

LOVING GOD
Outline - Selected Scriptures
Dennis McBride 8/92

Primary Text: Deuteronomy 6:4-15

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LOVING GOD

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INTRODUCTION:

1. Primary text = Deuteronomy 6:4-15

“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

“And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons 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 up.

“And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

“Then it shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you shall eat and be satisfied, then watch yourself, lest you forget the Lord who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

“You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him, and swear by His name. “You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.”

2. “Deuteronomy” = Deuteros/Nomos = “Second Law”. It is, in actuality, a restatement of the Law for the generation born during the wilderness wanderings, thereby preparing them for entrance into the Promised Land.
3. The book came at a pivotal time in Israel’s history:
 - The wilderness wanderings were over.
 - They were preparing to enter Promised Land under new leadership.
 - Moses was recapping God’s promises and Law.
 - Moses was calling God’s people to obedience.
 - He offered them two options: blessings or curses.

Deut. 28:1-2, 15 - “Now it shall be, if you will diligently obey the Lord your God, being careful to do all His commandments which I command you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, if you will obey the Lord your God. . . .

“But it shall come about, if you will not obey the Lord your God, to observe to do all His commandments and His statutes with which I charge you today, that all these curses shall come upon you and overtake you.”

4. When Joshua took command, God said to him,

Josh. 1:8 - “This book of the law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have success.”

5. Some important parallels to our situation at Trinity Baptist Church:

- We enter a new era of ministry under new leadership.
- Others have laid a foundation upon which I now have privilege of building.
- My sacred duty is to call you to love and obey God, so that He might continue to bless you and this church.

6. My greatest desire is for us to know God’s abundant blessing, and to know He is pleased with our church.

7. I want us to be successful in God’s eyes, so one day we will hear: “Well done, good and faithful servants.”

8. To do that, we must pursue God’s work in His way, and our priorities and non-negotiables must be clear. Loving God is certainly of utmost importance.

9. God’s glory is to be the *goal* of everything we do, and our *motive* is to be our love for God.

10. That brings us to the passage that was to every devote Jew the most significant and best known in all of Hebrew literature: Deuteronomy 6:4-5.

“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.”

11. But loving God certainly wasn’t confined to the Old Testament:

When a lawyer tested Jesus, asking, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied, “You shall love the Lord your

God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37).

Mark adds, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30).

12. That’s a unique characteristic of the Christian faith:
 - Buddhists don’t speak of loving Buddha.
 - Muslims don’t speak of loving Mohammed.
 - But Christians love God--that’s what makes us Christians!
13. Christianity goes *beyond* affirming certain doctrines. At its heart is love for God and for His truth.
14. Similarly, to be a church that God can honor we must look beyond programs and services and examine our love for Him. Do we truly love Him, and demonstrate that love by embracing the priorities and practices that are dear to Him?
15. Before we can answer that question, we must first consider three things:
 - What Loving God Is Not
 - What Loving God Is
 - How To Love God More

I. WHAT LOVING GOD IS NOT

A. LOVING GOD ISN’T OPTIONAL

1. Failure to love the Lord brings a divine curse.

1 Cor. 16:22 - “If anyone does not love the Lord, let him be accursed.”

2. True believers love Christ.

John 8:41-42 - Jesus said to some Jews, “‘You are doing the deeds of your father.’ They said to Him, ‘We were not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God.’ Jesus said to them, ‘If God were your Father, you would love Me; for I proceed forth and have come from God.’”

Implication: All of God’s children love Christ. There’s a sense in which if you’re a child of God, you love God.

3. Love is present but not perfect.

However, that love isn't absolute--it can fluctuate--it can be neglected--it can languish.

John 21:15-17 - "When [the disciples] had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?' Peter said to Him, 'Yes, Lord; You know that I love you.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend My lambs.'

"Jesus said to Peter again a second time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me?' Peter said to Him, 'Yes, Lore; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Shepherd My sheep.'

"Jesus said to him the third time, 'Simon, son of John, do you love Me?' Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, 'Do you love Me?' And he said to Jesus, 'Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.' Jesus said to him, 'Tend My sheep.'

4. *The Ephesian church didn't love Christ.*

Rev. 2:1-7 - "I have this against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen, and repent and do the deeds you did at first; or else I am coming to you, and will remove your lampstand out of its place--unless you repent."

5. *What a tragedy!*

Some of you, no doubt, have left your first love. This speaks to *motive*. The things you once did out of love for Christ you now do purely out of duty or habit or because it's expected of you Outwardly no one knows, but God knows, and He calls you to repentance.

B. **LOVING GOD ISN'T MERELY EMOTIONAL**

John 15:17 - "This I *command* you, that you love one another."

You can't command emotions. You may be overwhelmed emotionally by your love for God, but true love isn't purely emotional.

C. **LOVING GOD ISN'T THOUGHTLESS OR ARBITRARY**

Biblical love is always according to truth.

1. **Phil. 1:9-11** - "This I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in *real knowledge and all discernment*, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of

righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.”

