

# The Greatest Commandment – *Deut 6:1-9*

**Introduction** – Fear God. Obey God. Yes and Amen. But the greatest commandment is to love the LORD your God and all the other commands are subsumed here. The command to love is central here and throughout the Scriptures. It is the core of Christ-likeness and the very character of the Triune God who purchased us. Love and law are not at odds with one another. It is not the stuff of sappy, sentimental feelings for it proceeds from a consuming fire, jealous for His own glory and righteousness to be manifest in the community of His people.

**One Commandment** (vv1-3) – This is *the commandment* upon which all the others hang. Moses begins a long course of exposition now on the Ten Commandments, beginning with the first and showing its centrality. The intent of the instruction is obedience proceeding from a fear of God extending over generations in order that a mighty increase of blessing would follow.

**Obedience/Fear/Love** – The work of faith produces all three traits interdependent upon one another. Believing God to be a personal Deliverer and faithful covenant-keeper, one turns to Him. He calls for obedience proceeding from a fear of Him (v2). Our desire for blessing is to motivate this obedience (v3). Love is the basis, the core, of all obedience (v5). “*Therefore, to understand the fear of the Lord rightly, learn to see it as love hungering for blessing*” – (Wilson).

**Seeking Blessing?** – No stoicism here, no place for self-righteous self-denial. Our God is a God who blesses sinners, and, as John Piper says, “*God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him.*” Jesus said, “*Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be filled.*” It is right and proper to obey God while looking for blessing. In fact, we do not hunger enough for God’s blessings.

**One God, One Love** (v4-5) – Here is the ancient *Shema*, the great confession of faith and vow of loving obedience. We are not monotheists and then turn to a particular flavor of that. There is only one God, our God, Yahweh, Who created all things, spoke with Adam in the Garden, spoke to Noah and Abraham and Moses and David. Our Triune God is One and Jesus is God come in the flesh.

Because God is not divided, the human heart may not be divided. We are to love Yahweh with all our heart (the seat of the intellect and emotions), all our soul (the source of our life and vitality), and all our strength (our energy and activity).

Obedience to the commandments is an outgrowth of this kind of undivided, biblical love.

**Teaching from the Heart** (vv6-7) – While they were written on stone, these commandments, and particularly this one, was always to be kept in one’s heart. As it works itself out in one’s life, the only option is to give covenant children a covenant education. Everything in life, everything about life, and everything one does in life flows from the greatest commandment. And so the law, meditated upon, lived out, taught, is to be then given to the next generation. Love that does not lead to Christian education for covenant children is no love at all.

Love for God and this kind of education takes place all the time in every circumstance. It runs through the fabric of life, when you get up and when you lie down, when you are reclining and when you are working. It’s in your heart, but it is also something you talk about all the time.

**Hands, Posts, and Gates** (vv8-9) – To bind the law to your hands and forehead probably means to let the law direct what you do (your hands) and how you think and see the world (forehead). Also, there is a progression here from an *individual commitment* (bound on the hand and forehead), to a *household commitment* (doorposts of your house), to a *social and civil commitment* (your gates). Because the law is in our hearts, there is no stopping the spread of the working out of the law without compromising.

**Love God** – We don’t want pop-worship-lite. Neither do we seek a stoic-reformed-propositional religion. This love flows from a fear of God and a growing hunger for His blessings. We should worship God and, as He is revealed, wonder why we are not receiving more blessings – and we should long for more. We want the church to increase mightily, our homes to increase mightily, our maturity and wisdom to increase mightily.

**Love Your Children** – Too often we have so little to teach our children because our love for God has not worked itself out from our hearts to our hands and to everything we are thinking and doing. You must and will teach your love for God first to your children. Do not teach them a wooden compliance to a moral or value system. Teach them your love and hunger for God and for His blessings in every area of your life.