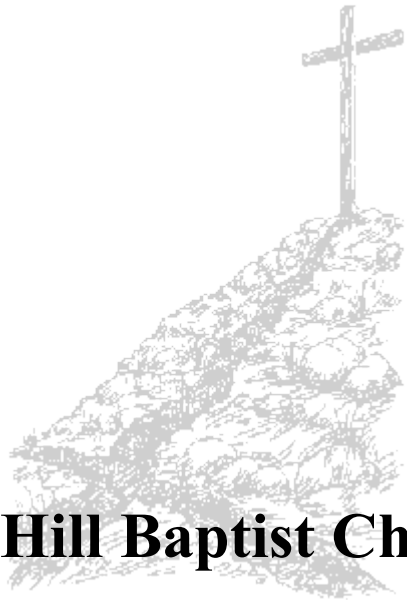


The Shema, Part Three

Love Is A Command,
Not An Emotion

Deuteronomy 6:4-5



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Defining "Love" In The Shema

FOCAL Deuteronomy 6:5 (KJV) "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

When we read the Shema, we see it starting with "**And thou shalt love**". This is a command - not a request, but a command. **Thou shalt love** - God commands that you love Him.

Having just recently celebrated that uniquely American holiday we call *Valentine's Day*, most of us think we know what love is. But can you imagine giving the person you love a little Valentine candy or a card that says "**You will love me**"? What kind of response do you think you'd get? Probably not a good one. But you see, the reason for this is that humanity - and especially we as Americans - have drifted far from what the Bible calls love. We equate love with emotional response - and love does bring with it an emotional response - but Biblical love is not rooted and grounded in mere emotion.

In America we often use the "L" word without any regard as to what the word itself means. We say "I love ice cream" and "I love steak", or "I love my boyfriend - girlfriend - wife - mother - husband". The word "love" is so overused in our society that we give little weight to it. But "Love" means nothing unless you understand love *in the context of God's definition of love*.

What is love?

The best definition is given in the Cross of Calvary. Nearly every child in America can say these words, yet they are more than mere words:

(John 3:16 KJV) "For God so LOVED the world, that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life."

Now here's love, God - styled love. **God so loved the world.** Let me ask you these questions, and see if you understand where my heart is going:

Question: Did the world love God first, or did God love the world first? (the answer is in **1 John 4:19**)

Question: Is the world sinless as God is sinless? (the answer is in **Romans 3:10-18**)

Question: Is the world *worthy* of God's love? (the answer is in **Romans 1:28-32; Hebrews 11:32-38**)

Question: Does the world *return God's love*? (the answer is in **John 1:10-11**)

Question: Does the world love or hate Jesus? (the answer is in **John 15:18-25**)

And yet the Bible says **God so loved the world.** Love *cannot be mere emotion*, but must be something else. Biblical or Divine Love is that quality that seeks to do *the highest good for another.* In the context of salvation

we see that **God so loved the world** does not necessarily mean that He felt good about the world, nor that He approved or the world. God neither approves nor feels good about the world, for the world is lost in its sin. In fact, prior to salvation the Bible says that *we were the enemies of God:*

(Romans 5:10 KJV) "For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."

and yet, even as enemies, God still *loved us* or *did the highest good toward us* regardless as to *how it felt.*

If we are ever going to make a difference in the world around us, we *must cease to be emotionally driven* and become *God driven.* We must love like God has told us to love - not tossed about by feelings, but driven by His Command. We view Love in a way that is *totally apart* from the Biblical view of Love. Humanity's view of love is that a young man in love is driven by his emotions to pursue something or someone who will fulfill his desires¹. He then goes out looking for love. When his eyes fall on the love of his or her life then he or she woos him or her to win that love.

¹ By the way, ladies, this applies to you, too!

Our View of Love and God's View of Love



If she spurns that love, the man is devastated - having a broken heart. This type of love - though it is found in the Scripture - is not God's ideal of love. In the ancient world marriages were often arranged

by the father or the head of the family. One of the most beautiful passages in all of Scripture is the story of father Abraham finding a wife for his son Isaac (**Genesis 24:1-10**). Abraham called the oldest servant of his household and told him to go out and find a wife for Isaac. Abraham had promised God that his son would not marry any of the unbelieving Canaanites, and he was too old and sick to go find a wife for his boy. So he sent his servant out. The servant said:

What if she won't come, Abraham?

