

# HEMA

A H E B R E W W O R D S T U D Y

## Overview:

For thousands of years the Jewish people have prayed the Shema – a daily prayer of allegiance to God. This series will help you learn what those words mean in the original language.

## Lessons:

1. The Meaning of "Listen" in Hebrew
2. The Meaning of "Lord" in Hebrew
3. The Meaning of "Love" in Hebrew
4. The Meaning of "Heart" in Hebrew
5. The Meaning of "Soul" in Hebrew
6. The Meaning of "Strength" in Hebrew



# THE MEANING OF "LISTEN"

*Find discipleship resources at [pursueGOD.org/Shema](http://pursueGOD.org/Shema)*

## TALKING POINTS

*"Shema" (Deuteronomy 6:4-5) is a common word in the Hebrew Bible, usually translated as "listen." But the meaning of the word goes far beyond what your ears can hear.*

- Shema means \_\_\_\_\_. Leah named her son Simon (Shim'on) in order to remind herself that God was truly listening. **Genesis 29:33**
- Shema means \_\_\_\_\_. This is the kind of listening we want God to do when we pray to him. **Psalm 27:7**
- Shema means \_\_\_\_\_. In Hebrew, listening and doing are two sides of the same coin – and that's still how Jesus sees it today. **Exodus 19:5, Mark 12:28-29**

## DISCUSSION

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1. *Share about a time when someone "didn't hear" what you were trying to say. How did you know?*
2. *How do you know when someone is really listening to you?*
3. *Read Psalm 27:7. Share a time when you prayed for God to "hear" you. What were your expectations of him?*
4. *Read Deuteronomy 6:5-6. In the OT, we see that God was not merely calling Israel to know his commandments, but to live accordingly. Does this principle apply to us today? Explain.*
5. *Read Exodus 19:5 and Mark 12:28-29. How does obedience relate to listening. How do you feel when your words aren't heeded by your kids or employees? How do you think God feels when we don't obey?*
6. *Read John 14:15. From Jesus's perspective, what does it mean if we live in constant disobedience to him?*



# THE MEANING OF "LORD"

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## TALKING POINTS

*There is one true God, eternal and supreme, who deserves our absolute reverence. That's how the ancient Jews viewed Yahweh.*

- "Yahweh" means that God is \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. He has always been God and always will be. **Exodus 3:13-15, Revelation 1:8, Psalm 90:2,5,12**
- "Yahweh" means God is the only \_\_\_\_\_ there is. Every religion has a concept of God, but only one God actually exists – the \_\_\_\_\_ God of the Bible. **Isaiah 44:6,8, Hebrews 13:8, Romans 11:33-36**
- As the one true God, our deepest \_\_\_\_\_ should be focused on Yahweh alone. Nothing else should take the place only he \_\_\_\_\_ in our lives. **Mark 12:28-29**

## DISCUSSION

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1. Read Exodus 3:1-6. What is God communicating to Moses in this passage?
2. Read Exodus 3:9-15. Why do you think Moses asks who is speaking to him? How did God describe himself to Moses and why is it significant?
3. What does YAHWEH mean?
4. What does it mean that God "is" according to this topic? Why does this matter for understanding God?
5. Jewish leaders created extra laws to keep themselves from breaking the Law of Moses, and Jesus later criticized some leaders for doing this. What are some examples of how we today can create "extra laws" over and above what the Bible teaches? Are we wise or are we foolish to do this? Explain.
6. Read Isaiah 44:6 and Psalm 135:13. Why is it important to understand who God is to worship him?



# THE MEANING OF "LOVE"

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## TALKING POINTS

*The concept of "love" in the Old Testament ("ahava" in Hebrew) is very different from our word in today's culture. Understanding the true nature of love inspires us to love God and others.*

- God is \_\_\_\_\_, and he created us in his image so we can love. God shows us what \_\_\_\_\_ love really looks like.  
**1 John 4:8, Jeremiah 31:3, Deuteronomy 4:37**
- Our love for God is more than a \_\_\_\_\_, it's also demonstrated in action. True love for God impacts our ability to love our \_\_\_\_\_.  
**Deuteronomy 10:12-13, Matthew 22:37-39**
- God demonstrated His love for us in the most \_\_\_\_\_ way. While we were still \_\_\_\_\_, God sent Jesus for us. **John 3:16, Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23**

## DISCUSSION

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1. *Who are the people in your life that you care about? How would you describe the different types of love you feel toward them?*
2. *Read Deuteronomy 7:7-8 and Jeremiah 31:3. What does it mean that God is love? Why is it imperative to understand that God's love for us is not based on our efforts but from his character?*
3. *How does it change your view of God that he loves you with the affection similar to a husband and wife?*
4. *Read Deuteronomy 4:37. Why is love in action more important than just a feeling? How has your love for others motivated you toward action? How have you seen God's love for you propel you to action in your life?*
5. *Read Deuteronomy 10:12-13. What does it mean to fear the Lord? What more do you need to do to show your love for God in your life?*
6. *Read 1 John 4:19. Who are some people that you need to love and serve in your life?*



