

מְּוֹדֵקְחָ (Me'odekha)

-Ryan Parsons-

I once watched a story about a high school football player named Brock who was a leader and one of the most talented players on his team. When asked by his coach if he could be counted on to do his very best, he flippantly said, “Yes.” However, the coach knew he was holding back. Testing Brock’s statement, the coach blindfolded him and asked him to do a bear crawl with another player on his back. Brock said, “You want me to go to the 30 yard line?” In response, the coach told Brock that he only wanted his very best. With encouragement and continual challenge to give his very best, Brock ultimately went 70 yards further than he originally supposed. Coach used this learning moment to convict his player that he was holding back and that he needed to bring his very best to the football field.

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (ESV)

4 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **5** You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all **your might**.

The Shema is doing the same thing as Brock’s coach. Translated, the word me’odekha does not specifically mean *strength* or *might*. To be honest, the translators have had trouble putting the substance of that Hebrew word into one English word. The word actually translates *very*, but some use the words *muchness*, *umph*, *whatever measure*, *force*, or *abundance*. Basically, it means *utterly all of you*.

God’s people were heading into a new land. There they would be faced with the allure of shiny new cultures, religions, and morals. As they went in to accept this blessing from God, Moses wanted them to remember. More than that, he wanted them to summon the strength to act upon what they had heard. They were to remain faithful to and love the God who had delivered them from the oppression of the Egyptians, nurtured them in the barrenness of the wilderness, and who was providing for them a land of great promise. This was to be their ethos.

What a great challenge! Like Israel, we are called onto the football field of life and challenged to love the Lord with every fiber of our being, holding back nothing. However, we are also living in a world full of shiny cultures, religions, and morals. But, the Lord is the one and only. He wants our very best. Nothing more and nothing less.

How would you define your love for God? Are you holding back anything from Him? Discuss this with a brother or sister in Christ this week and imagine how you might love God more.