



## World Christian Fellowship

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### What is the great commandment?

**Matthew 22:34-40**

**Mark 12:28-34 & Luke 10:25-28**

**Matthew 22:34-40**, *But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. <sup>35</sup>Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, <sup>36</sup>“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”*

*<sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ <sup>38</sup>This is the first and great commandment. <sup>39</sup>And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup>On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”*

**Matthew 22**, this day is **Monday**, the last week of our Lord’s life. Wednesday He will be crucified.

**Sunday** He will rise from the dead.

**Previous Saturday**, He rode into Jerusalem and was hailed as the Messiah.

**Sunday**, He cleaned the temple out of all the moneychangers and the sellers.

It is Monday. He has cleaned the temple out.

Jesus has been acknowledged as the Messiah, the conquering hero who will overthrow the Roman oppression.

The day after they hailed Him as Messiah, instead of overthrowing the Romans, He overthrew the Jewish religious system. They don't quite know how to fit that in with their messianic expectation.

Again, Jesus is back in the temple, which He has cleansed, and He is moving around in the temple teaching.

Jesus is teaching on the kingdom.

A large crowd gathers around Him.

This makes the religious leaders irritated.

Jesus gives them in three parables.

**Matthew 21:28-32, "The Parable of Two Sons"**

**Matthew 21:33-46, "The Wicked Vinedressers"**

**Matthew 22:1-14, "The Wedding Feast"**

Three parables of judgment.

They must react to this.

**Why?**

Because this is public.

This is in the middle of the temple courtyard with masses of people around. Everybody can hear everything that's going on. They understood what He was talking about them.

**Matthew 21:45**, *Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them.*

The religious leaders in their anger, fury, rage, their desire to eliminate Jesus.

They design a strategy.

Their strategy is very simple.

While the whole world can hear Him, we are going to get Him to say something that will discredit Him.

We will make Him appear as a revolutionary, as an insurrectionist. Then we are going to report Him to Rome. the Roman government doesn't like insurrectionists, and they will come down here, get Him, and kill Him.

This is their plan.

**The three parables are followed by Four questions.**

Those three questions take us through the rest of chapter 22.

**Frist question: Matthew 22:13-22 Paying taxes**

**Second question: Matthew 22:23-33 About Resurrection**

**Third question: Matthew 22:34-40 What is the greatest Commandment?**

**Fourth question: Matthew 22:41-45 David calling his descendant Lord.**

Today we will look at the third question on the Great commandment.

## **Background.**

### **Political:**

**V 15**, the Pharisees along with the Herodians approached Jesus.

They asked a question, and they thought that the answer to which would get Him into trouble with the Romans.

They asked Him whether or not they should pay their taxes to Caesar? They had already conceived in their minds that He would probably say no because He was a man of God.

But Jesus answer made them kept quiet.

### **Theological:**

Pharisees collided with Sadducees, and they came with the second. They want to know His view on resurrection.

If they can't discredit Him politically, they wanted to try to discredit Him as a teacher before the people of Israel. This will help them as a small step in His elimination.

But again, Jesus' answer amazes them, and that test failed.

## **Spiritual:**

One more time they come to test Him.

**V 35**, says that that was their purpose.

They tried to test Him politically,

They tried to test Him theologically with a major doctrinal issue,

They are probing in the spiritual dimension again now.

They have one more try to discredit Him with the people. This is their last attempt.

**Mark 12:34**, *But after that no one dared question Him.*

This is it.

## **Question approach.**

**V 34**, *But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together.*

Jesus had silenced the Pharisees and the Herodians, then He had silenced the Sadducees, and they heard about it and they gathered together to discuss the situation.

Jesus put the Sadducees to silence. The verb to put to silence is literally gagged.

It wasn't that they wanted to be silent, but they had no choice.

They had more to say but they had nothing to say!

They couldn't say it.

Jesus brought their argument to an utter end where they were absolutely without another sound or thought.

When the Pharisees saw this, they had a meeting.

The Pharisees must have had mixed emotions.

