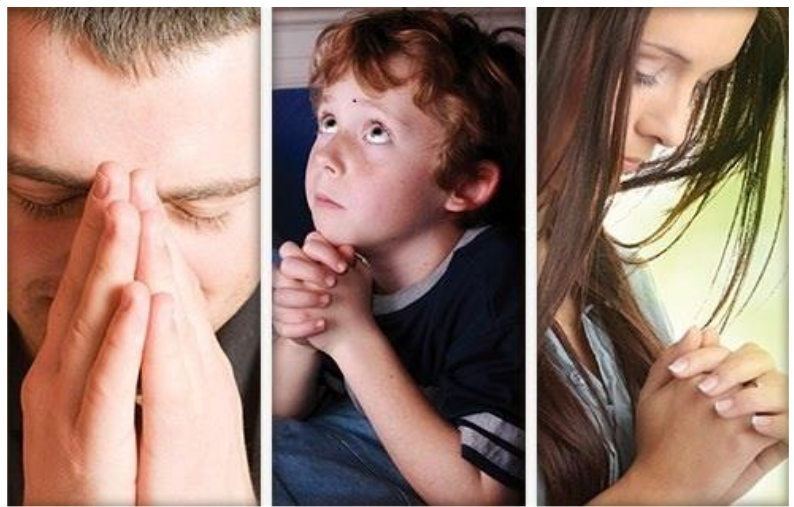




TO LOVE
THE LORD
YOUR GOD

Deuteronomy 6:4-9 is the “*Shemá*” (Heb. שמע, “listen”), one of the most important prayers of the people of Israel.

God is introduced as the only true god in these verses. He asks us to love Him with all our hearts. Is it an easy or challenging task?



שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד

Listen, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord alone



- Who should love God?
- Both loving and fearing God?
- Why should we love God?
- How can we show our love for God?
- How should we love God?

WHO SHOULD LOVE GOD?

“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.” (Deuteronomy 6:1)



God’s prescriptions were meant to be passed on from one generation to the next generation, so that “you, and your son and your grandson” would keep them (Dt. 6:2).

God wants us to keep them too, so “that it may be well with you” (Dt. 6:3). The first command God wants us to keep is to fully love Him above any person or object (Dt. 6:5).



This is a personal command that each person must fulfill. I must love *MY* God with all *MY* heart, with all *MY* soul, and with all *MY* strength.



BOTH LOVING AND FEARING GOD?

"that you may fear the Lord your God," (Deuteronomy 6:2)

God asks us to fear Him even before asking us to love Him.

What does fearing God mean?



Being afraid of Him since we deserve His punishment because we have sinned (Dt. 9:19; Ps. 119:120)



Although we deserve to be punished for our sins, God forgives us and gives us life (v. 1-5)

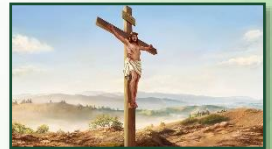


Admiring Him and respecting His authority, power, justice, and rectitude (Ex. 14:31; Ps. 47:2; 66:5)



He transforms us by His power, and enables us to love and serve Him (v. 6-10)

We love and fear God at the same time for everything He has done for us "in Christ Jesus" (v. 7).



WHY SHOULD WE LOVE GOD?

"We love Him because He first loved us." (1 John 4:19)

In Deuteronomy, Moses reminded the Israelites how God had loved their ancestors (4:37; 10:15) and themselves (7:7-8; 23:5; 33:3). God had rescued them from Egypt because He loved them, and He would keep loving them (7:13).

He had rescued them from slavery and loved them long before He told them to love Him (Dt. 6:5), even before they became a nation.



Our greatest motivation to love God is that He loved us first, "and given Himself for us" (Eph. 5:2), even before we existed.



HOW CAN WE SHOW OUR LOVE FOR GOD?

"If you love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15)

Dt. 5:10

Those who love Me and keep My commandments

Dt. 7:9

Those who love Him and keep His commandments

Dt. 10:12

To love Him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart

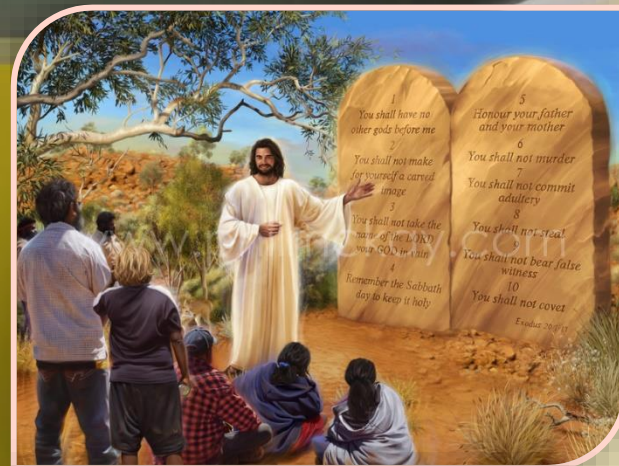
Dt. 11:1

Therefore, you shall love the Lord, and keep His charge

Dt. 19:9

To love the Lord your God and to walk always in His ways

Loving God is indissolubly linked to obeying Him. When we love God and understand what He has done for us, we express our love for Him by keeping His commandments because it pleases Him (Jn. 14:15).



HOW SHOULD WE LOVE GOD?



"Jesus answered him, 'The first of all the commandments is: "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength." This is the first commandment.'" (Mark 12:29-30)

Jesus summarized the commandments by quoting the *Shemá*. Love is the key to obey God's commandments.

This is a special kind of love. This love for God comes by knowing Him intimately and having a close relationship with Him. Our whole existence is imbued with this love: our heart, soul, mind, and body.

In the End Time, our loyalty to God will be challenged (Rev. 12:17; 13:15; 14:1, 4-5). Those who love God will remain obedient to Him, even when threatened with death.



“Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another—this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power [...] In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around.”

E. G. W. (The Acts of the Apostles, cp. 54, p. 551)