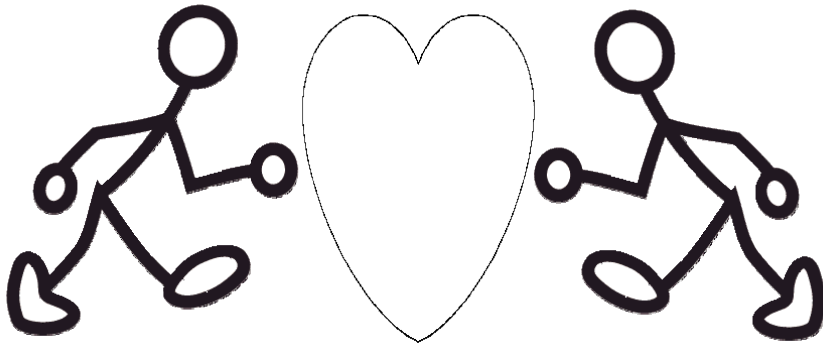
Genesis 24:7 (KJV) "The LORD God of heaven, which took me from my father's house, and from the land of my kindred, and which spake unto me, and that sware unto me, saying, Unto thy seed will I give this land; he shall send his angel before thee, and thou shalt take a wife unto my son from thence."

Abraham's response was very simple: Trust God! So the servant went out and, the Bible says, just as Abraham believed the LORD God did. By the way, this is YHWH Elohiym, the name of the Eternal Triune God. The servant went out and, coming to the city of Nahor he prayed:

Genesis 24:12 (KJV) "And he said, O LORD God of my master Abraham, I pray thee, send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham."

The servant prayed just as his master Abraham prayed, approaching YHWH Elohiym for blessing. The servant asked God to give him a sign as to who the wife of Isaac should be. The woman who came to the well who would be Isaac's wife would say (**Genesis 24:14**) "... drink, and I will give thy camels drink also...". The servant stood by the well and waited and, just as he believed, YHWH Elohiym sent out a woman named **Rebekah** to be Isaac's wife. Now bear in mind that the *only person*

who has seen Rebekah so far is the servant, and YHWH Elohiym, the Eternal God. Laban her father, having *never seen neither Isaac nor Abraham* said that Rebekah could go be his wife. Rebekah's brother and mother wanted her to wait a few days - but Rebekah herself said "I will go". What drove Rebekah and Isaac together, two people from whom God would bring forth *many nations to bless*? It was not emotion, but it was *obedience to God* - a love that obeys, not a love that feels. Obedience to God drove the servant to Rebekah, Rebekah to Isaac, and Isaac to Rebekah. Because God drove the love, that love was rewarded with a rich, full emotional response that blessed not only Isaac and Rebekah - but all of their descendants.



**Love Is Commanded In The Shema
For A Reason!**

Love is commanded in the Shema because *God's definition of Love is not mere emotion*. Divine Love does *the highest good toward it's object* regardless as to whether it feels good or not.

Let me ask you this: How do you think God *feels* about sinners? If He *loved the world* so much that He gave His only Begotten Son up as a sacrifice for our sin - do you

think He *feels good* about the sinner? This is what the humanist thinks, that God *feels good* about the sinner. But that's not what the Scripture says. The Bible says:

²(Psalms 5:5 KJV) "**The foolish shall not stand in thy sight: thou hatest all workers of iniquity.**"

What? You HATE all workers of iniquity, dear God? Is this just an isolated instance in the Scripture? No, we see this pattern repeated throughout the Bible.

(Psalms 11:5 KJV) "**The LORD trieth the righteous: but the wicked and him that loveth violence his soul hateth.**"

Psalms 45:6-7 (KJV) "**Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter. {7} Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness:** therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows."

