



January 18, 2023 // Life Church Smyrna

P. Christian Salzillo // Part 2

There seem to be two interpretations that both lead us to theological truths that are acceptable and that we can pull from this verse.

Two theological truths from this prayer:

- 1) Sole object of our affection (our love, worship, reverence)
- 2) Superiority over all the other gods

¹³ You must revere the LORD your God, serve him, and take oaths using only his name. ¹⁴ You must not go after other gods, those of the surrounding peoples, ¹⁵ for the LORD your God, who is present among you, is a jealous God—his anger will erupt against you and remove you from the land. **Deuteronomy 6:13-15 NET**

If we go from the Shema and fast forward to Jesus, we see an affirmation of this prayer and its subject matter:

²⁸ Now one of the experts in the law came and heard them debating. When he saw that Jesus answered them well, he asked him, “Which commandment is the most important of all?” ²⁹ Jesus answered, “The most important is: ‘Listen, Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ ³¹ The second is: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” ³² The expert in the law said to him, “That is true, Teacher; you are right to say that he is one, and there is no one else besides him. ³³ And to love him with all your heart, with all your mind, and with all your strength and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” ³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered thoughtfully, he said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” Then no one dared any longer to question him. **Mark 12:28-34 NET**

"This is the characteristic that has predominated your entire life...which you defined...as the 'search for the beloved'; and this is indeed what you have always given witness to and continue to witness to today: that the decisive thing that frames each of our days — come rain or come shine — that which gives rise to everything else, is that the Lord is truly present, that we desire him, that we are close to him interiorly, that we love him, that we really believe in him and, believing in him, truly love him. It is this loving that truly fills our hearts, this believing that allows us to walk confidently and peacefully upon the waters, even in the midst of a storm, as Peter did." **Pope Francis at Benedict's funeral**

¹⁵ "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. **John 14:15 NRSV**

²¹ The person who has my commandments and obeys them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and will reveal myself to him." **John 14:21 NET**

We love because he first loved us. **1 John 4:19**

Study Questions

1. What does it mean for you to see God as the sole object of your affection? What terms/words/actions can you think of that would allow you to live out this theological truth? Likewise, how about the fact that our God has superiority over all other gods? How can that truth translate into our daily lives?
2. Thinking about Pope Benedict or others who have taken that step into eternity, how does one cultivate a life that is able to profess love and affection for Jesus at its end?
3. So many of the verses we read talk about love being a result of obeying the Lord. Even this Shema prayer uses a word for love that is not just a warm, fuzzy feeling, but a word of demonstrated action. Is it challenging for you to accept that God's command for our love is proved through our actions?