



September 18, 2022
“A Major Life Lesson”

Mark 12



28 Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?” 29 Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. 31 And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” 32 So the scribe said to Him, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. 33 And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” 34 Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” But after that no one dared question Him.

How I discovered love- Born May 2, 1955

Mother and fathers

Brothers and sisters

Relatives

Friends

GOD

Stacy Lattisaw- I found love on a two-way street and lost it on a lonely highway

6 “Now this *is* the commandment, *and these are* the statutes and judgments which the LORD your God has commanded to teach you, that you may observe *them* in the land which you are crossing over to possess, ² that you may fear the LORD your God, to keep all His statutes and His commandments which I command you, you and your son

and your grandson, all the days of your life, and that your days may be prolonged. ³ Therefore hear, O Israel, and be careful to observe *it*, that it may be well with you, and that you may multiply greatly as the LORD God of your fathers has promised you—‘a land flowing with milk and honey.’ ⁴ “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. ⁶ “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Serving Christ by Serving You

Living by the Word Loving on the people sign

The importance of loving God and loving people

A. LOVING GOD

➤ Recognizing His Deity

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength” ([Deuteronomy 6:4–5](#)). This is known as the *Shema*, taken from the first word “hear” in Hebrew. Modern Jews consider the recital of the *Shema* both evening and morning to be one of their most sacred duties. It was cited by Jesus as the “greatest commandment in the Law” ([Matthew 22:36–37](#)).

Isaiah 45:21-22- Tell and bring forth *your case*;

Yes, let them take counsel together.

Who has declared this from ancient time?

Who has told it from that time?

Have not I, the LORD?

And *there is* no other God besides Me,

A just God and a Savior;

There is none besides Me.

²² “Look to Me, and be saved,

All you ends of the earth!

For I *am* God, and *there is* no other.

The Shema was also written down and placed in a small round box called a “**Mezuzah**” and placed on all the doors in the home. This served to remind the Jews of God in their going out and coming in.

Deuteronomy 6:8- Phylacteries

The importance and impact of the shema.

(Practice covering the eyes and saying the second part softly.)

➤ **Receiving His Command**

The Jewish scribes and rabbis had identified 613 commands in the Law. 248 of these were viewed as being positive in nature, while 365 were viewed as negative. These commands were then subdivided into two groups: heavy and light. The problem was, the scribes could not agree on which commands were heavy, or more binding, and which were light, or less binding.

The scribes loved to debate the Law. They were constantly trying to figure out which command was the most important. Besides this, they spent considerable time trying to come up with clever, one sentence summaries of the Law.

Matthew chapter 7 text

➤ **Realizing the implications**

“**Agape**” speaks of the kind of love God has for us. It is unconditional, perfect, eternal and changeless. It is utterly unselfish. It is love that gives itself away with the expectation of nothing in return. This is the kind of love that caused Jesus to go to the cross to give Himself for us, **Romans 5:8**. In other words, we are to love Him like He loves us! This love is possible, but only because He loved us first, **1 John 4:19**.

John 14:15- “If you love Me, keep My commandments.

Luke 10:27 -

“The great commandment is to seek God for His own sake, to have pleasure in Him, to simply love Him and to desire Him.”

- We can obey God without loving Him, but if we do love Him obedience will follow.

It is easy to think that religious ceremony and devotion are more important than love for God and our neighbor, but this isn't the case. A thousand empty burnt offerings do not mean more to God than a single act of love done in His name.

The [Spurgeon Study Bible](#) comments,

"'With all your heart' means intensely. 'With all your soul' means sincerely, most lovingly. 'And with all your strength' means with all our energy, with every faculty, with every possibility of our nature."

In reality, loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength is simply a response.

love – *agapao* – (the verb is future indicative, not imperative). *Agape* is a love based on the will more than the emotions. It is a choice to place value on another person or thing.

with – *ek* – out of; it speaks of the “source” of where the love is coming from

all – *holos* – all, whole, completely

heart – *kardia* – the heart; we could see this as the “control” center of the person, where your “will” springs from.

soul – *psuche* – breath; the soul; the seat of the feelings, desires, affections

mind – *dianoia* – the mind as a faculty of understanding

strength – *ischus* – ability, strength, might (physical strength, bodily powers)

Put it all together: *God's primary desire for us is to choose to place a high value on Him with a love that comes out of a complete commitment of our will, a love that comes out of all of our emotions, a love that comes from all of our mind, and a love that comes from all of our physical being.*

Observe the truth, allow the truth to touch the emotions, then to challenge and move the will, and finally to engage the body. We are to do this again and again and again.

You start solving problems by responding to God's love in this way. Only then can you love your neighbor as yourself. That is putting things in the proper priority.

