

# Deuteronomy 11:22-25

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*Moses explains that if the Israelites love God and obey His commandments, they will successfully conquer the land of Canaan and will possess a vast territory.*

Having told the Israelites that the gift of land promised to their fathers would be permanent, Moses now asked the people of God to obey God's laws in order to successfully conquer the land. He stated that if they *are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to hold fast to Him, then the Lord will drive out all these nations from before you.* The word *commandment* refers to the whole corpus of ordinances and statutes of God. Keeping His commandment was summarized by three key principles: *to love the LORD, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him.*

First, the Israelites were commanded *to love the LORD their God.* *To love God* is to live in complete obedience to Him. Such a *love for God* is more than a strong affection for Him. It is an expression of obedience to His covenantal laws (6:4; 11:1; 30:16). This love was to be the appropriate response to the LORD because He is the one who knows what is best for His vassals (Israel). Therefore, He demanded exclusive love and loyalty. God promised that if Israel would walk in self-governance, with mutual respect and service, they would be blessed. This of course makes a lot of sense—mutual service and cooperation always leads to prosperity.

Second, the Israelites were commanded *to walk in all God's ways.* The term translated as "ways" (Heb. "derek") literally means "road," or "path." However, Moses frequently used it in Deuteronomy to refer to the way the Israelites were to live; that is, in accordance to the laws of God. To honor one another in truth, trust and service. To love others as they wanted to be loved. Thus, to walk in God's ways implies Israel's affirmative response to the covenantal laws of God, manifested by a sense of dynamic and mutual engagement. Such obedience would create a society with little need for policing, and a lot of mutual love, respect, and trust. This would of course lead to communities that were both enjoyable as well as safe.

Third, the Israelites were asked to *hold fast to God*. To *hold fast* means “to cling,” “to cleave,” or “to keep close.” The verb expresses emotional closeness and loyalty. Moses used the same verb in [Genesis 2:24](#) to explain how a man leaves his parents to “be joined” to his wife to “become one flesh” (see also [Deuteronomy 4:4](#); [Deuteronomy 10:20](#)). Holding fast to God would allow the Israelites to stay away from idolatry or anything that led them away from their Suzerain God. The way of idols is the way of human exploitation and self-seeking. This was to be strictly avoided.

Moses told the Israelites that if they followed these three principles, *then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you*. Although these nations were *greater and mightier* than Israel, the almighty God would deliver them into the hands of His people so that they could defeat them to occupy their land ([Deuteronomy 7:1](#)).

Israel was given a unique privilege to be in a covenant relationship with the LORD. They were chosen by God to be His “own possession among all the peoples” ([Exodus 19:5](#)). Because of God’s choice of Israel, the people would possess a vast territory. As Moses said to them, *Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours; your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon, and from the river, the river Euphrates, as far as the western sea*.

The expression *every place on which the sole of your foot treads* likely refers to the ancient practice of gaining formal title to a land by walking in and through it. The *foot* was a symbol of power in the Ancient Near East and indicated the power to conquer and have dominion. In this case, it means that all the territory over which the Israelites walked was to be theirs. Such a vast territory extends from the wilderness in the south, to the *Lebanon* in the north. *Lebanon* speaks of the inland mountain range ([Deuteronomy 1:7](#)). And the *river, the river Euphrates* is an indication of the northwestern side of the river in northern Syria, the northern border of the land that God has promised to His people, as far as the western sea, that is, the Mediterranean Sea in the west.

Moses concludes this section by declaring that *No man will be able to stand before you; the LORD your God will lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land on which you set foot, as He has spoken to you*. The Israelites would be victorious not because their army was stronger than the enemy’s army. Instead, they would conquer the land because the LORD would strike terror upon the inhabitants of Canaan ([Deuteronomy 2:25](#); [7:21-24](#)). Israel’s

God is the great warrior, the one who always fights for His people. This would only be the case, however, if Israel walked in obedience.

**Biblical Text:**

**<sup>22</sup> For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him, <sup>23</sup> then the Lord will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. <sup>24</sup> Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours; your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon, *and* from the river, the river Euphrates, as far as the western sea. <sup>25</sup> No man will be able to stand before you; the Lord your God will lay the dread of you and the fear of you on all the land on which you set foot, as He has spoken to you.**