

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* (סוּת, entice/incite) indicates active seduction. The word 'secretly' (בְּסֵתֶר, 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

כִּי יִסְיֶיךָ H3588	אִם יֶבֶן H5496	אִם יֶבֶן H251	בֶּן H1121	אִם יֶבֶן H517	אִם יֶבֶן H176	בֶּן H1121	אִם יֶבֶן H176
entice	If thy brother	or thy son	of thy mother	or thy son			
בִּתְּךָ H1323	אִם יֶבֶן H176	אִם יֶבֶן H802	חֵיקְךָ H2436	אִם יֶבֶן H176	רֵעֶךָ H7453	אִם יֶבֶן H834	
or thy daughter	or the wife	of thy bosom	or thy friend				
כְּנַפְשְׁךָ H5315	בֵּסְתִּי H5643	לֵאמֹר H559	נֹלֶכְהָ H1980	וְנַעֲבֹדָהּ H5647			
which is as thine own soul	thee secretly	saying	and serve				
אֱלֹהִים H430	אֲחֵרִים H312	אֲשֶׁר H834	לֹא H3808	יָדָעְתָּ H3045	אֲתָה H859		
gods	other	which thou hast not known					
וְאֲבֹתֶיךָ H1							
thou nor thy fathers							

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.