Revelation 2:6 (KJV) "³**But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitanes, which I also hate.**"

The **LORD**⁴ *hates the one who loves violence!* The Psalmist uses the most holy and enduring name of God YHWH when he describes God's *emotional disposition* toward the destroyer. We were all in the place, at one time or the other in our lives, when we were **children of wrath (Ephesians 2:3)**, upsetting to God. God's attitude

2 powerpoint slide here

3 To the Church of Ephesus

4 YHWH, the Eternal and most holy name of God.

- His emotional disposition toward *unbelieving Israel* was harsh to say the least:

(Hosea 9:15 KJV) "All their wickedness is in Gilgal: for there I hated them: for the wickedness of their doings I will drive them out of mine house, I will love them no more: all their princes are revolvers."

(Psalms 78:56-68 KJV) "Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies: {57} But turned back, and dealt unfaithfully like their fathers: they were turned aside like a deceitful bow. {58} For they provoked him to anger with their high places, and moved him to jealousy with their graven images. {59} When God heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel: {60} So that he forsook the tabernacle of Shiloh, the tent which he placed among men; {61} And delivered his strength into captivity, and his glory into the enemy's hand. {62} He gave his people over also unto the sword; and was wroth with his inheritance. {63} The fire consumed their young men; and their maidens were not given to marriage. {64} Their priests fell by the sword; and their widows made no lamentation. {65} Then the Lord awaked as one out of sleep, and like a mighty man that shouteth by reason of wine. {66} And he smote his enemies in the hinder parts: he put them to a perpetual reproach. {67} Moreover he refused the tabernacle of Joseph, and chose not the tribe of Ephraim: {68} But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved."

The truth is, God is *not emotionally pleased* with the unbeliever, though He *so loved the world that He gave His only Begotten Son*. Divine Love is *not emotionally driven* like we who are humans make it to be.

1. Divine Love always seeks to do the *highest good* for its object. God *so loved* the world by offering up Christ for it.

2. Divine Love *may not feel good* about doing the highest good for its object - but it nonetheless does it anyway. God the Father was certainly *not happy* about the Cross, but Love demanded that payment.

3. Divine Love is *commanded* to the people of God *regardless* as to whether it feels good or not. We are to *do the highest good toward God* whether we feel like it or not. We are to *do the highest good toward our enemies* whether we feel good about it or not. Jesus said:

(Matthew 5:44-48 KJV) "But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; {45} That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. {46} For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? {47} And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so? {48}

Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

(Mark 11:25-26 KJV) "And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. {26} But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses."

4. As believers indwelt by the Spirit of God we are therefore called to *love God in the Shema*, which does not mean *just to feel emotional warm fuzzies toward Him* - it means to do *the highest good toward God*. If you love God you will be *obedient* to Him in all things, whether you *feel like it* or not. Jesus said:

(John 14:15 KJV) "If ye love me, keep my commandments."

The Shema Demands Obedience

Biblical love *demands obedience, not agreement*. Let me qualify that statement, if I may. The Shema states:

FOCAL Deuteronomy 6:5 (KJV) "And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might."

Now Jesus made *love* and *obedience* to be one in the same. Our Lord said:

(John 14:21-24 KJV) "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth

me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him. {22} Judas saith unto him, not Iscariot, Lord, how is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world? {23} Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. {24} He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me."

The disciples were like many Christians are today: they emotionally *loved* Jesus, but often failed to follow His Divine direction. But Jesus said "If a man love me, he will keep⁶ my words". The word **keep** literally means **to keep watch over, to carefully observe, to be obedient to**. To love Christ in the Biblical sense of the word "love" is to do what He says.

As a pastor I have often had people call and ask me questions on how Christians ought to behave. One of the key questions I am often asked is "How do I handle the problem I have with brother/ sister so and so"? Time and time again I have given the words of Christ as *absolute truth*. The standard that Jesus established was:

1. First, try and resolve the matter *privately* between yourself and the offending party (**Matthew 18:15**).

2. If the offending party will not hear you, then take a

⁶ Future Active Indicative tereo {pronounced tay-reh'-o}, to guard, to observe

witness with you and *go back to the offending party* (**Matthew 18:16**).

