

The Great Commandment

No. 20

Introduction.

- I. On one occasion a lawyer (a teacher) of the Jews came to Christ and asked Him this question: "Teacher, which is the great commandment of the law?" Jesus answered. (Matt. 22:37-40).
- II. Jesus taught that love for God is the greatest of all the commandments. No other commandment compares to it. We are to love God with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. We are to love God with all our being.
- III. The purpose of this lesson is to discover how this love for God is to be manifested in our lives.

I. **The One Who Loves God Will Study Him** - The one who loves God will study Him.

A. We desire to know more about the things we love.

1. For example **the man who loves music** will spend long hours studying and listening to it. He may also learn to play an instrument.
2. The **boy who loves a girl** will also desire to know all about her. He will ask her many questions about herself and be with her as much as possible. Why? Because he loves her.

B. In the same way, the individual who loves God will desire to know all he can about God. He wishes to know what God is like as a Divine Person and how He has dealt with His people in the past and how He deals with them today.

1. But where can he turn for such information? Will nature tell him? Nature tells us of the existence and power and wisdom of God, but it does not tell us what God is like as a Person.

2. The scriptures alone tell us what God is like.

- a. This being true the one who loves God will spend much time in study of the scriptures. Like the psalmist, he will study and meditate upon them day and night. (Psa. 1:2).
- b. Once I heard a gospel **preacher tell about his father who was an elder of the church**. He said every morning his father would arise one hour earlier than the rest of the family and study the scriptures. He said that this had left a great impression on his life when each morning when he got up he found his father studying the word of God. Why did his father do this? Why did he sacrifice an extra hour of sleep each morning. It is obvious. Because he loved God and His word.

II. **The One Who Loves God Will Want To Worship Him** - The one who loves God will want to worship Him.

A. He will be filled with praise. He will spend countless hours exalting God for His greatness and

goodness. He will praise God when he is happy and when he is sad, when all is going well and when times are hard.

B. He will praise God as David did in the 8th Psalm. (Psa. 8:1-9).

III. **The One Who Loves God Will Obey Him** - The one who loves God will obey Him.

A. The scriptures are quite clear. (Jn. 14:15; 1 Jn. 5:3; 2:4,5; 2 Jn. 6).

1. These verses teach that if we love God we will keep His commandments.

2. No one can say "I love God" who does not keep His commandments.

B. These verses also teach the motivation behind our obedience to God. We are to obey God because we love Him.

C. There are some, however, who obey God simply because they **fear punishment**.

1. They are afraid that if they do not they will go to hell.

2. They are the ones who ask, "Do I have to come to church Sunday and Wednesday nights?" "Do I have to study the Bible and visit the sick and others?" They do not love God. They are just seeking to do as little as possible to escape hell!

D. There are others who obey God simply because they want the **reward of heaven**.

1. They do not really love God.

2. They are serving God for what they can get out of Him.

3. They also seek to do as little as possible to escape hell and get into heaven.

E. Compare this obedience with the one who **serves God because he loves Him**.

1. Yes, this man fears punishment, for what man in his right mind would not fear eternal punishment. He also desires the reward that God has promised to those who serve Him. But these are not the primary motives behind his service to God. He obeys God because he love God and would obey Him even if there were no heaven or hell. He does not seek to do the least he can just to get by, but he seeks to do the most he can in God's service. He knows that even at his best he is weak and unworthy and that the only way he can please God is by doing his best.

2. Brethren, it is a shame for preachers and elders and teachers to have to beg Christians to come to church, to visit and do the other things God has taught. Love should compel us. It should motivate us to do these things.

IV. **The One Who Loves God Will Be Devoted To Him** - The one who loves God will be devoted to Him. He says with Paul. (Gal. 2:20; Phil. 1:21).