Matt Redman wrote the song:

Blessed be Your name
In the land that is plentiful
Where Your streams of abundance flow
Blessed be Your name
Blessed be Your name
When I'm found in the desert place
Though I walk through the wilderness
Blessed be Your name
Blessed be Your name
When the sun's shining down on me
When the world's all as it should be
Blessed be Your name
Blessed be Your name
On the road marked with suffering
Though there's pain in the offering
Blessed be Your name
Every blessing You pour out
I'll turn back to praise
When the darkness closes in, Lord
Still I will say "Blessed be the name of the Lord"

And so how do we get it? How do we obtain this? Well, I think, first of all, by realizing it's His gift and we have to pray for it. We have to look to Him for it. We have to go to our knees. We have to seek the Lord and ask Him to supply to us what He requires of us, but what we of ourselves cannot supply. Pray for that and ask Him to change our lives and to visit us in such a way that we are filled with a hunger and a thirst for God. So that we can express ourselves the way the psalmist expresses himself when he wrote, "As the deer pants for the water brook, so my soul pants for Thee, O God."

William Lane states of this passage: [To love God in the way defined by the great commandment is to seek God for his own sake, to have pleasure in him and to strive impulsively after him. With this Jesus demands a decision and a readiness for God and God alone, in an unconditional manner.](#)

Number one is to begin with God. When you are troubled, when you do not know what to do first, when you feel you do not have enough resources to handle something, or are puzzled and bewildered, start with God and love him.

We are to solve our problems by responding again and again to God's love. When we start with God's love, then we are ready to turn to our particular problem -- our relationship to our wife, children, neighbor, friend, or boss. Then we are freed to love our neighbor as ourselves. The same process that reached us and won a response from us, we are now to pass on to somebody else. We can show them the same love that we ourselves have received. Our response to God's love makes it possible. If we start with our neighbor, we get so wrapped up with all the hurts, difficulties, and friction that we start responding in the same way they treat us. But when we start with God and we have experienced his love and responded to it with love, then we can pass it along to our neighbor. **It never works when we start with "love your neighbor" first**, as we always are trying to do. All the social humanities of our day teach us that we ought to love our neighbor and they are right. But if we start there, without loving God first, we find ourselves incapable of loving others.

B. LOVING OTHERS

Do you love people?

If you are having a problem with loving people I suggest it's because you are not loving God properly.

➤ **Understanding the neighbor concept**

According to Jesus, my neighbor is anyone who wears a suit of skin.

Luke 10:25 and on

Ill. Riding along with police officer and arresting a person- mercy

➤ **Understanding the parallel of loving yourself**

But this modern idea of self-esteem is developed around the idea of an inherent worth, an inherent value, a personal value apart from Christ, and that leads oftentimes to narcissism, which is a term we often hear applied to our age, a focusing on the self,

becoming consumed with self. And when the happens, you can't be consumed with God. You can't be focusing upon Him. You can't be focusing upon one's neighbor. So rather than teach the verse, that really robs the verse of its meaning. It stands the whole thing on its head and misses the point.

When you stand in front of the mirror in the morning, are you happy with what you see, or disappointed? We might think that the person who is disappointed has low self-esteem, but the reason that they are disappointed is because they *love* their self and they don't think they're as good as they should be. If they really didn't love their self, they would stand in front of the mirror and say, "It's so great to see that I'm so ugly! I hate myself so much that I am glad that I look terrible".

Ephesians 5- ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, ²⁶ that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, ²⁷ that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish. ²⁸ So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies; he who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as the Lord *does* the church. ³⁰ For we are members of His body, of His flesh and of His bones.

Samuel told Saul when he was disobedient, "To obey is better than sacrifice." David wrote in Psalm 40, "Sacrifice and meal offering Thou hast not desired." Later in Psalm 51, he writes, "Thou dost not delight in sacrifice, a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise." God wants our heart before He wants our service and our sacrifices. And in a day in which the nation offered daily sacrifices morning and evening, but rejected God's Son, in a day in which they engaged in all kinds of ritual, filled the temple on the feast days, filled the synagogues on sabbath, but did it out of a cold heart, this man, this scribe put his finger on the nation's problem, which was formalism and ritualism, and that's a problem that threatens all genuine worship of the Lord.

➤ **Understanding where this fits in with our walk with God**

The second mandate is horizontal, and views our relationships with others as we love others as God loves others, loving them as we love ourselves. Both of these commandments are fulfilled first in our mental attitude. Then and only then is there action. This scribe very well understood that.

What our Lord is saying, "Treat other people with the same detailed care you treat yourself." It's not a call for self-love, it's a call to love others the way you already love yourself.

Loneliness is a love need that is not being met. It is the awful ache and agony of needing love but not finding the need met." And we do need love. Love is as necessary

to humanity as air and sunshine and water and food. Without love, the human spirit withers, shrivels, and dries up; we begin to strike back and act hostile and angry.

It is possible for a person to have a religious upbringing and still be lost.

Ø It is possible to know the truth and still be lost.

Ø It is possible to have heard the Gospel preached all your life and still be resting on your own goodness and good works.

Ø It is possible to be Gospel hardened and to seal your own damnation while sitting on a church pew.

Ø It is possible to be within an inch of Heaven and still die and go to Hell.

How must we respond to this Word today?

- ✓ **Focus ourselves on the Lord God who is One.**
- ✓ **Love Him with your total being with His strength making it possible.**
- ✓ **Love people as you love yourself.**

If this is carried out, you are on your way to a blessed life and a life well pleasing to God.

Take-away