



BIBLE READING NOTES

the greatest commandment

PREPARE

If you were an unbeliever, and were asked to guess what the greatest commandment is for Christians to obey, what do you think you would say?

BIBLE PASSAGE

²⁸ One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, “Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

²⁹ “The most important one,” answered Jesus, “is this: ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.^[e] ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ (Mark 12 vv 28-30)

1. This passage links back directly to "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:5). This is a very important biblical passage. It is part of the Jewish *Shema*, the declaration of faith that is of paramount importance to every Jewish believer and indeed to Jesus as we see from this passage. Both the rabbis and Jesus combined this statement with Leviticus 19:18 "and you shall love your neighbour as yourself" (seen in verse 31 of today's passage).

Considering all this, what can we learn about what following the command to love God might involve? Think about what 'all your heart, all your soul, all your strength' might mean as well as the two parts of the commandment mentioned above.

2. Verses 13 – 27 of this chapter show the teachers of the law and leaders trying to trap Jesus by asking him questions. Do you think the teacher in verse 28 was doing the same? Why? See also verses 32 – 34.
3. Why do you think this is 'the greatest commandment'? Can you think of any other commandments that are linked to this one? (see the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20 for examples).





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4. Do you think it would surprise an unbeliever to find out what the greatest commandment is? Why?

EXPLORE

'To what degree should we love God? ..In China it is very common to say, "Having a belief is good. Just don't be too extreme." The idea is that belief is good because it can give us comfort or hope. Yet do not spend too much time, energy, or effort on it because your job, career, and things are more important.' (quote from *studyandobey.com*).

This is certainly true for how many people in our world would see belief in God. But what impact does this idea have on how we view God? How do both belief (in a set of commands) and faith (a deeper heartfelt response) come into play as we seek to love God?

RESPOND

How would you respond to someone who asks how you can show love to a God that you cannot see?

In Peter Graystone's sermon on Sunday, he mentioned three ways to love God: by telling him (using his name with respect); by doing what God wants you to do (see John 14 v 15); and by putting God first in all your choices and decisions. Spend some time thinking about each of these as you consider your daily life at the moment. Ask God to show you what he wants you to learn.

PRAYER

Our Lord and our God, thank you for the reminder today of this, the greatest commandment. We need to remind ourselves daily to turn to you with every part of our lives and allow you in. We need to remember that the reason you ask us to put you as head and Lord of our lives is because that's how we function best. We need your help as we seek to give you the honour and glory that you are due as our creator, Father and king.





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