On the one hand, they would have been glad to see their enemies, the Sadducees were silenced. They would have been very happy to see that terribly disturbing question that the Sadducees had asked them for years and they had never answered right.

They were glad that Jesus had said He believed in resurrection and therefore took the side of the Pharisees.

On the on hand, they would rather have seen Jesus discredited than the Sadducees discredited because Jesus posed a far greater threat to them than the Sadducees ever did.

Seeing their enemies unsuccessful in destroying a greater enemy, namely Jesus, must have left them dissatisfied.

So, they gathered together.

**Psalm 2** is a Messianic prophecy, in which the psalmist looks ahead to the Messiah.

**Psalms 2:2-3**, *The kings of the earth set themselves, And the rulers take counsel together, Against the Lord and against His Anointed, saying, <sup>3</sup>“Let us break Their bonds in pieces And cast away Their cords from us.”*

It was predicted that the rulers would come together and take counsel together against the Lord and against the Messiah.

In Acts chapter 4, they quoted Psalm 2.

**Acts 4:26**, *The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the Lord and against His Christ.’*

The final question to test him.

The approach of the Pharisees.

We need to understand that what the Pharisees had in mind when they asked this question to Jesus so that we get the full understanding of this incident.

So often we refer to this passage as isolating it from its context.

We major on the great **37<sup>th</sup> verse**.

*V 35, Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying,*

A Pharisee was a lawyer means a law expert, really the same as a scribe.

A scribe was one who copied the law, who was an authority on the law, who knew the law, who interpreted the law, who taught the law.

Normally Matthew uses the word “scribe.”

It’s unlike Matthew to use the word “lawyer.”

The reason Matthew used this word suggests that this person was a cut above the average scribe. He was a law expert.

All scribes were, to some extent, lawyers, half attorney, half theologian because their understanding of law was that it was biblical law and traditional law, not just secular law, so they were sort of theologian attorneys and advocates and teachers.

This may have been one who stood out from the many scribes as a real expert. He is been sent to ask the question on behalf of the rest of the Pharisees.

This lawyer is a mission-minded man.

He is going on a direct task sent by the Pharisees, and they're filled with hatred.

All they want to do is see Jesus eliminated, but it seems to me that he is not quite committed to that.

He is little more objective than the rest of them.

When we compare the Mark passage we can see the whole picture.

**Mark 12:32-34**, *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. <sup>33</sup>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 neighbour as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." <sup>34</sup>Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."*

We could see that while he is acting as an emissary for the Pharisees, on his own terms, he seems to have more integrity than they do.

While they are without any objectivity at all, seeking only to eliminate Jesus, he at least has enough to come with a somewhat open mind to hear an answer that he may receive.

The lawyer is not quite as venomous as the rest, and maybe that's why he was willing to go.

Maybe he thought that of kill two birds with one stone. He could play out his role as a Pharisee, and he could also get direct contact and a direct answer for himself that might help him in his own thinking.

But nevertheless, he also came to test Jesus.

**V 35,** *Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying,*

The lawyer puts Jesus to the test.

They want Jesus to fail the test.

They want Him to be discredited.

They want Him to lose His popularity.

It is essential that we understand what this question is all about and what the approach is all about.

**In Judaism who is the most popular person?**

Moses.

Without question, Moses was the number one hero of Judaism and still he remains their hero.

Moses spoke to God face-to-face as a man speaks to his friend. That sets him apart from everybody else.

Moses, whom when God searched the world for a man to whom He could give His law, was chosen the recipient of the divine law of God.

Moses, the priority writer, penned the first five books of the Old Testament.

Moses was their great hero.

*“God calls Moses faithful in all His house, and thereby ranks him higher than the ministering angels themselves.”* **Rabbi Jose ben Halafta, 2<sup>nd</sup> Century.**

Many of the Jews believe that Moses was in a category above the angelic hosts. He was the greatest one.

**Matthew 23:2**, saying: *“The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat.*

The seat of Moses is the seat of ultimate authority. That was the seat of absolute power.

Moses had given the law of God.  
Moses was their greatest hero.

