



Date: 9-17-2017

Scripture: Mark 12:28-34 "*First Great Commandment*"

Mission: Make, Mature, and Multiply Disciple-Makers of Jesus Christ.

Intro: With over 600 commandments in the Old Testament it would have been hard to know them all. There were laws governing the kinds of food one could eat, the kinds of fabric one could weave together to make clothes, the kind of food to offer in the various sacrifices, how to handle domestic disputes, and even how to interact with foreigners. As burdensome as these laws might have seemed, they ultimately flowed out of the single greatest commandment: to love God with all of one's self.

In Mark 12:29 Jesus quotes Deut. 6:4-5 (see below)ⁱ where Moses begins to explain the intent behind the Ten Commandments given in Deut. 5. The purpose of all the 600 plus commandments was for Israel to know how to relate to God and others in the promised land of Canaan. It is not by accident that the most important commandment, from which all the others flowed, was to love God and to do so *exclusively*.

- Why/how do these two commandments summarize the whole OT law?

Context: Browse through Mark chapters 11-12.

- What keeps happening to Jesus by the various religious leaders of Israel?
- What is different about the questioner (vs. 28, 32) and Jesus' answer (34) compared to the two previous questions and answers?



Connecting: Many Christians tend to think of loving God as akin to the fuzzy feelings we have towards others in our lives. But fuzzy feelings alone are not love. Our *feelings* must be *expressed* in our *actions* (*Remember Samuel's words to Saul – 1 Samuel 15:22*). Faith is belief expressed in action of one kind or another.

- What gets in the way of loving God in the four areas mentioned (Heart, Soul, Mind, Strength)¹?
- Are you willing to give a specific example in your own life?
- Please describe some things that make you feel loved.
- What would it look like, or how would that work to take the things that make you feel loved and doing them to, for, or with God?
- How would that impact our wallets/purses?
- What are some specific ways in which we can love on God?
- Think of someone that you know that you believe deeply loves God. What makes you say that about them? Are they super-human or is there something they do or is it just an attitude they have? What is it? What would you like to learn from them?
- How did Jesus demonstrate His love for the Father?
- How does Jesus help us obey the greatest commandment?

Action Steps: With the help of the Holy Spirit impacting with the truths of Scripture, how can you be intentional about loving God more this week, this year and the rest of your life? What's one specific thing you can do this week to live differently and love God better? Are you willing to share that with your group and report back to them on how you did next week?

Coming up...

Notice how Jesus combines the 1st and 2nd commandment together in vs. 31 when He says, "There is no other *commandment* greater than *these*." How do these two commandments connect?

¹ The piling up of the terms "heart," "soul," and "mind" is just a way of saying "with your whole being" and is not intended to designate the component parts of human nature



ⁱ Deuteronomy 6:1–15 (ESV)

The Greatest Commandment

6 “Now this is the commandment—the statutes and the rules—that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you, that you may do them in the land to which you are going over, to possess it, ² that you may fear the Lord your God, you and your son and your son’s son, by keeping all his statutes and his commandments, which I command you, all the days of your life, and that your days may be long. ³ Hear therefore, O Israel, and be careful to do them, that it may go well with you, and that you may multiply greatly, as the Lord, the God of your fathers, has promised you, in 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 and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. 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.

¹⁰ “And when the Lord your God brings you into the land that he swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give you—with great and good cities that you did not build, ¹¹ and houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant—and when you eat and are full, ¹² then take care lest you forget the Lord, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ¹³ It is the Lord your God you shall fear. Him you shall serve and by his name you shall swear. ¹⁴ You shall not go after other gods, the gods of the peoples who are around you— ¹⁵ for the Lord your God in your midst is a jealous God—lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you, and he destroy you from off the face of the earth.

Leviticus 19:18 (ESV)

¹⁸ You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the Lord.

In the OT “neighbor” meant only fellow Jews; it did not include non-Israelites and Gentiles. The early Christians, however, clearly believed that Jesus expanded the idea of neighbor. This is evident from Luke 10:25–29, where this saying is prefaced to the parable of the Good Samaritan. For Jesus, the neighbor includes even despised Samaritans!

James R. Edwards, [The Gospel according to Mark](#), The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI; Leicester, England: Eerdmans; Apollos, 2002), 372.