

So, You Want to Study Torah?

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Perhaps you want to learn to love G-d and serve Him better. Perhaps you are a student of the Hebrew Roots of our faith and you want to grow. Perhaps you're looking for a tool to deepen and broaden your walk.

Whatever your reason, if it is to bless and glorify Him – then it's a great reason. But, the study of Torah is not an easy task. Look at the example of the Orthodox Jews. For them the study of Torah is a lifetime commitment – a commitment of all of their lives. They have the advantage of having begun when they were around five. They have the advantage of knowing Hebrew. They have the advantage of having the writings of the Sages. Their very lifestyle is build upon and around Torah. But, that does not mean that you and I are at any disadvantage at all.

This tool is offered as a place of beginning – not a means but a means to an end. The end is to make sure that Torah written on the heart is also Torah implanted in the mind. It is one step in moving us toward an intimate relationship with G-d's Word and hence with Him. There are NO barriers in our relationship with Him. Yeshua assures us of this. So all we can do is work to improve that relationship.

How do we improve our relationship with G-d? We do it just as we do any relationship we get to know Him. We spend time with Him, we listen to Him, we talk with Him and we live our lives in a manner that reflects that relationship lives that honor and glorify Him. Yeshua (for those of us who are Gentiles) has removed any barrier or hindrance. For all of us (Jew and Gentile) Yeshua has made it possible for us to seek Him and serve Him with awe and gratitude and with no fear of failure – for failure is simply an opportunity to learn and to grow.

The end is NOT to be saved or stay saved but to learn to live in Him and for Him before all men in a manner that brings no shame to Him. The END is Him and His glory and honor. And praise be to Him that we will benefit greatly from making this our END.

The Shema is our motivator – our inspiration – our marching orders.

Deu 6:4 Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God *is* one LORD.

Deu 6:5 And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.

Deu 6:6 And these Words which I am commanding you today shall be on your heart.

Deu 6:7 And you shall teach them to your sons, and shall speak of them as you sit in your house, and as you walk in the way, and as you are lying down, and as you are rising up.

Deu 6:8 And *you* shall bind them for a sign on your hand; and they shall be for frontlets between your eyes.

Deu 6:9 And you shall write them on the doorposts of your house, and on your gates.

The verse I struggle with is verse 5. How do I do that? What can I do to grow in loving Him with all my heart, soul and strength?

Well, I don't do it by accident – I do it on purpose – with intent. Where do I start? He makes it plain; I start with His Words. I take them in, I lock them in my memory, I reflect upon them and what they must mean for me each day, each moment. I reflect on what they say and mean when I am happy, sad, angry, afraid – what do they mean when I am?

Now there are, by tradition, 613 instructions. How in the world do I learn them and reflect on them?

Some of them can't be followed for the Temple is gone. Where do I start?

I suggest you start with the clearest summary. Of course loving G-d and loving our neighbor is the simplest summary – but though it is monumental in it's calling to us, for me it is just a little too simple. I love G-d and love my neighbor by following G-d's instruction – His Torah – but 613?

Start with the ten found in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. They make an excellent foundation from which to start our study of His instructions.

We have a "what" so we need a "how." Here's what I suggest. Below you will find the instructions in the Literal Translation. Take one instruction per week and read it at the beginning of each day, in the middle of each day and then at the end of each day. Each evening sit down and reflect upon how this instruction was or was not active in your life that day. This is not an exercise in self-abuse but rather an exercise of discovery.

We need to discover two things. First we need to discover where, in what situations, we find ourselves living these instructions that we need to celebrate and give thanks for. Second we need to discover where these instructions are challenged in our lives by friends, associates, circumstances, by life and our own hearts. We do this in order to understand ourselves and our needs and to give fodder for our prayers.

Each night you will write (at least five sentences) reflecting on the instruction you are working on that week. Be gracious to yourself as He is gracious. This is not about earning but about experiencing and growing. This is not about being okay with G-d; Yeshua took care of that. This is about being a tree and not a fence-post. It is about growing strong and wise as well as humble and contrite. It is also about growing in gratitude.

When I see where I am faithfully following His instructions I praise and thank Him for it is by His grace and provision that I am doing it. When I see where I am challenged and where I fail I praise Him for Yeshua and for allowing me to see where my walk in His Way needs to be strengthened. It's a WIN-WIN because;

As His divine power **has given** to us all things *pertaining* to life and godliness through the full knowledge of the *One* calling us through glory and virtue, by which means He has given to us the very great and precious promises, so that through these you might be partakers of *the* divine nature, escaping from the corruption in *the* world by lust. (2Pe 1:3-4)

All we need do is follow Peter's instructions for he goes on to write;

But also in this very thing, having brought in **all diligence, having fully supplied in your faith virtue, and with virtue knowledge, and with the knowledge self-control, and with the self-control patience, and with the patience godliness, and with the godliness brotherly love, and with brotherly love, love.** For these things being in you, and abounding, *they will* make you not idle, not unfruitful in the full knowledge of our Lord Yeshuah the Messiah. (2Pe 1:5-8)

1. (Exo 20:2) I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

2. (Exo 20:3) You shall not have any other gods before Me.

Acts 14:15; John 4:21-23; 1 Timothy 2:5; James 2:19 and 1 Corinthians 8:6

(Exo 20:4) You shall not make a graven image for yourself, or any likeness in the heavens above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth;

(Exo 20:5) you shall not bow to them, and you shall not serve them; for I *am* LORD your God, a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of fathers on sons, on the third and on the fourth *generation*, to those that hate Me;

(Exo 20:6) and doing kindness to thousands, to those loving Me, and to those keeping My commandments.

Acts 17:29; Romans 1:22-23; 1 John 5:21; 1 Corinthians 10:7-14

3. (Exo 20:7) You shall not take the name of LORD your God in vain; for LORD will not leave unpunished the *one* who takes His name in vain.

James 5:12; Matthew 5:33-37; and Matthew 6:5-9

4. (Exo 20:8) Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy;

(Exo 20:9) six days you shall labor and do all your work;

(Exo 20:10) and the seventh day *is* a Sabbath to LORD your God; you shall not do any work, you, and your son, and your daughter, your male slave and your slave-girl, and your livestock, and your stranger who *is* in your gates.

(Exo 20:11) For *in* six days LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all which *is* in them, and He rested on the seventh day; on account of this LORD blessed the Sabbath day and sanctified it.

Mk 6:2; Lk 4:16; Lk 4:31; Lk 23:55,56; Acts13:14; Acts13:42; Acts13:44; Acts15:21; Acts16:13; Acts17:2; Acts18:4; Heb 4:4; [See Eph 5:1 where it states that we are to be imitators of God.]; Heb 4:9

5. (Exo 20:12) Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long on the land which LORD your God *is* giving to you.

Ephesians 6:1-4

6. (Exo 20:13) You shall not murder.

1 John 3:15 and Matthew 5:21-22

7. (Exo 20:14) You shall not commit adultery.

Matthew 5:27-28; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13; 1 Corinthians 6:9-20 and Hebrews 13:4

8. (Exo 20:15) You shall not steal.

Ephesians 4:28; 2 Thessalonians 3:10-12 and James 5:1-4

9. (Exo 20:16) You shall not testify a witness of falsehood against your neighbor.

Colossians 3:9 and Ephesians 4:25

10. (Exo 20:17) You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male slave, or his slave-girl, or his ox, or his ass, or anything which *belongs* to your neighbor.

Ephesians 5:3 and Luke 12:15-21

If I can be of any encouragement or help please let me know.

Shalom,

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