2. **John 8:42** - Jesus said to some Jews who thought they belonged to God, “If God were your Father, you would love Me.”
 - They thought they loved God.
 - They thought they were part of His family.
 - But they didn’t even know Him:

Jesus said to them, “It is My Father who glorifies Me, of whom you say, “He is our God”; and you have not come to know Him, but I know Him; and if I say that I do not know Him, I shall be a liar like you, but I do know Him, and keep His word” (vv. 54-55). “You are of your father the devil” (v. 44).

II. WHAT LOVING GOD IS

A. LOVING GOD IS A RELATIONSHIP

1. An example from marriage:

If you were to ask me if I loved my wife, I wouldn’t look to my emotions only, I’d look to the quality of my relationship with her. Do I demonstrate the attributes of love? If not, my love is lacking, no matter how I may feel about her.

2. Some examples from Scripture:

- a. **1 John 4:7-8** - “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”

You’ve heard the expression, “To know me is to love me?” That’s true of God: to know Him is to love Him.

Believers are in a love relationship with God. By love He chose and redeemed us. His love is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who indwells us (Rom. 5). And He produces the fruit of the Spirit, which includes love, joy, peace.

- b. **John 14:21, 23** - “He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him. . . . If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.”

3. *Implications*

Communication (prayer) and every other element of a relationship must be present.

The quality of your love will be reflected in the quality of your relationship.

B. *LOVING GOD IS A LIFESTYLE*

1. *2 John 1:6* - “This is love, that *we walk* according to His commandments. This is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, that you should walk in it.”

2. *“Walk” = a lifestyle:*

Eph. 2:1-3 - “You were dead in your trespasses and sins, in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, etc.”

Col. 3:5-7 - “Consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. For it is on account of these things that the wrath of God will come, and in them you also once walked, when you were living in them” (see also 1 John 2:6).

C. *LOVING GOD IS PRACTICAL*

Love is best understood by the company it keeps: the godly virtues and disciplines that accompany it in Scripture.

Examples:

1. *Love is accompanied by obedience and service (an oft-repeated theme in Scripture):*

Deut. 10:12 - “Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

Deut. 11:1 - “You shall . . . love the Lord your God, and always keep His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments.”

This point was very important to Jesus:

John 14:15 - Jesus said, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

John 14:21 - “He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose Myself to him.”

John 14:23 - “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him, and make Our abode with him.”

2. Love accompanied by hatred for evil.

Ps. 97:10 - “Hate evil, you who love the Lord.”

3. Love accompanied by sacrifice.

John 3:16 - “God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son.”

Rom. 5:8 - “God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

1 John 3:16 - “We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.”

1 John 4:10 - “In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.”

4. Love accompanied by ministry.

John 21:15 - “Jesus said to Simon Peter, ‘Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?’ [Simon] said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.’ [Jesus] said to him, ‘Tend My lambs.’”

III. HOW TO LOVE GOD MORE

Now we return to Deuteronomy 6:4-15, the Hebrew Shema (“to hear”), which became Judaism’s basic confession of faith:

“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

“And these words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart; and you shall teach them diligently to your sons 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 up.

“And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

“Then it shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you shall eat and be satisfied, then watch yourself, lest you forget the Lord who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

“You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him, and swear by His name. “You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.”

A. IF YOU WANT TO LOVE GOD MORE, REMEMBER HIS LOVE FOR YOU - vv. 4

“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one!”

1. God is unique.

This verse doesn't speak of His indivisible nature, but of His uniqueness. He alone is the Lord. He is the only One to whom the title “Lord” rightly applies.

2. “Lord” = Yahweh, Jehovah, Lord.

3. God is personal.

In the Pentateuch (first five books of the Old Testament), “Lord” denotes that aspect of God's character that is personal rather than transcendent. It occurs in contexts in which the covenantal and redemptive aspects of God are predominate.

4. The focus is on relationship.

That brings us back to the idea of relationship. It is as if God is saying:

“Hear, O Israel! I am the One who personally chose you as My people, and entered into covenant with your fathers: Abraham, Isaac,

and Jacob. I am the One who redeemed you from Egypt and have brought you to the threshold of the Promised Land, in keeping with my covenant. I alone am Jehovah, your Lord.”

5. *Why did God do all that?*

Deut. 7:8 - Moses told the people, “Because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand, and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.”

6. *How does that relate to you?*

- a. ***Eph. 1:4-6*** - “[God] chose us in [Christ] before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before Him. In love He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved.”
- b. ***Titus 3:4*** - “When the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us.”
- c. ***Note Luke 7:36-50*** - Those who have been forgiven most, love most.

B. *IF YOU WANT TO LOVE GOD MORE, MAKE HIM YOUR SINGULAR FOCUS* - v. 5

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” (And Jesus added “mind”).

- 1. *This is a conscious, deliberate act of your will as to the place that God will occupy in your life.***
- 2. *That doesn’t eliminate other quality relationships; it governs and enhances them:***

Eph. 5:25 - “Husbands love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her.”

- 3. *That doesn’t eliminate other quality pursuits; it governs and enhances them also:***

Col. 3:23-24 - “Whatever you do, do your work heartily, as for the Lord rather than for men; knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance. It is the Lord Christ whom you serve.”

