

The Journey to Eternity
Week 8 | March 2, 2014

The Greatest Commandment
Mark 12:28-40



Sometimes we would like the list of God's laws in a clear order of priority so that we know exactly where we stand and how we are measuring up. We could reassure ourselves or at least keep an eye on the list. Jesus' answer to the lawyer's question in our passage this week is not about list-keeping or measuring ourselves against a set of rules. What does He want?

Love God.

Read Mark 12:28-34.

[Q] Of all the commandments, why do you think Jesus chose loving God and loving others as the most important?

[Q] Describe in your own words, what it means for you to love God in the ways described in this passage:

With all my heart and soul -

With all my mind -

With all my strength -

[Q] Why is God not satisfied with anything less?

[Q] What gets in the way of loving God with all you've got?

Apply:

Part of loving God is knowing Him. The more you know Him, the more you will love Him. You get to know Him more and more through His Word, the Bible. Starting Wed. March 5, you can join with Pastor Jay and others at Valley and read through the entire New Testament in the weeks leading up to Easter.

Choose the method that works best for you:

- Print the Bible reading plan at valleycommunity.cc/NT40 and put it in your Bible to help you keep on track.
- Get the [YouVersion Bible App](#) and read or listen to this New Testament plan with your favorite device. (bible.com/reading-plans/867-the-40-day-nt-challenge)

We love because He first loved us. 1 John 4:19 NIV

[Q] We can't love God without Him loving us first. Do you agree or disagree? Why?

[Q] How has God set the ultimate example of love? Consider John 3:16, 15:13, and Ephesians 5:1-2. How does this develop our understanding of what real love looks like?

Love your neighbor as yourself.

For followers of Jesus, *love* is perhaps the primary goal we should pursue in our daily lives: It gives practical expression to our devotion to Christ. You cannot be a faithful Christian and at the same time be an unloving person; it is a contradiction in terms.

Read Mark 12:38-40.

[Q] What caution to *us* is present in Jesus' warning about the teachers of the law?

Read 1 Corinthians 13:4-7.

[Q] How does this clarify what it means to love? Think of these not simply as emotions, but as behaviors.

How can you love someone if you do not "feel" like loving them?

People usually cannot, by an act of their will, change how they feel in an instant. In the case of the command to love God and love others, we are not absolved of our responsibility because we do not "feel" like it. Rather in those times, we must **ask God** to help us recognize how He has loved us, and to give us the grace to bring our thinking, acting, and ultimately feeling in line with the example of His Son.

Apply:

[Q] Who in your life do you need to love as Christ has loved you?

[Q] What steps will you take to make the love of God and love of neighbor a higher priority in your life? Be specific.

[Q] How can our group encourage one another with these steps?

Pray