3. If the offending party will not hear you still, then take your witnesses to the Church and *tell it to the Church* (**Matthew 18:17**). If the offender refuses to make peace, then the Church recognizes him or her as if they were a **heathen man and a publican**.

Time and time again I find myself giving this formula, one that our Savior very clearly invoked - and few times do Christians follow the formula. The last time I gave this information out the person I told this to told me "Thank you for your opinion". This is *not my opinion*, it is the Lord's Word! If you love Him you will *keep His commandments*, even when keeping these commandments seem hard to keep.

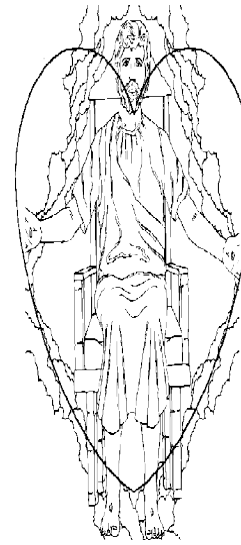
Love of God demands *obedience to God!*

The Shema demands obedience to God!

How Obedient Must I Be To The Shema?

FOCAL Deuteronomy 6:6-9 (KJV) "And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: {7} And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. {8} And thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thine hand, and they shall be as frontlets between thine eyes. {9} And thou shalt write them upon the

posts of thy house, and on thy gates."



God's Command Must Dominate The Heart!

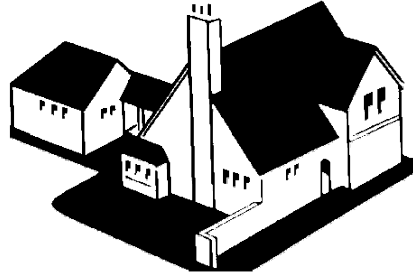
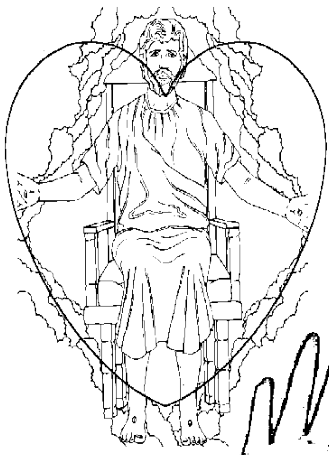
God was very clear on the command that He gave us. First of all, the command was to be stored *in our hearts*. Our *hearts* or *emotions* would not dictate how we loved, but His command would be that which

dictated our emotional lives. The Scripture wrote an absolute truth when it said:

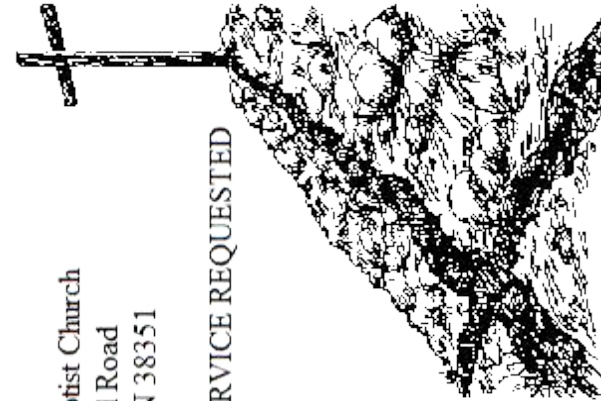
Proverbs 25:28 (KJV) "He that hath no rule over his own spirit is like a city that is broken down, and without walls."

When God is in control, when you make the decision to *trust Him no matter what your emotions say*, then you can be like Abraham and be a friend of God. When you trust God and obey Him no matter what your emotions may say, when He is YHWH Elohiym of your heart, then you *cannot be controlled* by others - only by Him.

When you have focused your heart on Christ rather than on hurt, Christ rather than fear, Christ rather than rejection, Christ rather than loneliness, Christ rather than anything else in this life - then you are controlled by Him rather than by life's circumstances. We must, as believers in Christ, *cease being controlled* by our emotions and *start being controlled* by YHWH Elohiym. This is the



only hope that we have to turn around the horrible state of loss that has become America.



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED