

יְהוָה (Echad)

-Ryan Parsons-

The Smartphone is one the greatest technological developments in the history of man...so far. However, it has also become one of the greatest dangers man has ever faced. Relationship experts are now encouraging couples, colleagues and families to put their phones away because the presence of the phone in your hand or on the table in front of you communicates to the other person(s) in the room that they are not important.

Go to restaurants or to many family dinner tables and observe how everyone is looking at a phone rather than looking at and engaging the person(s) right across the table. While the phone and apps that facilitate “connection” provide an illusion of intimacy, they are actually, in many ways, destroying it.

What does this have to do with the Shema? The people of Israel needed to hear this:

Deuteronomy 6:4 (ESV)

“Hear, O Israel: **The Lord our God, the Lord is one...**”

They had some experience around cultures with a multiplicity of gods. Surely, they could remember the stories of being in Egypt. In addition, in Canaan, the land they were about to enter, was filled with all kinds of gods. But the Lord wanted them to know this:

He is their God and he is God “alone” (another way to translate the Hebrew word echad).

Asaph and David got it.

Asaph petitioned God to act against his enemies to show them He is the **only one**:

Psalm 83:18

*that they may know that you alone,
whose name is the Lord,
are the Most High over all the earth.*

In David’s prayer he declared God **completely unique**:

Psalm 86:8

There is none like you among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like yours.

The shiny new idols that Israel was going to be confronted with had an allure, and there was going to be the temptation to two-time YHWH. After all, that’s what all the cultures around them were doing it. But knowing is not enough. There must be a response. God’s people were being called to center their entire life around the one and only God of the universe and to let Him be Lord of their lives.

One of satan’s subtle tactics has been dividing man’s affection, loyalty, and worship between multiple sources. But God is God alone. Only He deserves our undivided attention and our singular focus. We should never two-time God.

In the same way we put down the distractions in order to preserve our relationships with our spouse, kids, family and friends, we **MUST** put down all things that take the place of God.

What is your distraction or temptation? Can you put it down for good? This week, ask someone to pray for your strength to forsake anything in your life that is pulling your focus from the Lord.