

## **Chapter 1: Determine Your Course**

### **Dig Deeper:**

Passage: Read Deuteronomy 6:1-25. This is the key passage for the majority of our study. It is sort of a “mini-Bible” for successful spiritual parenting in an ungodly world. We are going to explore a little bit of this passage each week to see what we can learn for safely making the journey from “Egypt” to the “Promised Land” (verse 1) with our children.

*Verse 2, 4-5: “...so that you and your son and your grandson might fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. ...Hear, O Israel! The LORD is 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.”*

Many parents want to know, “Which commandments and statutes are we supposed to keep today? The Old Testament is full of them—what are we to teach our children as required for obedience?” I believe God made the answer VERY simple. He alluded to it in verse 1 and spelled it out in verse 5. Read Matthew 22:36-40 out loud.

### **True love for God manifests in at least 3 important ways:**

**1. Read John 14:21. True love manifests as \_\_\_\_\_.**

**2. Read the following passages.**

*“When you have finished paying all the tithe of your increase in the third year, the year of tithing, then you shall give it to the Levite, to the stranger, to the orphan and to the widow, that they may eat in your towns and be satisfied. You shall say before the LORD your God, ‘I have removed the sacred portion from my house, and also have given it to the Levite and the alien, the orphan and the widow, according to all Your commandments which You have commanded me; I have not transgressed or forgotten any of Your commandments.’” Deuteronomy 26:12-13*

*“Pure and undefiled religion in the sight of our God and Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.” James 1:27*

Note that the word “visit” is translated from the Greek word, “episkeptomai” and it means: to look after, have care for, provide for.

*“Then the righteous will answer Him, ‘Lord, when did we see You hungry, and feed You, or thirsty, and give You something to drink? And when did we see You a stranger, and invite You in, or naked, and clothe You? When did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?’ The King will answer and say to them, ‘Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.’” Matt. 25:37-40*

**True love for God manifests itself by showing love to \_\_\_\_\_.**

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### 3. Read 1 John 3:17-18. True love for God manifests by showing love to \_\_\_\_\_.

It's important to see that families were instructed to keep the Law with its foundation in LOVE even way back in the days of Moses. So then we teach our children to live in the freedom of holding all their personal choices up to these two commandments. The "Law of Love" is their "measuring tape" in every activity in life. It's really that simple.

- If I do this thing, will I still be showing love to God with my whole being?
- If I do this thing, will I be showing love to my neighbor? Would I want this done to me?

#### Group Interaction:

- In OMA chapter 1, two roles of believers are presented in dealing with the hurts and needs (physical or spiritual) of the "victims" of this world. The roles were "bystanders" or "heroes." Which role is your family currently playing and how (share with the group)?
- Share with the group a time when your family played the role of "hero" for a person or situation in need. What did you do? How did it feel? What were your family's reactions?
- Who are some young people (0-21) you know who are actively changing their world for Christ, whether the world around them or the world at large? What are they doing? What sets their attitudes and actions apart from those of their peers?

#### Bring it Home:

For this section each week, we will focus on one characteristic that the "Perfect Parent," Jesus, worked to build into His children (disciples). Take the 7 verses for each characteristic, and read one each day of the week to your children. Then use the questions as a springboard of discussion to involve them in applying it to their lives. Make sure you share examples from your own life so they can see the principles in action.

#### Jesus taught His disciples to LOVE...

Day 1: Read Matthew 22:36-40:

*"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"*

*"And He said to him, 'YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND.' This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."*

1. What does "all your heart, soul, and mind" mean?
2. Who is your "neighbor"?
3. How can you really tell if you have love for God and people?
4. Why do you think that loving God and people are more important than all the other commandments?

Day 2: Read Matthew 6:24:

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*"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."*

1. What is a "master" in this passage?
2. Think of an example of someone trying to serve two different masters that have opposite purposes. What kinds of things might that person do to try to show loyalty to both?
3. Why wouldn't this work out very well?
4. Is wealth the only "master" that might try to take you away from God? If not, name some others.

Day 3: Read John 14:15, 21

*"If you love Me, you will keep My commandments. He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him."*

1. Why do you think that keeping God's commandments shows Him love?
2. Can people keep commandments for reasons other than love? If so, why? And what is the result of obeying commandments without love?
3. What are some of the rewards of keeping God's commandments because you love Him?
4. What did Jesus mean when He said, "I will disclose Myself to him"?

Day 4: Read Mark 10:21:

*Looking at him, Jesus felt a love for him and said to him, "One thing you lack: go and sell all you possess and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me."*

1. How was Jesus showing love to the man by asking him to give up his possessions?
2. Does Jesus ask everyone to give up all their possessions?
3. Why might a person have to give up something for God?
4. Is a person rewarded for obeying when God asks them to give up something important? When? How?

Day 5: Read John 21:15

*"So when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?' [Peter] said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.' [Jesus] said to him, 'Tend My lambs.'"*

1. Who are Jesus' lambs?
2. What did Jesus mean to "tend" them?
3. How can you tend His lambs now?

Day 6:

Read Matthew 5:43-47:

*"You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven; for He causes His sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what*

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*reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? If you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same?"*

1. What is an enemy?
2. Do you have any person like that in your life right now?
3. What could you do to show love to that person?
4. Spend a few moments praying for your enemies right now together.

Day 7: Read John 13:34-35

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."*

1. Do you think your friends and family know that you are a disciple of Jesus by your love?
2. How do you show your love for them?
3. What action could you do today to show someone close to you that you love them?
4. What is something you learned this week about love?