

CHOOSING PRIORITIES FOR THE NEW YEAR

One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"²⁹"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.'³⁰Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'³¹The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Mark 12:28-31 (NIV)

❖ Choosing to Put GOD FIRST:

"Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"²⁹"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is (number) one.'"

Mark 12:28-29 (NIV)

1. There can only be ONE GOD.

"No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon."

Matthew 6:24 (NASB)

2. This God is LORD (Yahweh).

"God, the Lord, created the heavens and stretched them out. He created the earth and everything in it. He gives breath and life to everyone in all the world."

Isaiah 42:5 (NLT)

3. This God is PERSONAL (Jesus).

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.²He was with God in the beginning...¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:1-2, 14 (NIV)

❖ Choosing to LOVE God MOST:

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength."

Mark 12:30 (NIV)

1. Loving God with all your HEART... our EMOTIONS.

And then Jesus added, "It is the thought-life that defiles you."²¹For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder..."

Mark 7:20-21 (NLT)

2. Loving God with all your SOUL... our CONSCIOUSNESS.

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul.

1 Peter 2:11 (NIV)

3. Loving God with all your MIND... our INTELLIGENCE.

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is--his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Romans 12:2 (NIV)

4. Loving God with all your STRENGTH... our ACTIVITIES.

Finally, be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. ¹¹Put on the full armor of God so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. ¹²For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

Ephesians 6:10-12 (NIV)

❖ Choosing to LOVE Others PURPOSEFULLY:

"The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

Mark 28:31 (NIV)

1. Love others EQUALLY.

"So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets."

Matthew 7:12 (NIV)

2. Love others CONSISTENTLY.

If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. ⁹But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers.

James 2:8-9 (NIV)

3. Love others PRACTICALLY.

If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him? ¹⁸Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.

1 John 3:17-18 (NIV)

❖ Closing Challenge: Will we choose to LOVE GOD and LOVE OTHERS in 2023?

"Love God with all our being... Love others as much as we love ourselves."