

# Hosea 12:6

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment,  
and wait on thy God continually.

## Analysis

---

God's call to covenant renewal: 'Therefore turn thou to thy God: keep mercy and judgment and wait on thy God continually.' The Hebrew imperatives are direct: 'we-attah be-Eloheka tashuv' (and you, to your God return), 'hesed u-mishpat shemor' (mercy and justice keep), 'qavveh el-Eloheka tamid' (wait on your God continually). The three-fold summons:

1. return/repent (shub—turn back from idolatry to YHWH)
2. practice covenant loyalty and justice (hesed u-mishpat—internal devotion and external righteousness)
3. wait on God continually (qavah—hope/trust, persistently).

This encapsulates covenant faithfulness: right relationship with God (return/wait) produces right treatment of others (mercy/justice). Micah 6:8 parallels: 'do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with thy God.' True religion combines vertical and horizontal dimensions.

## Historical Context

---

Context includes Israel's history of deception and violence (v. 7-8: merchant using false balances, loving to oppress), contrasted with Jacob's wrestling with God and prevailing through persistence (v. 3-4, referencing Genesis 32:24-30). The call to 'return' assumes Israel had departed; 'wait continually' implies sustained trust, not sporadic devotion. Israel's pattern was cyclical apostasy (Judges period repeated in kingdom era). God calls them back to consistent covenant life: mercy (hesed)

toward covenant community, justice (mishpat) in all dealings, persistent dependence on God. This anticipates Jesus's summary of the law: love God, love neighbor (Matthew 22:37-40). Genuine faith produces both worship and ethics, vertical and horizontal righteousness.

## Related Passages

---

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

**1 John 4:8** — God is love

**Revelation 20:12** — Judgment according to deeds

**Romans 2:1** — Judging others

## Study Questions

---

1. Have I 'returned to God' with genuine repentance, or do I maintain distance through unconfessed sin?
2. How do I balance active obedience (keeping mercy and justice) with patient trust (waiting on God continually)?

## Interlinear Text

---

וְאַתָּה ה	אֱלֹהֵי יְיָ	תֵּשׁ וּב	חַסְדִּי	וּמִשְׁפָּט	שְׁמִי ר	יִקְוָה
H859	on thy God	Therefore turn	mercy	and judgment	keep	and wait
	H430	H7725	H2617	H4941	H8104	H6960

  

אֵל	אֱלֹהֵי יְיָ	תָּמִיד:
H413	on thy God	continually
	H430	H8548

## Additional Cross-References

---

**Micah 6:8** (Grace): 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?

**Hosea 14:1** (References God): O Israel, return unto the LORD thy God; for thou hast fallen by thine iniquity.

**Micah 7:7** (References God): Therefore I will look unto the LORD; I will wait for the God of my salvation: my God will hear me.

**Zechariah 7:9** (Grace): Thus speaketh the LORD of hosts, saying, Execute true judgment, and shew mercy and compassions every man to his brother:

**Isaiah 40:31** (Parallel theme): But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.

**Isaiah 58:6** (Parallel theme): Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke?

**Isaiah 8:17** (Parallel theme): And I will wait upon the LORD, that hideth his face from the house of Jacob, and I will look for him.

**Isaiah 1:16** (Parallel theme): Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil;

**Isaiah 30:18** (Grace): And therefore will the LORD wait, that he may be gracious unto you, and therefore will he be exalted, that he may have mercy upon you: for the LORD is a God of judgment: blessed are all they that wait for him.

**Isaiah 31:6** (Parallel theme): Turn ye unto him from whom the children of Israel have deeply revolted.