

Deuteronomy 13:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.

Analysis

The positive command: 'Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.' This fivefold description defines authentic faith: walk after God (follow His ways), fear Him (reverent awe), keep commandments (obey stipulations), obey His voice (responsive hearing), serve Him (devoted worship), cleave to Him (covenant loyalty). The Hebrew *dabaq* (דָּבַק, cleave) describes marital fidelity—exclusive, enduring attachment. True faith is comprehensive devotion, not partial or selective. This contrasts with false prophecy's appeal to novelty or experience; authentic faith maintains covenant loyalty regardless of circumstances or competing claims.

Historical Context

This echoes the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-5) and reiterates covenant relationship's core. Following God means rejecting all alternatives—no religious pluralism or syncretism. Israel's history demonstrates failure: they repeatedly 'went after other gods' (Judges 2:12). Apostasy begins with divided affections. Jesus later declared: 'No man can serve two masters' (Matthew 6:24). Covenant relationship demands exclusive loyalty. The early church faced similar challenges—Judaizers, Gnostics, emperor worship—requiring unwavering commitment to apostolic doctrine.

Related Passages

Psalm 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. Which aspect of this fivefold description (walk, fear, keep, obey, serve, cleave) is most challenging for you personally?
2. How does cleaving to God as in marriage illustrate the exclusivity required in spiritual devotion?
3. What competing voices or claims threaten to divide your loyalty to God and His word?

Interlinear Text

אֶחָד	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	כִּי	וְאֵת	וְאֵת	תִּירָא
after	the LORD	your God	H1980	H853	and fear	H853
H310	H3068	H430			H3372	
מִצְוֹתַי	וְתִשְׁמְרֵם	וּבְקוֹלִי	וְתִשְׁמְעוּ	וְאֵת	וְתַעֲבֹדוּ	
his commandments	him and keep	his voice	and obey	H853	and ye shall serve	
H4687	H8104	H6963	H8085		H5647	
וְ	תִדְבָּקוּ:					
H0	him and cleave					
	H1692					

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 10:20 (References God): Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name.

Colossians 1:10 (References God): That ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God;

Jeremiah 7:23 (References God): But this thing commanded I them, saying, Obey my voice, and I will be your God, and ye shall be my people: and walk ye in all the ways that I have commanded you, that it may be well unto you.

1 Corinthians 6:17 (References Lord): But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

2 Kings 23:3 (Word): And the king stood by a pillar, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all their heart and all their soul, to perform the words of this covenant that were written in this book. And all the people stood to the covenant.

2 Chronicles 34:31 (Word): And the king stood in his place, and made a covenant before the LORD, to walk after the LORD, and to keep his commandments, and his testimonies, and his statutes, with all his heart, and with all his soul, to perform the words of the covenant which are written in this book.

Deuteronomy 30:20 (References God): That thou mayest love the LORD thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him: for he is thy life, and the length of thy days: that thou mayest dwell in the land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them.

Micah 6:8 (References God): He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Deuteronomy 6:13 (References God): Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve him, and shalt swear by his name.

Romans 6:13 (References God): Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.