

Undivided Heart

By Steve Pruitt

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 NKJV

Deuteronomy 6:4 is the beginning phrase of what the Jews call the *Shema*. The *Shema* is a declaration of faith or a creed as well as a pledge of allegiance to the one true God. The declaration asserts that the God of Israel is the only God; that he alone is Yahweh and there is no other. Deuteronomy 6:5 is the second line of the *Shema* with which the Jew pledges to love the Lord with all of their being. Jews are commanded to recite the *Shema* twice each day; in the morning and in the evening.

The words of the *Shema* are also written on a mezuzah. A mezuzah is a parchment that is placed in a decorative container and affixed to the doorposts of a house. The mezuzah is hung in accordance to the commandment of Deuteronomy 6:9 to write the *Shema* on the doorposts. Each time the Jewish worshiper passes through the doorway they are to touch the mezuzah, then kiss the fingers of the hand that touched it. This is done as an expression of love to God and his word and to remind the worshiper of the word written in the mezuzah.

One day as Jesus was reasoning with the Jewish leaders a scribe asked him, “Which is the first commandment of all.” Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4-5. The scribe concurred with Jesus that the commandment was more important than all the burnt offerings and sacrifices. Jesus replied, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” It wasn’t enough for the scribe to have just head knowledge of this commandment, he must also have it planted in his heart and walked out in his life.

The heart is the innermost being of a man. To love the Lord with all your heart means that you have no other gods before him; no divided heart; no other love interests. To love the Lord with all your soul is to love him with every breath or the very centre of your personality. To love the Lord with all your strength (might) means to love him vehemently. According to the American Heritage Dictionary, the word vehement is characterized by forcefulness of expression or intensity of emotion, passion, or conviction.

Like those of the Jewish faith we must constantly remind ourselves to love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and strength. This greatest of commandments is the heart of worship. For unless one has recognized God as the only absolute God and is consumed (mind, will and emotions) with love for him, he cannot live a life of worship.

Do you have a divided heart? Does the word “vehemently” describe your love for God? Ask the Father to give you an undivided heart.

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Scriptures for meditation:

- Exodus 20:3
- 1 John 3:21-23
- Matthew 15:8-9