

A NOTE TO PARENTS

“These words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart; and 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. ...”

Deuteronomy 6:6-7

A crucial part of the Jewish law is this provision that the Law itself shall be honored and revered, studied, discussed, and, most important of all, taught to one's children. Jewish society developed institutions for passing on an increasingly elaborate tradition of study and commentary on the Law, while the family, as the primary place of worship and teaching, had the role of fostering an attitude of reverence and delight in God's ways.

Children learn in the family through habit and example. Much of what will become our children's basic world view will be things that we do not even realize we have taught them—that we may not have consciously expressed even to ourselves. “It's important to be on time;” “That's women's work;” “Count your blessings;” “Grownups don't cry;” “Do it if you can get away with it”—these or any of a thousand other “laws” may be the most important commandments in our household, without our even being aware of the fact. We can let our children grow up with their central attitudes formed by osmosis in this way; or we can try, as the rabbis did, to understand the laws we live by. Jesus criticized the Pharisees for their pursuit of learning in the Law as an end in itself. But there is also an opposite danger. We need to take the time to examine our values, and articulate what is most important to us as God's children.

Try asking your children what they feel are the basic rules that guide your family. Write down, together, everything you can think of. Then decide, like Jesus, which are the “most important of all.” Try to express them in some all-inclusive way, as Jesus did. Write your “commandments” on a poster and place them in the kitchen—talk of them as you go out and come in, teach them diligently to your children ... and live them yourselves.

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The scribes and teachers asked Jesus,
“Which of God's laws is the
most important?”

MARK 12:28



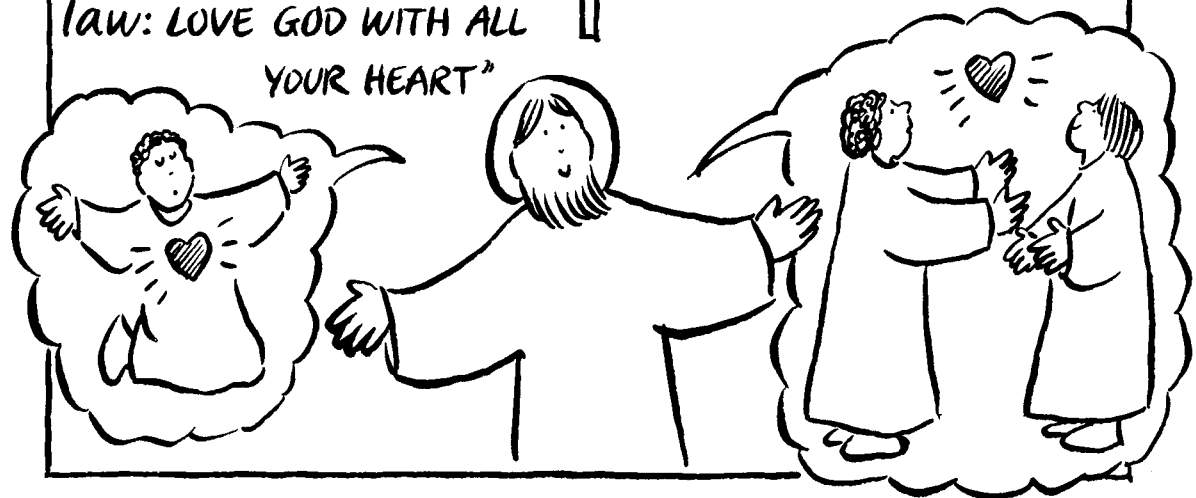
In Jerusalem, people crowded around Jesus, asking him questions about God's laws.

Some of them were his enemies. They wanted him to say something that would get him into trouble.



Jesus would not argue with them. He said, "This is the most important law: LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART"

"...and the next most important is: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF."



The Bible is full of rules. In Jesus's time, many very smart people spent their lives studying those rules, and arguing about what they meant.

Jesus said that is not what the Bible is for. He said God's law is not hard to understand. We should not be arguing about it, but trying to obey it—by loving God and other people.

These words shall be on your heart

♥
DEUTERONOMY
6:6-7
♥

You shall teach them to your children

Draw some children, learning about God's laws. Who is teaching them?