

**STUDY QUESTIONS—Leader's Guide****The Shema**

Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 4:32-40; 6:4-9

Leaders: *The Jews considered The Shema the most important verse in the Old Testament. It was the response of God's people to His love and faithfulness. According to the Hebrew model of teaching, "to hear" was "to obey." When Moses spoke the words of God in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, it was in the context of the past works of God. Israel wasn't asked to love God based on their own self-will. Israel was to respond to God's love because of what God had already done.*

*The goal of this study is to understand how God loves us because of His past, present, and future love and faithfulness, not because of ours.*

**Getting Started**

Do you like making lists to accomplish tasks or to help you remember things? Is there another way you remind yourself?

If you made a list of the ways in which you see evidence of God's love for you, what would you write down?

**Digging Deeper** *(Review Deut. 6:4-9 with the group.)*

Read some of "the past" in Deuteronomy 4:32-40. What are some of the ways God has loved Israel? (see v. 33, 34, 36-38)

Can you relate to any of these? Why or why not?

Why did God show Israel "these things"? (see v. 35-40) What "things" has God shown you?

Leaders: Additional questions for discussion

If your "past" were in print, would God's love and faithfulness play a central role or background character?

When it comes to our close relationships (spouse, family, friends) what causes you to love them more? The past? The present? The future?

Consider this quote...

"Religious profession is meaningless unless it is translated into practice." (Donald F. Ackland in *Studies in Deuteronomy*).

How do you "practice" your faith? If you don't, what is one way you can begin?

**Application**

Even though God's word is full of the way He loved, loves, and will love us, it can still be a struggle to grasp the love of God and how to respond to that love

What is the one thing God could do to convince you of His love? Write it down.

As a group, brainstorm practical ways to remember God's love throughout the day (a note on your dashboard, a dot on your face, be creative).

**CHALLENGE!**

We are to remind ourselves of the reality of Deuteronomy 6:4-9 because life makes it very easy to forget. When we are at a loss for words to express who God is, sometimes it helps when we read scripture to remind us of God's unfailing love and unending faithfulness.

Memorize Psalm 33:16-22 this week. Take one verse a day, and by the end of the week you'll have it memorized.

When we know who God is and what He does for us, our love for Him can grow.