

November 2, 2025 Session 9
Love Deuteronomy 6:1-9,20-25

Intro: Jesus was asked by religious leaders of His day what command in the law is the greatest. In His answer Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:5, which revolves around the word love. Today people primarily think of love as a noun, that is, in subjective terms as a pleasant disposition or warm emotions. The ancient idea of love found in Scripture is more like a verb or active commitment. Love, in the long run, is not always something that sweeps a person up involuntarily, but more of a deliberate choice or commitment to another person. Love is best understood as both affection and action. It must be declared with our words and demonstrated in our actions. God is the primary Actor in the covenant relationship He established with Israel. Even though Israel repeatedly failed to uphold their end of the covenant and reciprocate that love, God continued to love them with faithful love. Throughout the cycle of Israel's running to God for relief and running away from God in rebellion, God's affection never changed, and God's pursuing action never ceased. Israel was to love God because God first loved them. **1 John 4:19** *"We love Him because He [God] first loved us."*

The Ten Commandments are at the heart of the entire law of God. The body of God's commands can be understood as specific applications of the Ten commandments in religious, civil, and moral aspects of life. The Ten Commandments are structured in two tables or sections. Commands 1-4 express how God's people are to relate to Him. Commands 5-10 express how God's people are to relate to one another. Jesus was asked, "which is the great commandment in the law?" He answered. **Matthew 22:37-40** *"Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all our heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."* The Ten Commandments are to be understood as a unified whole. The entirety of the commandments reflect God's character. Who God is determines who His people are (people who follow Him and those who don't) and how they should live.

Fear of the Lord (Deuteronomy 6:1-3) p. 84

Our relationship with God is defined by love. We are each individually responsible for our relationship with God. We must each decide to fear and

honor him, and keep His instructions. Following God's statutes demonstrates the fear of the Lord. The first five books of the Bible are referred to as the Torah. As the word of God, the commands are unified and must not be broken apart or edited, lest it cease to be what God intended. Moses was commanded by God to teach the Torah to Israel. God's law was to apply to the current generation and to the ones that follow. Heart-motivated obedience would result in God's blessing, namely a long life. Following God's command is associated with "the fear of the LORD your God." The fear of the LORD speaks of having a healthy regard (reverential awe) for who God is and motivates the person to obediently follow God's commands. **Proverbs 9:10** *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."* In the Old Testament when a person encountered God, they had a sense of reverence, of awe involving fear. The Hebrew word for fear has overtones of respect and awe. Reverent fear of the Lord results in willing, even worshipful, obedience. Obedience to God would yield full life in the sense of its length and the quality of such life.

V. 3 The Israelites' lives in the land were directly tied to their obedience to God as they lived out their lives. The Israelite's obedience was necessary to experience God's blessing "so that you may live, enter, and take possession of the land the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you." Such blessings would take the form of prosperity in the sense of a multiplied population and the enjoyment of a land flowing with milk and honey. God wants to bless us, and that can happen when we are obedient.

Devoted (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) p. 85

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is referred to as the "Shema" in Judaism. The word Shema comes from the Hebrew term meaning hear or listen. When the Israelites recited the Shema, they declared their undivided and unqualified devotion to the Lord their God. God alone is worthy of our reverence, worship, and love. We obey God, not because we are forced to do it, but because we love God. Our love for Him is comprehensive; we are to love God fully. With our heart, or our will, and intellect. We love God with our soul, or the part of us that craves God, the center of a person's being and what he desires. We must love God with our strength, or what we put our energies into, using our strength to serve God. We are to love God with all that we are, think, feel, and do. The Lord being one does not negate the Trinity. Understanding God's unity and uniqueness helps us affirm that He is three in one. In God's unity as three in one, the Lord's plan of redemption was fully revealed in His work as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Vs. 5 God is the Creator and Sustainer of all that exists. He had also entered into a covenant with the Israelites to be their God and they were His special people. As such He expected and required Israel's total and exclusive devotion. The people of Israel were being called, and we are being called as well to love God with every fiber of our being. We are to love God in thought, emotion, energy, and ability. Our love for God is action-oriented and has to do with loyalty, commitment, and obedience.

Vs. 7 Israel's identity as a people was tied to God's Word given to them. Our identity is tied to the living Word, Jesus Christ. God's law dictated how the Israelites were to live as His distinct people, and in obeying and passing on that law to each successive generation, they would continue as His distinct people. God's people are called and charged to be disciples that make disciples. As a people who are called to learn God's Word, they are also charged to pass on what they have learned. This is especially true within families. Discussion about God's law and who He is are not to only happen in church. A person who has a loving relationship with God will talk about it. Don't you enjoy talking about Jesus, the truth of the Bible, and how God interacts with us every day? We naturally talk about the Lord in ordinary conversations during ordinary times of coming and going, eating and sleeping. For the Israelites, failure to talk about God's mighty acts meant those outside of Judaism would not hear, and thus, would not give God His proper glory. For us to not share is to disobey God. **Romans 10:14** *"How shall they call on Him [Jesus] in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher [proclaimer]?"* Whether the commands of these verses (bind God's words on your hand and forehead...) were to be taken literally or metaphorically, the intent was that every Israelite was to base their personal, familial, and national life on God's divine instruction for His people. Both inwardly and outwardly, the Israelites' lives were to demonstrate full commitment to the God who loved, delivered, and constituted them as His people.

Righteous (Deuteronomy 6:20-25) p. 87

Do you remember your kids or grandkids asking you questions about the Bible, and wasn't it a precious time when you told them about the great things God has done? Have you told them about how God delivered you? God's statutes (rules) are for our prosperity and preservation when we follow them. After Moses commanded the Israelites to repeat the law to their children and raise them by teaching them God's ways, he looked forward and anticipated the day when those children would ask about the

motivation to follow the law. Parents and grandparents would have the opportunity to tell the story of God's love and faithfulness to His people. Every Christian should be able to share their faith. What God has done for us, He has done for the Israelites. The Lord had brought them out in order to lead them into His kingdom. He brought them out of a land they knew and led them into a land they had never seen. He brought them out of persecution and led them into His promise, out of bondage and into blessing. Our God is unique. Other religions say, "Clean yourself up before you can come to god." But our God says, "I will save you and make you clean." In other religions, followers obey their laws to earn favor with their gods. The God of the Bible grants us favor in love, and in response, we obey. An interesting question is "How do we know if our faith in Christ is genuine, and we have received eternal life? One way we know that God's Spirit resides in us is that we have a love for God, and that expresses itself in the love of others. For in our obedience, we mirror the character of our loving God, from whom the commands overflow as an expression of His being. As the people of God, this sets us apart as distinct from the rest of the world. Following God's statutes is the external evidence of our internal reverence for Him. Our obedience to God honors Him. Our behavior points to Him as the One who deserves our reverence. How we conduct ourselves says something about who we believe God is. The reason behind all the decrees, statutes, and ordinances was so God's children could live in righteousness—a right relationship with Him and He with them. God's rules help us live in a way that others can see God. **2 Corinthians 5:20** *"Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ's behalf, be reconciled to God."*