The Jews believed that the teaching of Jesus attacked Moses' teaching. They believed that.

That is why in the Sermon on the Mount Jesus spoke about the law being fulfilled by Him.

**Matthew 5:17-19**, *“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. <sup>18</sup>For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. <sup>19</sup>Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.*

Jesus is very sensitive to the fact that He would be accused of attacking Moses, of setting Himself up as a new authority and diminishing the role of Moses.

But they believe that Jesus is a diminisher of Moses.

They believe that Jesus would proclaim that He is something beyond Moses. They wanted this.

They want Jesus to affirm that He has a word that supersedes Moses so that they can accuse Him of being a heretic and an apostate. They can accuse Him of one who departed from the faith delivered through the greatest of all, Moses himself.

If they can just get Jesus to say that He supersedes Mosaic authority, then

- ✓ He will become a blasphemer.
- ✓ He will discredit Himself.
- ✓ He will become unpopular with the people who revere Moses as the greatest of all.

So, they want to put Jesus in a situation to attack Mosaic law by superseding it. They firmly believed that He will do that because they saw His teaching as something beyond.

That wasn't true.

Jesus reiterated to them that God's law had not been altered. They had merely changed things with their traditions. But their goal is to make Him look like an apostate.

The approach of the Pharisees was to discredit Him with the people by setting Him against Moses. And pushing Him to a point where he articulates some law that's above Moses and therefore the people will turn against Him.

This is their approach.

**The question of the lawyer.**

**V 36, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"**

“Master/ Teacher” flattery they always seem to attach.  
The Greek text here to make this word great a comparative in this usage, “which is the greatest commandment in the law?”  
They had a lot of discussion about this kind of stuff among themselves.

Hope you remember history of Jewish law:  
There are **613 separate laws** because there were 613 separate letters in the Decalogue or the Ten Commandments.

But they had one law for every letter in the Decalogue, Exodus 20, the Ten Commandments.

They divided the commandments into two parts.

Positive/affirmative: There are **248 affirmative laws**.  
One for every part of the human body.

Negative/ Prohibitive: There are **365 negative laws**.  
One for every day of the year.

They said one for every day of the year, one for every member of the human body adds up to 613.

They also divided the 613 laws into the light laws and the heavy laws. The light laws were semi-optional, and the heavy ones were binding.

You can't keep 613, you have got to have a break somewhere, so they lightened up on some and got heavy on some others.

**Matthew 23:4**, *For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.*

They were into the heavy and the light.

There was a lot of debate about what was light and heavy, what was important, and which is not.

If Jesus is who we think He is, and that is a man with a huge ego trying to establish Himself as the Messiah because they didn't really believe He was. If He is as false as we think He is, He is going to say something that supersedes Moses.

He is going to set Himself up as the authority.

He is going to give some law that comes out of His mouth.

Thus, we will know that He is an apostate and heretic.

### **What is the great law?**

Just give us one, the greatest law, and they figure if He's got something new to say, it can't be something old, right? If He's come with some new message, it can't be an old law.

The Sadducees accepted only the Pentateuch, so they really held Moses as the authority.

The Pharisees accepted the Pentateuch and everything else, but Moses was still supreme. The issue is Moses.

**What is the great law?**

**Response:**

Absolutely no hesitation.

**V 37-38**, *Jesus said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’* <sup>38</sup> *This is the first and great commandment.*

What an answer!

Jesus quoted Moses.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-5**, *“Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! <sup>5</sup>You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.*

Jesus did exactly the opposite of what they wanted Him to do. They wanted Him to supersede Moses, but Jesus quoted Moses.

Not only did He quote Moses, but He quoted the most familiar thing that Moses ever wrote, the Shema.

**Deuteronomy 6:4-5**, was the most familiar Scripture to all the Jews.

You ever gone to a Jewish house and seen a **Mezuzah** on the door, a little box that they put on the front door.

Mezuzah is there in every Jewish home even today.

- I. Every time you enter or leave, the mezuzah reminds you that you have a covenant with God.
- II. The mezuzah serves as a symbol to everyone else that this dwelling is constituted as a Jewish household, operating by a special set of rules, rituals, and beliefs.

**Have you ever seen an orthodox Jew strapping to his forehead the phylactery, the little box strapping to his arm?**

Inside the box on his arm and the box on his head is **Deuteronomy 6:4- 5.**

Every orthodox Jew, every Jew at the time of Jesus who was faithful to his religion twice a day had to stop and recite this statement: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength.” out of **Deuteronomy 6:5.**

- ✓ Jesus hit them right at the very core of their own religion.
- ✓ Jesus is saying, “I Am no apostate. I Am no heretic. I Am not coming up with something you didn’t know about.”
- ✓ Jesus affirms solidarity with Moses.

- ✓ Jesus speaks to them of a verse that is most familiar to all of them.

Jesus quotes something with which they were all familiar. I am not here to tell you anything different than what Moses told you.

The word in **Deuteronomy 6:5**, you shall love **Ahava/Ahebv** in Hebrew. The verb refers primarily to the love of will, the love of the mind, the love of action, rather than the love of feeling, the love of emotion.

It is that highest kind of love.

Not the love that you just feel but the love of dedication, the love of commitment.

The love that says this is right, noble, irrespective of how you feel.

The Greek word, **Agapaō**.

**Agapaō** is the love of intelligence, purpose, love of will.

The **Phileō**, is the love of emotion or affection.

The **Eros**, which is the love of the physical animal senses.

This is the highest kind of love, the love of purpose, the love of will, the noblest, purist, highest, self-sacrificing love of that which is right and that which is worthy.

Jesus says to them what they already knew that the number one thing is to love God with your whole being, your heart, your soul, and your mind.

They are all called to participate.

In Mark passage the Lord also said strength, your heart, your soul, your mind, your strength.

Jesus just collects all the parts of being.

He just covers all the words, and there's some overlap in those words.

Those words are used in different ways at different times in Scripture.

Jesus is simply calling together all that a person is with your whole being to love God.

The intent is to sort out every individual sense of every word.

The word **“heart”** basically in the Hebrew understanding is the core of a person's identity.

**Proverbs 4:23**, *Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life.*

Everything comes out of the heart.

The heart in the Hebrew understanding as the intellect, which produces the thoughts, words, and actions.

**Proverbs 23:7**, *For as he thinks in his heart, so is he. "Eat and drink!" he says to you,*

The intellectual part that's most often stressed.

The word "**soul.**"

It can refer best to emotion.

**Matthew 26:38**, *Then He said to them, "My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me."*

The emphasis could be on the emotional part.

The word "**mind,**" here replaces "might" in **Deuteronomy 6**. Our Lord is not misquoting.

Mind is another way to say "might." "Might" is a very broad word but it seems as though might has to do with intention and will.

It has to do with moving ahead with energy, and I see that with mind.

Mind is having to do with purpose or with intention or with will.

For example, we say "he had a mind to do this or that."

Mark adds the word "strength," which is all our physical capacities.

We can see here that in an overlapping sense, there are four channels for love to be perfectly balanced.

- It is an intelligent love,
- It is a feeling love,
- It is a willing love, and
- It is a serving love.

It carries itself right out to how we act in our physical strength.

- Our intellectual part,
- Our emotional part,
- Our volitional part,
- Our physical part.

All comes together to love God. To love God with the total being, all that we are.

These things are not pushed together.

It doesn't say love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. It doesn't say that.

It is not that they are pushed together.

They are spread apart.

It says that you are to love the Lord your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.

It is as if He wants to push them to as wide a possible level as He can. To really love God, that is the great commandment.

God is not looking for people who go through religious ritual. God is not just looking for people who, on the outside, can go through the motions.

God wants people who with the whole being love Him.

When God loved us, He really loved us, didn't he?

God loved us with His whole being, He must have, He gave us everything He was and is and will be.

He gave us Himself in death for our sin.

He who gave us His wholehearted love does not want our half-hearted love in return.

He loved us enough to give His Son, we are to love Him enough to give ourselves.

**John 15:13**, *Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.*

We are to lay down our life for Him.

As He demonstrated that here in His love.

**1 John 4:19**, *We love Him because He first loved us.*

God loved us and gave us His Son, as He showed that love can sometimes happen even where there's not initial reciprocation, so we are to love God not for what we gain but because it's right.

We are to love God in a comprehensive way as He has loved us in a comprehensive way, with every part of our being loving Him.

This is what God is calling for from humanity.

God wants more than our believing.

**James 2:19**, *You believe that there is one God. You do well. Even the demons believe—and tremble!*

### **Why aren't they redeemed?**

Because though they believe God, they do not love God.

This is the distinguishing mark of the redeemed.

They love God.

God demands that we love Him with a perfect love, with a love that is as wide as all our capabilities and capacities.

- No one is ever right with God, no matter what kind of religious activity they are engaged in.
- No one is ever right with God no matter how much church they attend or how many good things they do

or how many sacrifices they offer or how many rules they try to keep.

- No one is ever right with God until his heart and soul and mind and strength manifests love for God.

That's why we have said this so many times through the years, that a person does not become a Christian just because they may believe, a person becomes a Christian when they demonstrate a consuming love for God.

When Jesus said this to them, they were unmasked.

What God wants out of you is your heart of love.

You have never given that to God.

**Matthew 23:13**, *“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*

**V 14**, *“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*

**V 15** *“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*

**V 23**, *“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*

**V 25**, *“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*

**V 27**, *“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*

**V 29**, *“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!*

**Who is a hypocrite?**

Someone who has something on the outside and nothing on the inside.

They didn't love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength.

They were going through religious motions for what they could gain out of it, self-satisfaction, pride, ego, an appearance of righteousness.

**Was this new to them?**

No, it wasn't new to them.

When Jesus said you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, that wasn't new to them.

This was from Moses, and that way of describing the redeemed was the Mosaic way of describing them.

In **Exodus 20**, where you have the giving of the Ten Commandments.

**Exodus 20:6**, *but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.*

God wanted them to keep His commandments.

That's the outside.

**What about the inside?**

Love me and keep my commandments.

Again, that is repeated in **Deuteronomy 7<sup>th</sup> chapter**, that same basic injunction when God gives His commands again.

**Deuteronomy 7:9**, *“Therefore know that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;*

Nothing is new.

It was repeated again in Nehemiah.

**Nehemiah 1:5**, *And I said: “I pray, Lord God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments,*

There was never a time in the Old Testament or a place where God taught externalism.

Never a time when He said I just want you to crank these rules out and I will accept you.

It was always at first you love me and because of that love, there is a desire and a commitment to obedience.

Jesus gathered His disciples in the upper room and told them the same thing.

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

This is not new.

This is what God’s been saying all along.

There is nothing new about it.

If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

**1 John 4:19**, *We love Him because He first loved us.*

Turn it around, He first loved us therefore, we love Him. We are those who love God.

The best definitions Christians could ever find in our scriptures.

**Ephesians 6:24**, *Grace be with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.*

Grace to those who love the Lord honestly, who really love Him, and **what is the opposite?**

**1 Corinthians 16:22**, *If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed. O Lord, come!*

God calls people to love Him.

Ask yourself a question! **Is He worthy of that?**

Of course He is.

**How could you resist loving One who is perfect?**

**How could you resist loving One who is gracious and who loved you with a supreme love?**

Not loving God is an absolute affront, and yet that's characteristic of the world. They don't love God.

**Exodus 20:5**, *you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,*

**Deuteronomy 5:9**, *you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me,*

**Deuteronomy 32:41**, *If I whet My glittering sword, And My hand takes hold on judgment, I will render vengeance to My enemies, And repay those who hate Me.*

It is basic to man to resent God and hate God and not want God because God comes down with these demands on our life.

God says we are to love Him, and if you don't love Him, you hate Him.

Jesus put it this way: "He that is not with me is against me."

What does God desires from men is that we love Him.

### **What kind of love is this?**

Love that meditates on God's glory. Psalm 18.

It is a love that trusts in God's great power. **Psalm 31:23.**

It is a love that seeks fellowship with God. **Psalm 63:1-8.**  
It is a love that secures the peace of the soul. **Psalm 119:165.**  
It is a love that is sensitive to how God feels, **Psalm 69:9.**  
It is a love that loves what God loves, **Psalm 119:72, 97, 103.**  
It is a love that loves whom God loves, **1 John 5:1.**  
It is a love that hates what God hates, **Psalm 97:10.**  
It is a love that grieves over sin, **Matthew 26:75.**  
It is a love that rejects the world, **1 John 2:15.**  
It is a love that longs to be with Christ, **2 Timothy 4:8.**

But more than all of that, this love is a love that obeys!

The desire and even though the obedience is imperfect, the love is there. I love God. I don't love Him like I ought to love Him.

**Philippians 1:9**, *And this I pray, that your love may abound still more and more in knowledge and all discernment,*

I love God, but I could love Him more perfectly, and so there ought to be in life a reality of love toward God that my whole being loves Him and yet there is a continuing development of that reality.

If you are a Christian, you love God.  
You love God with everything you are.  
You could love God even more.

Though it is a love that meditates on His glory

- ✓ Love that trusts in His power,
- ✓ Love that seeks His fellowship,
- ✓ Love that secures peace with Him,
- ✓ Love that is sensitive to His feelings,
- ✓ Loves what He loves and loves whom He loves and hates what He hates,
- ✓ Love that grieves over sin,
- ✓ Love that rejects the world,
- ✓ Loves the Saviour,

Most of all it is a love that obeys God's word.

Love Him and keep His commandments is the mark of a believer.

A true believer is a lover of God, and that is made manifest because He keeps His commandments.

You show me someone who doesn't have any interest in keeping His commandments, I will show you someone who doesn't love Him.

### **Can men just choose to love God that way?**

For all of us have lived without loving God and hating God.

We all need to be forgiven for that.

We need a Saviour.

Jesus came into the world to die in our place and to pay the penalty for our sin, the core of which was we hated God.

The reason we didn't obey Him was because we never loved Him.

We need to be forgiven for that.

God wants to forgive us for that and that's why Christ died on the cross. He bore on the cross the sin that we should have borne.

### **What was that sin?**

It was the sin of hating and rejecting God.

If love is demonstrated in obedience, then its opposite is demonstrated in disobedience.

Our disobedience demonstrated that we hated God and we needed to have that paid for, and so Christ comes as a Saviour to pay the price for our lack of love for God.

God not only forgives us for a past lack of love, but He infuses us with an ability in the present and future to love God.

**Romans 5:5**, *Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us.*

The Spirit of God when given to us in salvation enables us to love God.

We can't love the way we are supposed to love, and because we have not loved that way, we need forgiveness.

Jesus comes, pays the penalty, forgives the unloving sins of the past, and enables us to love God in the future.

A believer loves God with everything!

He could love God, and yes, he sins, but that's not what he wants to do. He hates the things that he sees as sin because he's controlled by his love for God.

It has always been God's standard.

God desires people who love Him and keep His commandments. The people of old should have recognized that they did not love God in this way, as evidenced by their inability to fully obey His commands.

Unless you acknowledge that you don't love God as you should, you won't seek His help to change that. But when you come to the realization that your love for God is lacking—that loving Him with all your heart, soul, and mind is not the driving purpose of your life—you will understand your need for a Saviour.

It's only then, when you recognize your inability to love God as He deserves, that Christ enters your life. In that moment, your

past is forgiven, and the power to live according to His will is given to you for the future.

**V 39**, *And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'*

This flows from love for God.

Jesus quotes this from **Leviticus 19:18**.

When you love God right, you love people right.

- The Pharisees didn't do that.
- They bound heavy burdens on people.
- They used people.
- They abused people.
- They were cruel to people.

Witness their treatment of the prophets and Christ.

They were haters of men, users of men, abusers of men.

