

Session 2 Loving God is the First and Great Commandment

I. JESUS' FINAL PUBLIC MESSAGE TO HIS PEOPLE BEFORE THE CROSS

- A. **Review:** Jesus' statement in Matthew 22:37-38 reveals God's mission statement for the human race. Thus, it is the most reliable measurement of success for a believer at the judgment seat of Christ.
- ³⁷***“You shall love the Lord...with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.”***
- ³⁸***This is the first and great commandment.” (Mt. 22:37-38)***
1. God first *exhorted* Israel, through Moses, to love Him with all their heart (Deut. 6:5).
⁵You shall love the LORD...with all your heart...and with all your strength. (Deut. 6:5)
 2. Moses *prophesied* Israel would love God with all their heart in the end times (Deut. 30:1-6).
⁶The Lord...will circumcise your heart...to love the Lord...with all your heart. (Deut. 30:6)
- B. In Matthew 22:37, Jesus' statement about loving God was both an *exhortation* and a *prophecy*.
- C. In Matthew 22:38, Jesus elaborated on Moses' exhortation, adding two words—***first*** and ***great***.
- D. God's ultimate eternal purpose for creation is to provide a family for Himself that includes faithful children for Himself and an equally yoked Bride for Jesus as His eternal companion (Rev. 19:8).
⁷Let us be glad...for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready. (Rev. 19:7)
- ⁸I [the Father] will give You [Jesus] the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth for Your possession. (Ps. 2:8)***
1. *Mandatory obedience:* God will cause all creation to obey Jesus (Phil. 2:9-11).
 2. *Voluntary love:* God will raise up people who voluntarily choose to love Him.
- E. God promised to give Jesus an inheritance consisting of a people whom He fully possesses in love. No one else can give God all “your love” except for you.
- F. A unique part of Jesus' inheritance has been entrusted by the Father to you specifically. It is the love that only you can give.
- G. We only get one opportunity to do this in a fallen world where love for Jesus is both costly and rare.
- H. The most important decision or lack of decision in our life is to make loving God our top priority.
- I. ***Only one life, t'will soon be past. Only what's done for Christ will last. – CT Studd.***

II. THE FIRST COMMANDMENT: LOVING GOD IS WHAT GOD WANTS FIRST

- A. Jesus defined loving God as being the “primary” response that God wants *from* His people.
- B. The Spirit’s first priority and emphasis in the Church is for God’s people to mature in love for God. However, our natural tendency is to focus first on gaining more blessing on our circumstances—more money, honor, comfort, influence, etc. If we do not understand that God is committed first to helping us grow in love, we can be confused about His leadership in our life.
- C. Loving God is the first priority to God. Jesus did not call it the first *option*, but *commandment*.
- D. God wants us to love Him with all of our heart because He loves us with all of His heart and mind.
- E. Loving God is a glorious ***end in itself***. However, it never ends with loving God but always overflows into loving ourselves and others (believers and unbelievers).
- F. God has everything, yet He is searching for something that He still wants first. The only thing He does not have is our voluntary love, something He will not take by force. What does God search for? What does He want most and first?
 - 1. It is our love that He desires. He is after our heart. The mystery of our life is found in this truth. He wants us. He wants our voluntary love.
 - 2. One very important questions to ask God is, “What are You looking for above all else?” When we find what God is looking for, then we find the answer to what we are looking for.
- G. The Spirit will reveal the supremacy of the first commandment to the Church before Jesus returns. We are not left guessing as to what God considers greatest.
 - 1. In seeking to stay up with popular ministry trends, some regularly change directions in their ministry. We must not get our ministry focus from the latest trend, but from God’s Word.
 - 2. Numerical growth is good, but it is not the litmus test of God’s grace or our success. It is not enough to be a part of a big ministry or have a vision to change a nation—we must love God.
- H. The Spirit is raising up end-time messengers who will call others to define love as God’s highest purpose. They will make the first commandment their primary focus for their life and ministry.
- I. The church of Ephesus was a great revival center (Acts 19-20). Yet they did not sustain freshness in their love for Jesus. They became *workers for* God more than *lovers of* God.

4I have this against you, that you have left your first love. (Rev. 2:4)

- J. Lovers always outwork workers. When we work without intimacy, we work as a slave. The heart of a bride is refreshed as she labors. Service without the foundation of loving devotion leads to burn out, disappointment, and wounding. Thus, the labor is not sustained over decades.
- K. Ask the Spirit to mark your heart and to continually call and remind you to pursue growing in your love for Jesus and calling others to this as the top priority in your ministry vision and action plan.

III. THE GREAT COMMANDMENT: LOVING GOD IS THE GREATEST CALLING

- A. Loving God is our greatest calling, and it is how He measures the success of His people. He calls the life choices of those who love Him, “great.” The greatest ministry call is to call people to this.
19...whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. (Mt. 5:19)
- B. At the judgment seat of Christ, the Lord will measure our life according to how we grew in our love for Him. Love is the currency in the age to come; it is the only thing that we bring from this life.
- C. Loving God has the greatest impact on God’s heart, our heart, and others to whom we minister.
 - 1. Our greatest calling in the grace of God is to move or impact God’s heart. We move His heart by every decision that we make that expresses love to Him with our service and obedience.
10For God is not unjust to forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward His name, in that you have ministered to the saints, and do minister. (Heb. 6:10)
 - 2. Do you know the way that you move Him? His heart is moved each time we repent of compromise and walk in obedience because of seeking to love Him.
21He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. (Jn. 14:21)
 - 3. We move His heart by sitting before Him (Lk. 10:42) and by doing small acts of service for others because of loving Him (Mt. 10:42; Heb. 6:10). Impacting people is very important, but it is not our greatest call. Our greatest impact cannot be measured by the size of our ministry.
 - 4. What God wants most and esteems as greatest is the response of love from the human heart. He wants our time, money, and talents, because in giving them we express our love for Him.
- D. God’s will for our life is to strengthen our love for Him. He allows certain pressures to continue to wake us up to reveal and impart His love to us. Everything that God does, He does first for love.
- E. ***Greatest grace:*** The greatest grace we can receive is to receive God’s love and to return it to Him.
- F. ***Greatest strength:*** Our greatest strengthening is found in affection-based obedience that flows from experiencing Jesus’ affection and responding back with love. One who is lovesick for Jesus will do and endure anything to show love for Him. People in love are untouchable and unmovable.

- G. ***Greatest satisfaction:*** Our satisfaction is found is overflowing with love for Him and others.
- H. ***Greatest possession:*** Our greatest possession is to receive and return God's love. The reward of love is found in possessing the power to love in return. No sacrifice is comparable to the love He gives us. Anyone can quit, but not a person in love. When we are tempted to quit, the obstacle in our path is that we love God.
- I. ***Greatest life choices:*** Loving Jesus has the greatest reward in the age to come and is, therefore, the only way to enter our greatest destiny. You can be one of the greatest people in history simply by cultivating deep love for God. You may not be the most famous, but you can be one of the greatest.