

Love God

Deuteronomy 6:1-15

1 "Now this is the commandment-the statutes and the rules-that the LORD your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, 2 that you may fear the LORD your God, you and your son and your son's son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. 3 Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the LORD, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in a land flowing with milk and honey. 4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. 7 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. 8 You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. 9 You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. 10 "And when the LORD your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you-with great and good cities that you did not build, 11 and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant-and when you eat and are full, 12 then take care lest you forget the LORD, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 13 It is the LORD your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. 14 You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you- 15 for the LORD your God in your midst is a jealous God-lest the anger of the LORD your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.

Deuteronomy 10:12—11:3

12 "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am

commanding you today for your good? 14 Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. 15 Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. 16 Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. 17 For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. 18 He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. 19 Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. 20 You shall fear the LORD your God. You shall serve him and hold fast to him, and by his name you shall swear. 21 He is your praise. He is your God, who has done for you these great and terrifying things that your eyes have seen. 22 Your fathers went down to Egypt seventy persons, and now the LORD your God has made you as numerous as the stars of heaven. 11:1 **"You shall therefore love the LORD t.** 2 And consider today (since I am not speaking to your children who have not known or seen it), consider the discipline of the LORD your God, his greatness, his mighty hand and his outstretched arm, 3 his signs and his deeds that he did in Egypt to Pharaoh the king of Egypt and to all his land,...

Context

- Israel is on the brink of taking possession of the inheritance God had promised them
- They are about to go into battle
- God – through Moses – is preparing His people for conquest and for living in the land as a nation who bears witness to His name
- As Israel contemplates this new era that He was taking them into God reminds them of:
 - Who He is
 - What He has done for them
 - He clarifies for them how they should live – what is required of them...
- He reminds them that His love is the reason that Israel existed and that His love is in the purpose that He was working out in and through them

- The high point of came many years later in the salvation that He brought through the death of Jesus on the cross and the new life we share in through His resurrection
- Jn 3:16 – The reason for all of this, the big ‘why’ is God’s love for the world

Another point God is emphasising at this stage in Israel’s journey is that taking possession of the land and living in it as His people was not a passive exercise – it would require much of them

- God tells them exactly what that is
- God’s words to them give them a way to do this in right relationship with Him and without being discouraged, distracted or defeated
- He shows them how to be the people of God
- He shows them:
 - The way of faith
 - The way of courage and confidence of success
 - The way of blessing
 - The way of loving obedience to their God

Deut 6:4-6

4 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. 5 You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. 6 And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

Loving God is clearly the most important thing

Loving God is always accompanied by obedience

This is because He is God and we are not

This not a relationship of equals

We were made to serve Him – He is not there to serve us

Deut 10:12-13

12 "And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, 13 and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good?

Love is at the heart of all of this. In other words:

- Loving God is expressed in a healthy fear of Him
- Loving God is to walk in all His ways
- Loving God is to serve Him with all our heart and souls
- Loving God is to obey His commandments (Jesus teaches this John 14:14; also 1 Jn 5:3)

If we take love out of our relating to God our relationship with Him goes wrong:

- **Fearing God** without love is a fruitless and insecure pursuit where we live in fear of offending God
- **Walking in God's ways** without love is joyless drudgery, an impossible burden for us to bear
- **Serving** without love is legalistic slavery with little or no secure hope for true liberty
- **Obedience** without love becomes a transactional relationship where we live in fear of condemnation, judgement and punishment

When we begin by loving God it takes the 'have to' out of our relationship with Him and puts a 'want to' in its place

Love becomes the 'why' for us – just as it is for God

When we love Him first our relationship with Him is right and we enjoy fellowship with Him

- Loving God makes **fearing God** a willing and reverent worship that no longer has any fear of rejection
 - We know we are His, that He is our God and that we have been set free to worship Him
- Loving God makes **walking in His ways** a joyful devotion that is filled with the blessings of His peace and rest

- **Serving God** in love is the way of secure sons and daughters with their Father
 - Not the way of slaves with their masters
- Loving God makes **obedience** a pleasing sacrifice that is not burdensome and is given freely
 - There is no fear of punishment or judgement in this obedience because there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

We can do this because:

- He first loved us
 - We know that we are His because He set His love on us and pursued us (Deut 10:15)
 - He revealed Himself to us
 - He enabled us to see that our sin separated us from Him and led to eternal death
 - He made a way for us in paying the price for our sin and enabled us to believe in that, to put our faith in Him and be saved
 - We live, and love Him, in the grateful awareness of what He has done to set us free from sin and death