They traded on them, they stole their money, they overcharged them, and they made merchandise of them.

People are not basically lovers of others as they ought to be, they're self-lovers.

The love of purpose, the love of intention, the love of will, the love of action is to take care of somebody else the same way I take care of me.

- We are very concerned about our own comfort.

- We are very concerned with meeting our own needs.
- We are very concerned about our own goals being met.

**Are we as concerned about somebody else's?**

When I am hungry, I take care of me.

When I see somebody else hungry, do I take care of them with the same speed and concern?

When I have a need, I want that need met.

**Do I have the same feeling toward someone else who has a need?**

When I am uncomfortable, I want to find comfort.

**Do I have the same feeling for someone else's discomfort?**

We are to care about others the same way we care about ourselves.

We are to turn it around so that we get lost in other's needs.

Love God, and love men.

Christianity isn't that complicated, neither is Judaism.

If you love God, you will do what He says.

If you love men, you will do what they need.

That's life for us.

**V 40, *On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.***"

Everything else God said in the Old Testament hangs on those two things.

If you just love God with all your being and love everybody as you love yourself, you don't need any more rules.

You don't need anything more, everything else is just a definition of that.

There are laws in the Scripture against murder that indicate that people don't love each other.

The fact that there are laws in the Bible against idolatry means we don't love God the way we ought to love God.

If I love God perfectly, I will have no other idols.

If I love God perfectly, I won't take His name in vain.

If I love men as I ought to love men, I won't kill them, steal from them, covet what they have, be unkind to them, gossip about them, slander them, or hurt them in any way.

Everything is summed up in that.

Paul made this very clear.

**Romans 13:8-10,***Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. <sup>9</sup>For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other*

*commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." <sup>10</sup>Love does no harm to a neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilment of the law.*

### **Do we need any laws if we love everybody?**

Of course not.

If I love God with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength, then I don't need any rules about that, either. Everything reduces to these two issues.

I don't even need a law that says don't make idols if I love God supremely.

I don't need a law that says don't take His name in vain if I love Him supremely.

Those are just pinpoint descriptions of what these two things contain.

## **Conclusion:**

### **What is God calling for?**

Love me, keep my commandments.

Love your neighbour as yourself.

Love others in a way that causes you to meet their needs as readily, as eagerly, as anxiously, as completely as you meet your own needs.

I don't love God as perfectly as I should, and I don't love my neighbor as perfectly as I should. Because you haven't done that, you have violated God and you need two things.

- You need a Saviour to forgive the past.
- You need an enabler to help you in the future.
  
- If you are a Christian, then you will love God and you will love your neighbour.
- If you are a non-Christians, then you have not loved God. You need forgiveness for that and enablement to do that or you will be accursed from His presence forever.

The lawyer that asked Him the question said, "You are right," and he repeated what Jesus said. Jesus said to him, "You are not far from the Kingdom."

If you believe this, you are not far, but believing is one step short of loving.

The answer was so right and so straight and so unmasking of these hypocrites.

**Mark 12:34**, *"No one dared ask Him any more questions."*

No more questions.

Ripley's Believe it or Not says that the longest love letter ever written was written in **1875**, and it was written from a Parisian painter by the name of **Marcel Proust**, addressed to **Madame de Noailles**, and he was so in love with her that he wanted to write I love you in French a thousand times for every year, so it was 1875, so he wrote I love you, **one million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand times**. Not being a fool, he hired a secretary to do it.

But - but he did not want to diminish the expression of his love, so he did not tell her to write it **one million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand times** but rather he dictated each one to her separately.

So, he said it **one million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand times** and she wrote it one million eight hundred and seventy-five thousand times.

Ripley says, "Never was love made manifest by as great an expenditure of time and effort." It's a nice thought, but that's not true.

**Never was love manifested by such a great expenditure of time and effort?**

God loved us in a way that couldn't be measured when He gave Christ.

Secondly, when we love God back with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, we love God more than that guy loved that lady, and we express it, not by writing something over a million times, but by a life of obedience.