

JESUS REPLIED: "LOVE THE
LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART
AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL AND WITH ALL
YOUR MIND.' THIS IS THE FIRST AND
GREATEST COMMANDMENT. AND THE
SECOND IS LIKE IT: LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR
AS YOURSELF."
MATTHEW
22:37-
39

- ***“The critical question for our generation---and for every generation---is this: If you could have heaven, with no sickness and with all the friends you ever had on earth, and all the food you ever liked, and all the leisure activities you ever enjoyed,***

- ***and all the natural beauties you ever saw, all the physical pleasures you ever tasted, and no human conflict or any natural disasters, would you be satisfied with heaven, if Christ was not there?” (God is the Gospel, John Piper, p. 15).***

- **“Yea, I could do that?”**
- **This is often the heaven many people want.**
- **Lots of leisure and Jesus just shows up now and then to check up on things.**

LOVE
— THE —
LORD
WITH ALL YOUR



- **Giving all your heart away---is not a mystery.**
- **We know what that looks like.**

- ***“You go to great lengths to be with the one you love. You’ll drive for hours to be together, even if it’s only for a short while. You don’t mind staying up late to talk. Walking in the rain is romantic, not annoying. You’ll willingly spend a small fortune on the one you are crazy about. When you are apart from each other it is painful, even miserable. He or she is all you think about; you jump at any chance to be together” (Crazy Love, Francis Chan, p. 100).***

- **If we can express love like that for imperfect people—we can certainly express it towards God.**
- **Others have before us.**

*As the deer longs
for running streams,
so my soul longs for
you, O God...*

Psalm 42:2

- **“For a day in Your courts is better than a thousand outside” (Psalm 84:10).**
- **“The life which I now live....I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me” (Galatians 2:20).**
- **“From which we eagerly wait for a Savior” (Philippians 3:20).**

God Deserves Such Devotion

- **Jesus was not exaggerating the case when He told us to love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength (Matthew 22:37). An unbeliever once said that God is a bully for He threatens to condemn those who don't love Him. Actually, that is not the real situation.**

- Because of our sins *we are already condemned* (Isaiah 59:1-2). In more accurate terms, **God mercifully offers a loving relationship to condemned people.** The real picture of God is an extremely beautiful picture.

- **“The Lord God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth, who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin” (Exodus 34:6-7).**

- **“After all that has come upon us for our evil deeds and your great guilt, since You our God has requited us less than our iniquities deserve” (Ezra 9:13).**
- **“But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).**



A Common Problem

- “I cared for you in the wilderness, in the land of drought, as they had their pasture, they became satisfied, and being satisfied, their heart became proud; **therefore they forgot Me**” (Hosea 13:5-6).
- In the time of Malachi, the people and their priests were offering to God animals that were blind, lame and sick (Malachi 1:8).

Something is Better Than Nothing?

- Really?
- We don't even believe this.
- Neither does God.
- Malachi 1:10

- ***“God is holy. In heaven exists a Being who decides whether or not I take another breath. This holy God deserves excellence, the very best I have” (Chan p. 92).***



love

first

law

Lord

heart

soul

commandment

prophets

God

neighbor

mind

- **Jesus is not saying that only one rule exists, and that is to have warm feelings for God, for both the Old and New Testaments are filled with various commands that are absolutely essential. Rather, Jesus is teaching that all the rules in the Bible can be put into two categories, such rules either express love for God and or love for others.**

- **“For this is the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 7:12).**
- **“On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:40).**

- **“For he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. For this, ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not covet[’, and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this way, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself’. Love does not wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law” (Romans 13:8-10).**

Love and Obedience

- They go together.
- Satan seeks to separate them in our minds.
- Appearances can be deceiving.
- *It appears that people who don't follow the Bible are more accepting at times—until you disagree with them.*

- I remember thinking this as a teenager, that the parents who were more lenient *appeared to be more loving* in my immature mind. I finally realized that they were often more lenient because they were afraid of their kids or really didn't care what they did.

Love Obeys

- **“If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word” (John 14:23).**
- **“Love...does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth” (1 Corinthians 13:6).**

- **“But whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God **has truly been perfected**” (1 John 2:5).**
- **“This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments” (1 John 5:3).**

- **The path of obedience always brings more mercy to everyone.**
- **For example---what happened in this culture when the rules on divorce were relaxed?**
- **Was the result mercy or misery?**

Love and Worship

- The temptation when it comes to worship has often been wanting to offer to God what I think is impressive (1 Samuel 15:21) or what I want or what would make me feel good (2 Chronicles 26:16), instead of taking the time to read the Scriptures and find out what He desires. **Love does take the time to talk to our lover and actually learn what they value**









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A wide-angle photograph of a beach at sunset. The sun is a bright point of light on the horizon, casting a long, shimmering reflection across the water and the wet sand. The sky is filled with soft, golden clouds. The foreground shows the dark, wet sand of the beach, with some small debris scattered along the water's edge. The overall mood is peaceful and contemplative.

Simplify your Life

- **When I love God and others, the rules are far easier to see and they really make sense. If this life is not about me—then it makes complete sense to focus on God and others. In addition, when I love God, whatever rules exist are never viewed as a burden to keep (1 John 5:3).**