We can love Him because:

- We have His love shed abroad in our hearts through the indwelling Holy Spirit
- We live by faith
 - Trusting Him, believing that He loves us
 - Trusting in the work of redemption Jesus accomplished on the cross and in the new life we now live in the resurrected Christ
 - We live with a sure hope, a secure expectation, that we will see Him and be glorified in Him when He comes again

Love opens our eyes to see Him for who He really is

- We read everything in the Bible and view every circumstance of our lives with this perspective – Jn 3:16
- We therefore learn to see His loving hand in everything
- We hear His love in every word He speaks

Loving God will be visible – it will show up in our thinking, emotions and behaviour

The Bible is full of the ways that our love for God is expressed:

- Love God and imitate Him (Eph 5:1-2)
 - Love God and be holy as He is holy
 - Be perfect as He is perfect
 - Be merciful because He is merciful
 - Love because He is love
 - We want to be like Him
- Love God and love His discipline
 - His instruction – which is there to change us, transform us
 - So that we may share in His holiness (Heb 12:10)
- Love God so that His love is perfected in us (1 Jn 2:5, 4:12)
- Love God and worship Him alone
 - There is an exclusivity in worship
 - There is a devotion that belongs to God alone
 - We keep ourselves from idols, the ‘gods’ of this world
 - We resist the ‘isms’ of the world (humanism, secularism, pluralism, relativism, modern spirituality, etc.)

- We turn our backs on the cult of self (autonomy, comfort, avoidance of pain and discomfort, pursuit of what pleases us)
- Love God and throw off every sin (Heb 12:1)
 - Put off the old self and put on the new (Col 3:1-17)
- Love God in the discipline of devotion (Acts 2:42...)
 - Devotion: fervour, zeal, committed to, willing to sacrifice for, Willing to give time, energy and resources to, putting before ourselves, put our agendas and comfort aside, follow wholeheartedly... viz:
 - Teaching of the apostles
 - Fellowship and breaking of bread together
 - Prayer
- Love God because we have fellowship with Him – we have fellowship with Him because we love him (1 Jn)
- Love God and abide in Him (1 Jn 4:7-12)
 - Obey His commands
 - Love our brothers in deed
 - Keep in fellowship with Him
 - Do not sin
- Love God and put on love
 - In the New Testament Jesus teaches that loving God is something that is evidenced in loving our neighbour / brothers and sisters
 - We know we love God when that love is expressed in loving others
 - Col 3:12-14 – Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony
 - This is all loving behaviour, which is how those who love God behave toward others

- Love God and walk by faith
 - Seek to please Him and do the things that accompany faith
 - Love God and fight the fight of faith
 - Stand firm in our faith
 - Overcome the world
 - Overcome every work of the devil
 - Overcome in the face of persecution, trials and hardships.
 - Enduring, persevering and overcoming because we love Him make these all 'light and momentary troubles' that pale into insignificance in the light of His glory and the glory that awaits us
- Love Him and walk in the Holy Spirit
 - Keep in step with Him
 - Do not grieve the Holy Spirit
 - Do not quench Him
 - Be continually filled with the Holy Spirit
- Love Him and seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness
- Love God and share His love with the world
 - He loved the whole world
 - He died for the sins of the whole world
 - We bear witness to His love
 - Be loving in all our dealing with everyone – even though we love righteousness and hate wickedness.
 - Judge sin but are not be judgmental toward people – be merciful because God is merciful
 - The gospel tells the story of His mercy overcoming judgement because of His love

As we contemplate the season ahead of us

- There is an inheritance for us to take possession of
- There are battles for us to fight
- We will need to be overcomers
- None of this is passive
- There is something required of us
- But at the end of it all there is only one thing we need to do every day – love God

- He has shown us how to be the people of God
- He has shown us:
 - The way of faith
 - The way of courage and confidence of success
 - The way of blessing
 - The way of loving obedience to our God

Our inability to love God perfectly should never hold us back from a devotion toward Him in love

- With all our heart, all our soul and all our strength
- It need not because the foundation of our relationship with Him is what Jesus has done and not we can do

Loving God is why we are here

- All that counts is faith working itself out in love (Gal 5:6)
- If we do that, then everything else we need to do will become clear
- We will find the time, energy, resources and devotion to do whatever it takes to fulfil the purposes of God in our generation