# THE MEANING OF "HEART"

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## TALKING POINTS

*The concept of the "heart" in the Old Testament ("Lev" in Hebrew) is very different from how we use the term in modern language. Understanding the word can unlock new insights for living the good life.*

- In biblical Hebrew, the heart is where we \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. In fact, ancient Israelites didn't even have a word for "\_\_\_\_\_" that we know of. **Jeremiah 15:16, Proverbs 14:33**
- The heart is also where we make \_\_\_\_\_. So the concept of the "heart" is best understood as the "\_\_\_\_\_" – the seat of our emotions, mind, and will. **Psalms 37:4, Proverbs 4:23**
- The bad news in the Bible is that our hearts (our inner selves) are fundamentally \_\_\_\_\_ because of sin. The good news is that God can change our hearts in an instant – the moment we place our \_\_\_\_\_ in Jesus. **Jeremiah 17:9, Mark 7:21-23, Deuteronomy 30:6, Ezekiel 36:26, Jeremiah 31:33, Romans 10:9-10.**

## DISCUSSION

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1. *Share a time you made a decision from the heart rather than from the mind? How did it turn out?*
2. *Read Proverbs 4:23. Why should we "guard our hearts?" How can our hearts get us in trouble?*
3. *What does it look like practically to "guard" our hearts?*
4. *Read Jeremiah 17:9. In what ways is Jeremiah right to say that hearts are deceitful and wicked? How did his experiences and the things he witnessed affect his perspective?*
5. *How have you witnessed the wickedness of people's hearts?*
6. *Read Deuteronomy 30:6 and Ezekiel 36:26. Why is it necessary for God himself to change the hearts of people?*
7. *Share how God has changed your heart or that of someone you know upon a confession of faith?*





# THE MEANING OF "SOUL"

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## TALKING POINTS

*In the Bible, a "soul" isn't something you have; it's something you are. To love God with all of your "Nefesh" is to go beyond a superficial faith and make a "soul-level" commitment.*

- In English the "\_\_\_\_\_" usually refers to the non-material part of us that survives after death. But the Hebrew concept of "soul" is best understood as the "\_\_\_\_\_" – the essence of who we are. **Psalm 119:175, Song of Songs 3:1, Psalm 42:2-3**
- We first make a soul-level \_\_\_\_\_ by trusting Jesus. This is what opens the door to a real \_\_\_\_\_ with God. **Romans 3:22**
- We demonstrate this soul-level commitment by honoring God in \_\_\_\_\_. This \_\_\_\_\_ how we think, feel, talk, act, and relate. **Deuteronomy 6:6, John 14:15, 1 Corinthians 10:31**
- The natural outcome of a soul-level commitment to God is \_\_\_\_\_ for others. This means we make \_\_\_\_\_, at home and in the world. **Deuteronomy 6:7-9, Matthew 28:19-20**

## DISCUSSION

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1. *Share a time you longed for something in the deepest part of your soul. Why was that so important to you?*
2. *The Greeks believed souls were trapped in bodies. How would this have affected their view of their bodies and of the physical world?*
3. *Why is it important that the Bible does not teach that our souls are imprisoned in our bodies? What should it lead us to believe about our bodies and the physical world?*
4. *Read Psalm 119:175 and Song of Songs 3:1. How do these verses speak to the idea of loving with all that you have?*
5. *Read Psalm 42:2-3. What does it look like practically to love God with all of your "soul" (nefesh)? How can you put this "nefesh" level of love into practice in your own life?*



# THE MEANING OF "STRENGTH"

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## TALKING POINTS

*What does it mean to love God "with all of your strength"? The Hebrew word "Me'od" in the famous Shema prayer (Deuteronomy 6:4-5) will give us some insight.*

- Me'od doesn't mean "\_\_\_\_\_ " in terms of muscle power. It's actually an adverb that intensifies a word's meaning, more accurately translated as "\_\_\_\_\_." **Genesis 1:31, 4:5, 30:43, Numbers 14:7**
- When it came to translating "Me'od" in the Hebrew Bible, Greek interpreters used "\_\_\_\_\_ " (dunamis). Aramaic interpreters used the word for "\_\_\_\_\_", which can also be translated "that on which man trusts". **Acts 1:8, Matthew 6:24**
- When Jesus quoted the Shema, he translated "me'od" as "\_\_\_\_\_." The point is that everything in a person's life – time, talent, and treasure – offers a chance to \_\_\_\_\_ God and others. **Mark 12:30**

## DISCUSSION

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1. *Share a time you felt very strongly about something, good or bad. What words would you use to describe your emotional state?*
2. *Read Genesis 1:31. Why do you think God added me'od to his reaction of creating humans?*
3. *Why do you think the word used in Deuteronomy 6:4-5 is for "muchness" rather than for "strength"?*
4. *What does it look like for a person to love God with all of their "muchness"?*
5. *Read Mark 12:30. Why do you think Jesus quoted the shema prayer in the New Testament? How do we use the strength of our mind and our power to love God?*
6. *What would it look like if you loved God with all of the "muchness" you could muster in your life?*