C. IF YOU WANT TO LOVE GOD MORE, LEARN HIS WORD - v. 6a

“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.”

1. ***The Israelites needed to know God’s Law, so they would know what God required of them.***
2. ***This is very practical because biblical love is always directly related to behavior.*** And you can’t manifest loving behavior if you’re ignorant of biblical truth.

That’s why Paul said, “I pray that your love may abound still more and more *in real knowledge and all discernment*, so that you may approve the things that are excellent, in order to be sincere and blameless until the day of Christ; having been filled with the fruit of righteousness which comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God” (Phil. 1:9-11, emphasis added).

D. IF YOU WANT TO LOVE GOD MORE, INTERNALIZE HIS WORD - v. 6b

“These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart.”

1. ***The heart is the very center of man’s being--the seat of rational and spiritual deliberations.***

“The heart is the laboratory and place of issue of all that is good and evil in thought, word, and deed” (Merrill Unger).

Prov. 4:23 - “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it flow the springs of life.”

2. ***To surrender your heart to God is to surrender your entire self.***
3. ***To take God’s Word to your heart is to infuse and suffuse your life with biblical truth.***
4. ***It is paralleled in thought by the Psalmist:***

Ps. 119 - “How can a young man keep his way pure? By keeping it according to Thy word. With all my heart I have sought Thee; do not let me wander from Thy commandments. Thy word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee. . . . O How I love Thy law! It is my meditation all the day. . . . How sweet are Thy words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth. . . .

Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light to my path” (vv. 9-11, 97, 103, 105).

E. IF YOU WANT TO LOVE GOD MORE, APPLY HIS WORD - v. 7-9

“You shall teach them diligently to your sons 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 up. And you shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”

1. Saturate your life with biblical truth. Apply it in every area of life.

- Your speech - teach them diligently.
- Your value system (what you teach your children and entrust to another generation).
- Your entire world view. Every aspect of life, night or day.

2. Regarding Jewish Phylacteries, Merrill Unger writes,

“The line of thought referred to merely expresses the idea that the Israelites were not only to retain the commands of God in their hearts, [and] to confess them with the mouth, but to fulfill them with the hand, or in act and deed.

“But the Jews, after returning from Babylonian captivity, took this injunction literally, and had portions of the law written out and worn as badges upon their persons.

“They are still worn by modern Jews and consist of strips of parchment, on which are written four passages of Scripture (Ex. 13:2-10, 11-17; Deut. 5:4-9, 13-22). These are rolled up in a case of black calfskin, attached to a stiffer piece of leather having a thong one finger broad and 1 1/2 cubits long (for the head). . . .

“[The Phylacteries were] thought of as safeguards to ward off evil spirits. They are worn by the male Israelites, and consist of a strip of paper on which is written the four sections of law mentioned above, which are rolled up and tied with the white hair of a calf’s or cow’s tail, and placed in one of the compartments of a small box. The box is attached firmly with leathern strips to the forehead between the eyebrows, and on the left arm so as to be near the heart.”

3. Phylacteries are still posted on doorposts in modern orthodox Jewish homes.

F. IF YOU WANT TO LOVE GOD MORE, REMEMBER HIS FAITHFULNESS - vv. 10-12

“Then it shall come about when the Lord your God brings you into the land which He swore to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, to give you, great and splendid cities which you did not build, and houses full of all good things which you did not fill, and hewn cisterns which you did not dig, vineyards and olive trees which you did not plant, and you shall eat and be satisfied, then watch yourself, lest you forget the Lord who brought you from the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

1. Ironically, often while enjoying God’s blessings we forget God Himself.

2. On a human level:

a. I see that in our society.

Generations who’ve inherited freedom often take it for granted because they didn’t have to pay the price. They speak against the very country that gives them the freedom to speak at all.

b. I see that in families.

Children who’ve inherited the relationships, shelter, and provisions that others worked so hard to supply, often are dissatisfied and ungrateful. They didn’t have to pay the price.

c. I see that in churches.

Some of you were founding members of this church. You’ve prayed and worked hard over the years to see that it had proper leadership and resources. Some who don’t have that perspective or sense of ownership are more easily disgruntled when things don’t go the way they think they should.

3. But on a spiritual level, it’s a far more serious thing to forget God’s faithfulness.

It happened to Israel, and it can happen to us.

G. IF YOU WANT TO LOVE GOD MORE, WORSHIP AND FEAR HIM
- vv. 13-15

“You shall fear only the Lord your God; and you shall worship Him, and swear by His name. You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, for the Lord your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the Lord your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.”

That doesn't sound very loving!

1. *Worship is the proper response of a loving heart.*
2. *Fear is reverential awe. This is God we're dealing with.*
3. *Remember, loving God is a command, not a suggestion.*

CONCLUSION:

1. **True salvation goes beyond believing in God to loving Him!**
2. **That's the test of a true believer. I believe it's also the test of a true church.**
3. **Perhaps there is no higher compliment than for others to say, "There's a church--or an individual--that loves God."**