you attract people and have opportunities to share the good news of Christ; but when you're odd, you repel people and they slam the door on your witness.

In terms of talking about separation with kids, it's important to keep in mind that separation means safety; and you see that in the first six verses of Chapter Seven.

Deuteronomy 7:1 "When the Lord your God brings you into the land which you go to possess, and has cast out many nations before you, the Hittites and the Girgashites and the Amorites and the Canaanites and the Perizzites and the Hivites and the Jebusites, seven nations greater and mightier than you,

Deuteronomy 7:2 and when the Lord your God delivers them over to you, you shall conquer them *and* utterly destroy them. You shall make no covenant with them nor show mercy to them.

Deuteronomy 7:3 Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.

Deuteronomy 7:4 For they will turn your sons away from following Me, to serve other gods; so the anger of the Lord will be aroused against you and destroy you suddenly.

Deuteronomy 7:5 But thus you shall deal with them: you shall destroy their altars, and break down their *sacred* pillars, and cut down their wooden images, and burn their carved images with fire.

Deuteronomy 7:6 "For you *are* a holy people to the Lord your God; the Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for Himself, a special treasure above all the peoples on the face of the earth.



Separation is to be celebrated, not lamented, no matter how much your kids complain and want to do what everyone else is doing. It keeps them safe from so many things.

In verses seven through sixteen, you learn that separation brings blessing.

Deuteronomy 7:7 The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any other people, for you were the least of all peoples;

Deuteronomy 7:8 but because the Lord loves you, and because He would keep the oath which He swore to your fathers, the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of bondage, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

Deuteronomy 7:9 “Therefore know that the Lord your God, He *is* God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;

Deuteronomy 7:10 and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face.

Deuteronomy 7:11 Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them.

Deuteronomy 7:12 “Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that the Lord your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers.

Deuteronomy 7:13 And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you.

Deuteronomy 7:14 You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be a male or female barren among you or among your livestock.

Deuteronomy 7:15 And the Lord will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay *them* on all those who hate you.

Deuteronomy 7:16 Also you shall destroy all the peoples whom the Lord your God delivers over to you; your eye shall have no pity on them; nor shall you serve their gods, for that *will be* a snare to you.

God’s covenant was a covenant of love, and He would show His love by blessing them if they obeyed and chastening them if they disobeyed. Privilege always brings responsibility, and Israel’s responsibility was to obey God’s commandments, for then He could bless them as He promised.



Their blessings were material; ours are primarily spiritual. Spiritual blessings are better, and to be preferred; but we must work hard to communicate that they are better.

The remainder of Chapter Seven presents another part of our world view as Christians: We live by God's Promises.

Deuteronomy 7:17 "If you should say in your heart, 'These nations are greater than I; how can I dispossess them?' -

Deuteronomy 7:18 you shall not be afraid of them, *but* you shall remember well what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt:

Deuteronomy 7:19 the great trials which your eyes saw, the signs and the wonders, the mighty hand and the outstretched arm, by which the Lord your God brought you out. So shall the Lord your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.

Deuteronomy 7:20 Moreover the Lord your God will send the hornet among them until those who are left, who hide themselves from you, are destroyed.

Deuteronomy 7:21 You shall not be terrified of them; for the Lord your God, the great and awesome God, *is* among you.

Deuteronomy 7:22 And the Lord your God will drive out those nations before you little by little; you will be unable to destroy them at once, lest the beasts of the field become *too* numerous for you.

Deuteronomy 7:23 But the Lord your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed.

They had God's promises of conquest and triumph. They were not empty promises, to be followed by blind faith. No, the Lord had been faithful in the past, He had proven Himself; and they could therefore trust every promise of His Word.

Notice that God had a timetable for triumph. *Little by little* they would conquer and triumph, else *the beasts of the field become too numerous*. Patience, patience as we wait on the promises of God.

Separation and promise are the themes. They are taught, but must also be *caught* as children see you apply them – as in the closing verses:

Deuteronomy 7:23 But the Lord your God will deliver them over to you, and will inflict defeat upon them until they are destroyed.

Deuteronomy 7:24 And He will deliver their kings into your hand, and you will destroy their name from under heaven; no one shall be able to stand against you until you have destroyed them.

Deuteronomy 7:25 You shall burn the carved images of their gods with fire; you shall not covet the silver or gold *that is* on them, nor take *it* for yourselves, lest you be snared by it; for it *is* an abomination to the Lord your God.

Deuteronomy 7:26 Nor shall you bring an abomination into your house, lest you be doomed to destruction like it. You shall utterly detest it and utterly abhor it, for it *is* an accursed thing.

Any **abominations** in your house? Your kids will be affected by them – prone to ignore separation, and to disbelieve God's promises.

Conclusion

I know it sounds cheesey... But you'll remember it, so I'll say it: Your Christian life is a walkabout on which you talk about the Lord.