A. This devotion will **fill his every relationship of life.**

1. Whether this man works in the office, in the factory or on the farm, his business is just a sideline with him. His real work is serving God and his only reason for having any other job is merely to help him serve God. His job provides a way for him to support himself and his family in order that they might live to serve God. His job also provides a source of money which he can contribute to the work of the Lord. His job never comes before God.
2. Paul is an example of this. Paul spent much time working as a tentmaker, but I ask you, “Do you ever think of Paul as a tentmaker?” Not likely! We think of him as a man devoted to God. This is the way men should look upon us.

B. This devotion will fill his **social relationships.**

1. He engages in **recreational activities** in order to keep his body and mind in good condition for service to God.
2. He also takes advantage of his **social contacts** for God. He sees in every person he meets a soul he will try to lead to God.

C. **His home life** is likewise filled with his devotion to God. He strives to live a life pleasing to God and to make his home as God would have it.

D. **During the days of slavery a girl** was being sold on the auction block.

1. A man came along who was touched with her plight and bought her. As he led her way she said to herself, “Yes, he bought me so that he could use me as he would an animal.” When they had gone some distance from the crowd he said to the girl, “You can go free now. I bought you to set you free.” She didn’t understand this for a moment, so he repeated the statement. Then tears rolled down her cheeks and she fell at his feet, saying, “Oh, master, I want to serve you the rest of my life.”
2. There was a time when Satan had us in his power and he was taking us to hell. But God sacrificed His beloved Son and set us free. We ought to fall at His feet and cry out, “Master, I will serve You as long as I live. I am going to devote my life to You.”
3. Paul said. (Rom. 12:1,2).

V. **The One Who Loves God Will Trust In His Providence** - The one who loves God will trust in his providence. (Psa. 23:1, 2; 37:25; 84:11; Phil. 4:19).

- A. These scriptures remind me of **a farmer and his wife** who were riding in a buggy on their way to church one Sunday morning. They had experience hard times and now they only seven cents to their names. The farmer asked, “What can we do with a nickel and two pennies?” The wife said, “Let’s give the nickel to the Lord and keep the pennies.” On the way home, a few hours later, they met a wagon loaded with hay. The driver said, “Why, I believe you’re Mr. Brown who used to run the store in town.” “That’s right,” the husband replied. The man said, “You may not remember me, sir, but I want to pay you \$14 I owe you for some groceries I bought in your store ten years ago.” As

they drove on, Mrs Brown said, “That should teach us that if we do right for the Lord, the Lord will take care of us.”

B. This should teach all of this lesson. If we do right for the Lord, He will take care of us. (Matt. 6:33).

Conclusion.

I. Someone might ask, “How does a person develop this great love for God? How does one come to love God with all his heart and soul and mind?”

II. John answered this question. (1 Jn. 4:19).

A. As we consider God’s great love for us, we cannot help but love Him.

B. This is what pricked the hearts of the men on the day of Pentecost.

1. When they learned that Christ had died for them and they were responsible for His death, they cried out to the apostles, “Brethren, what shall we do?” (Acts 2:37).

2. Peter answered. (Acts 2:38).

III. I hope God’s great love will touch your heart and lead you to Christ. You will never have a better time to give your life to the Savior. You many never have another time.

A. **A preacher was once holding a meeting in Florida.** During the invitation he went down and spoke to an old man about his soul. The old man said, “Son, I heard the gospel before you were born.” The preacher said, “Then you’ve been rejecting Christ a long time, haven’t you?” The old man said, “I’ll be saved before I die, but I am not ready yet.” The preacher pled with him to come to Christ right then, but he said, “Not tonight, I’ll be saved sometime.” The next morning the preacher heard the old man had died in his sleep that night. He died without Christ. He died without hope of salvation.

B. This is why the Bible warns us not to delay.

1. This is why the Bible says. (2 Cor. 6:2; Heb. 3:13).

2. We urge you to come to Christ now and be buried with Him in baptism and arise to live a new life in devotion to God. Come as we stand and sing.