

# “The Command to Love”

**Mark 12:28-31**

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## *Setting the stage*

**Mark 11:15-19** <sup>15</sup> So they came to Jerusalem. Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. <sup>16</sup> And He would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple. <sup>17</sup> Then He taught, saying to them, “**Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations’? But you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’**” <sup>18</sup> And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy Him; for they feared Him, because all the people were astonished at His teaching. <sup>19</sup> When evening had come, He went out of the city.

- *“The court of the Gentiles should have been a place for praying, but it was instead a place for preying and paying. Mark especially mentioned the people who sold doves. The dove was one of the few sacrifices that the poor people could afford (Lev. 14:22). It was the sacrifice Joseph and Mary brought when they dedicated Jesus in the temple (Luke 2:24). Even the poor people were victimized by the merchants in the temple, and this in itself must have grieved the Lord Jesus, for He was always sensitive to the poor (see Mark 12:41–44).”*<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 151). Victor Books.
- *“Campbell Morgan points out that “a den of thieves” is the place to which thieves run when they want to hide. The chief priests and scribes were using the temple and its religious services to “cover up” their sin and hypocrisy.”*<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 151). Victor Books.

**Mark 11:27-28** <sup>27</sup> Then they came again to Jerusalem. And as He was walking in the temple, the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders came to Him. <sup>28</sup> And they said to Him, “By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority to do these things?”

**Mark 12:13** “Then they sent to Him some of the Pharisees and the Herodians, to catch Him in *His* words.”

**Mark 12:18a** “Then *some* Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him...”

## **The Command to Love God**

**Mark 12:28-30** <sup>28</sup> Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?” <sup>29</sup> Jesus answered him, “*The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. <sup>30</sup> And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.*”

- *The question?*
  - Which commandment is the greatest?
    - *“The scribes had determined that the Jews were obligated to obey 613 precepts in the Law, 365 negative precepts and 248 positives. One of their favorite exercises was discussing which of these divine commandments was the greatest.”*<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 153). Victor Books.
  - Another commentator states.
    - *“The prophets who wrote later shifted the weight to the moral laws. In Jesus' day, the scribes and the Pharisees placed most importance on Sabbath-keeping, tithing, and the dietary requirements of the law; however, they neglected the more vital aspects of justice, morality, and truth.”* John Philips Commentary, exploring the gospel of Mark page 260
- Jesus' response to the question is interesting. He doesn't even list any one particular commandment.
- He then quotes Deuteronomy

- **Deuteronomy 6:4-9** <sup>4</sup> “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. <sup>6</sup> “And these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. <sup>7</sup> You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. <sup>8</sup> You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. <sup>9</sup> You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.”
- *Commandment número uno?*
  - LOVE God.
    - HOW?
      - With ALL your
        - Heart
        - Soul
        - Mind
        - Strength
          - This is with ALL our being!
            - *Can I say I truly love God if I only pray?*
            - *Can I say I truly love God if I read but don't do what His word teaches?*
- This sums up the first three commandments.
- *The vertical law*
  - **Exodus 20:2-7** <sup>2</sup> “I *am* the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. <sup>3</sup> (1) “You shall have no other gods before Me. <sup>4</sup> (2) “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness *of anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; <sup>5</sup> 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, <sup>6</sup> but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. <sup>7</sup> (3) “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain,

for the Lord will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.”

## **Loving God**

### *1. Will keep you from straying*

- a. **1 Timothy 1:5-6** “<sup>5</sup> Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, *from* a good conscience, and *from* sincere faith, <sup>6</sup> from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk..”

### *2. Will keep you in the grace of God*

- a. **Ephesians 6:24** “Grace *be* with all those who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.”

### *3. Is the greatest sign of maturity*

- a. **1 Corinthians 13:11** “When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things.”
  - i. *Child* – Probably 3-4 years of age.
- b. **Ephesians 4:11-15** “<sup>11</sup> And He Himself gave some *to be* apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup> till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; <sup>14</sup> that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, <sup>15</sup> but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ.”

## **The Command to Love Others**

**Mark 12:31** “<sup>31</sup> And the second, like *it*, is this: ‘*You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*’ There is no other commandment greater than these.”

- Again, even on the second part, He quotes not from the law, but from Leviticus.
  - **Leviticus 19:17-18** “<sup>17</sup> ‘You shall not hate your brother in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your neighbor, and not bear sin

because of him. <sup>18</sup> You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the children of your people, but you shall **love your neighbor as yourself**: I *am* the Lord.”

- *The Horizontal Law*

- **Exodus 20:8-17** <sup>8</sup> “ (4) Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>10</sup> but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the Lord your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. <sup>11</sup> For *in* six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it. <sup>12</sup> “ (5) Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you. “ <sup>13</sup> (6) You shall not murder. <sup>14</sup> “ (7) You shall not commit adultery. <sup>15</sup> “ (8) You shall not steal. <sup>16</sup> “ (9) You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. <sup>17</sup> “ (10) You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that *is* your neighbor’s.”

- *Commandment número dos?*

- LOVE your neighbor.
  - HOW?
    - As yourself
      - We are to love our neighbor as ourselves.
      - The Bible presupposes self-love.

- *The Golden Rule*

- **Matthew 7:12** “Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets”.

- How? By treating others as you would want to be treated.

- **Romans 13:8-10** <sup>8</sup> “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 neighbor as yourself.*”<sup>10</sup> Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love *is* the fulfillment of the law.”

- “*We do not live by rules but by relationships, a loving relationship to God that enables us to have a loving relationship with others.*”<sup>1</sup> Wiersbe, W. W. (1996). *The Bible exposition commentary* (Vol. 1, p. 153). Victor Books.

*Loving others is proof.*

1. *We are His disciples.*

- a. **John 13:34-35** “<sup>34</sup> A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. <sup>35</sup> By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

2. *We are born-again.*

- a. **1 John 4:7-8** “<sup>7</sup> Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <sup>8</sup> He who does not love does not know God, for God is love”.

3. *We walk in the light.*

- a. **1 John 4:20-21** “<sup>20</sup> If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? <sup>21</sup> And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God *must* love his brother also.”

## **Wrapping up**

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

- *This type of love isn't a word!*
- *This type of love is an action!*
  - **1 Corinthians 13:4-7** “<sup>4</sup> Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; <sup>5</sup> does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; <sup>6</sup> does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; <sup>7</sup> bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”

- It isn't felt
- It isn't made up
- It isn't faked
- It isn't based on situations
- It isn't held back from anyone
- *True love for God is LIVED!*
  - **1 John 5:1-3** "Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him. <sup>2</sup> By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. <sup>3</sup> For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome."
- *Keeping His word results in blessing.*
  - **Luke 11:28b** "...blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

**1 Corinthians 13:13** "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these *is* love."