

# Deuteronomy 30:20

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

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.

## Analysis

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Moses commands: '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, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.' Three imperatives—love, obey, cleave—define covenant relationship. The Hebrew *dabaq* (cleave) describes marriage-like intimacy (Genesis 2:24), suggesting exclusive devotion. The rationale: 'he is thy life'—God isn't merely life-giver but life itself. Relationship with Him is the essence of existence, not merely one aspect of it.

## Historical Context

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This verse concludes Moses' covenant renewal address. The three imperatives—love, obey, cleave—summarize the entire law. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:5 as the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:37), showing these themes' centrality. Israel's tragedy was repeatedly violating this—loving other gods, disobeying commands, cleaving to idols. The exile fulfilled the warning—failure to cleave to God meant expulsion from the land. New Testament believers experience this through union with Christ (John 15:4-5).

## Related Passages

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**James 2:17** — Faith and works

**Romans 1:17** — The righteous shall live by faith

**1 Corinthians 13:4** — Characteristics of love

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

## Study Questions

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1. How do love, obedience, and clinging to God relate to each other in your spiritual life?
2. What does the statement 'he is thy life' mean practically for daily priorities and affections?

## Interlinear Text

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לְאָהֳבָה	אֶת	יְהוָה	אֱלֹהֶיךָ	לְשִׁמְעוּ	
That thou mayest love	H853	the LORD	thy God	and that thou mayest obey	
H157		H3068	H430	H8085	
בְּקוֹלִי	וּלְדַבָּרָהּ	כִּי	וְאֵל	חַיִּיךָ	
his voice	and that thou mayest cleave	H0	H3588	H1931	unto him for he is thy life
H6963	H1692				H2416
וְאֵלֶיךָ	יָמֶיךָ	לָשֶׁבֶת	עַל	הָאֲדָמָה	אֲשֶׁר
and the length	of thy days	that thou mayest dwell	H5921	in the land	H834
H753	H3117	H3427		H127	
נִשְׁבַּעַ ע	יְהוָה	לְאֲבֹתֶיךָ	לְאַבְרָהָם	לְיִצְחָק	וּלְיַעֲקֹב
sware	the LORD	unto thy fathers	to Abraham	to Isaac	and to Jacob
H7650	H3068	H1	H85	H3327	H3290
לָהֶם:	לָתֵת				
H1992					
H5414					

## Additional Cross-References

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**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.

**Acts 17:25** (Parallel theme): Neither is worshipped with men's hands, as though he needed any thing, seeing he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things;

**John 17:3** (References God): And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

**Acts 17:28** (Parallel theme): For in him we live, and move, and have our being; as certain also of your own poets have said, For we are also his offspring.

**Psalms 66:9** (Parallel theme): Which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved.

**John 14:6** (Parallel theme): Jesus saith unto him, I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

**Psalms 36:9** (Parallel theme): For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light.

**Deuteronomy 10:12** (Love): And 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,

**Deuteronomy 5:16** (References God): Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

**Deuteronomy 4:40** (References God): Thou shalt keep therefore his statutes, and his commandments, which I command thee this day, that it may go well with thee, and with thy children after thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days upon the earth, which the LORD thy God giveth thee, for ever.