

Two centuries ago and earlier family life was mostly home-centered. Industrialization changed that, but restrictions in the past year pushed many back to a home-centered life. Among Christians some flourished but others were challenged. Upon examining God's Word it is clear that the challenge has been good, because it pushed us to realize that following Christ must begin in our own hearts and then in our homes. Deuteronomy 6 contains God's instructions for Israel for following Him, which gives us a pattern for following Christ. The truth principle is this: Jehovah is God, there is no other; the training principle follows: put His Word in your heart and teach it.

I. Core truth: The LORD our God, the LORD is one (6:4).

1. Declaring the LORD (Jahweh / Jehovah) to be one stresses unity while recognizing diversity.
2. The connotations are rich, which include a foreshadowing of the tri-unity of God and a contrast to the varied attributes of pagan gods.
3. The focus here is that there is only one God, and there is none other (cf. 4:35, 39). This is also the NT focus and central to following Jesus Christ as the Son of God. There is one God, existing in three Persons as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and there is no other.
4. Therefore, you must evaluate if you have allowed other gods in your life and whether you worship Jehovah God, who is one.

II. Primary response: total love of the LORD your God (6:5).

1. Listing heart, soul and might does not define divisible parts of a person (cf. Matt 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27, Joshua 22:5), but encompasses your desires, thoughts, attitudes, energies, etc.
2. "All" demands that none of your being be devoted to other things.
3. "Love" is best defined here in the context (cf. 6:1–3, 17–18) and the context of similar passages (Deut 11:1; Joshua 22:5) as being revealed in obedience to the commands of God. Jesus likewise said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). This connects love and obedience, but also in light of Deuteronomy 6 was a claim by Jesus to being God. Being a disciple of Jesus means loving Him with your whole being, revealed in obedience to His commands.
4. Therefore, all your activities, energy, time, etc. should be as unto Him (cf. Colossians 3:17, 23). Jehovah is God, there is no other, and He alone deserves your service.

III. Redemptive relationship: obedience is expected from those whom God had already chosen and redeemed (6:1, 12, 21–25)

1. Redemption of the nation of Israel occurred before the commands were given (cf. 6:1; 4:32–40; 1 Cor 6:19b–20). Believers obey because they have been redeemed.
2. The redemption of the child of God is a touchstone for obedience. It needs to be remembered (6:12, 21).
3. The order is essential: first salvation by grace through faith, and then good works (Eph 2:8–10).
4. Those who are redeemed can say Jehovah is our God, there is no other who saves or who deserves our service.

IV. Two prevalent dangers which work against you (6:10–16)

1. Prosperity (6:10–15): When Israel entered the promised land they would obtain a prosperity they had not worked for. Such prosperity and comfort, because there is no sense of need, can tempt one to forget God and not rely upon Him.
2. Difficulties (6:16): At Massah (cf Exodus 17) Israel had no water, grumbled against Moses, and tested God by saying, 'Is the LORD among us or not?' (17:17). Difficulties can cause such doubts and tempt some to turn to other gods who are no gods.
3. Prosperity and difficulties, well-being and trials, are dangers bracketing life (cf. Proverbs 30:8–9). Guard against the temptations of both extremes and instead serve the Lord, because there is none other.

The Lord Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh. To follow Christ is to have no other god. Encourage other believers, be encouraged, but embrace your responsibility to follow Him fully.

Questions for further thought and discussion:

- What would your use of time and money show about what or whom you serve? How could you practically evaluate this? Does what upsets you or excites you show whom you serve?
- What helps you most to focus on loving God with all your heart, soul and strength?
- What one truth from this passage might change or improve the way you think about following Christ?