

The Heart of the Law

Key Verse: “Now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul, To keep the commandments of the LORD, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?”

—Deuteronomy
10:12,13

Selected Scripture:
Deuteronomy 10:1-
22;16:18-20

FOLLOWING THE GIVING

of the Law Covenant to Israel, the Heavenly Father asked his chosen people to be loyal to him, to love him, and to walk in his ways. To do this, there are requirements that are necessary for God’s people, both then and now, to keep close to their hearts. First, if we desire to “walk in his ways,” we must show an appreciation for his greatness, understanding our own insignificance and insufficiency without his guidance. We must show our love and thanksgiving for his graciousness. We then are to look away from our own thoughts and plans, and allow our minds to dwell on the grandeur of God’s character, and the wisdom of his ways. This will lead us to have a proper respect for God and for his divine arrangements.

“The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom.” (Prov. 9:10) A proper understanding of the word “fear” in this verse reveals that we are to reverence our Heavenly Father in order to gain true wisdom. These words also imply that our reverence for God will increase as we come

to know more and more of his character. This matter is very important in our dealings with the Heavenly Father, as pointed out to us in Deuteronomy 10:20: "Thou shalt fear [reverence] the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name." This is also shown in the words, "Fear [reverence] God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of a man." (Eccles. 12:13) These scriptures, and many others, further point out to us that we must keep our hearts and motives as pure as possible. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."—Prov. 4:23

We call to mind these words of the Master: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets." (Matt. 22:37-40) Our covenant with God is that we love him with all of our heart, mind, and strength. We are to live up to this standard in the spirit of our minds to the greatest extent possible, and are only able to do so by divine assistance. We are to desire to live a life that is true and loyal to the merit of the precious blood which bought us, and which covers our unavoidable deficiencies. "He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."—Isa. 61:10

As we strive to love the Heavenly Father with all our being, we should also be laying our lives down for the brethren. This attitude is pleasing to our Lord, as we see from his words: "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you." (John 15:13,14) Following Jesus in this way means that we will seek to walk in his paths, and strive, as he did, to take our instructions from God. In summary, we call to mind these words: "The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether."—Ps. 19:9 ■