

Deuteronomy 13:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods, which thou hast not known, thou, nor thy fathers;

Analysis

Family enticement: 'If thy brother, the son of thy mother, or thy son, or thy daughter, or the wife of thy bosom, or thy friend, which is as thine own soul, entice thee secretly, saying, Let us go and serve other gods.' The intensely personal relationships—brother, son, daughter, beloved wife, close friend—make this test most difficult. The Hebrew sut (נִזְזָר, entice/incite) indicates active seduction. The word 'secretly' (בָּשָׁרֶת, baseter) suggests covert temptation, appealing to loyalty or love. This confronts believers with ultimate choice: family or God? Christ later echoes this: 'He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me' (Matthew 10:37). Covenant loyalty must transcend even deepest human affections.

Historical Context

Family ties were paramount in ancient Near East—tribal identity, inheritance, survival depended on kinship. Demanding believers report and testify against family members for idolatry would have been almost unthinkable. Yet God requires it, showing nothing—not even family—supersedes covenant faithfulness. Israel often failed this test—Ahab tolerated Jezebel's Baalism, Solomon accommodated wives' idolatry, Josiah's sons apostatized despite his faithfulness. The first commandment allows no exceptions for family sentiment.

Related Passages

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Colossians 1:16 — All things created through Christ

Study Questions

1. What do you do when family members or close friends try to lead you away from Christ?
2. How do we maintain love for family while refusing to compromise spiritual truth?
3. What does Jesus's statement about 'hating father and mother' (Luke 14:26) mean in light of this passage?

Interlinear Text

אוֹ בְּתָם אָחָתֶךָ יִסְתַּבֵּחַ בְּתָם אָמֵת אָחָתֶךָ
H3588 entice H176 or thy son H176 or thy son H176
H5496 H251 H1121 H517 H1121

אָשֶׁר נָעַת אֵלֶיךָ אָשֶׁת אִשָּׂת בְּתָמָךְ
H834 or thy friend H176 or thy daughter H176 or the wife H176
H7453 H1323 H802 H2436

לִאמְרָה נָלַךְ הַנְּפָשָׁת בְּשָׁמְךָ הַנְּפָשָׁת
H5315 which is as thine own soul H5643 thee secretly H559 saying H1980 and serve H5647

אַתָּה יְדַעַת לֹא אָשֶׁר יְמִינָה יְמִינָה
H859 H3045 which thou hast not known H3808 H834 gods other
H430 H312

תְּאַבְתִּיכְנָה:
thou nor thy fathers
H1

Additional Cross-References

2 Peter 2:1 (Parallel theme): But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

Ephesians 4:14 (Parallel theme): That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;

Proverbs 18:24 (Parallel theme): A man that hath friends must shew himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Revelation 12:9 (Parallel theme): And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

Revelation 20:3 (Parallel theme): And cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season.

Deuteronomy 28:54 (Parallel theme): So that the man that is tender among you, and very delicate, his eye shall be evil toward his brother, and toward the wife of his bosom, and toward the remnant of his children which he shall leave:

Deuteronomy 29:18 (References God): Lest there should be among you man, or woman, or family, or tribe, whose heart turneth away this day from the LORD our God, to go and serve the gods of these nations; lest there should be among you a root that beareth gall and wormwood;

1 Samuel 20:17 (Parallel theme): And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him: for he loved him as he loved his own soul.

1 Samuel 18:3 (Parallel theme): Then Jonathan and David made a covenant, because he loved him as his own soul.

1 Samuel 18:1 (Parallel theme): And it came to pass, when he had made an end of speaking unto Saul, that the soul of Jonathan was knit with the soul of David, and Jonathan loved him as his own soul.

