

## SERMON SERIES: GETTING TO KNOW JESUS

**SUBJECT: THE LOVE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD**

**SCRIPTURE: MARK 12:28-34**

**SERMON NO. 26**

### **Introduction**

The love relationship with God is a true relationship with Him on His terms, involving our heart, soul, mind and strength. Involved in this relationship is a love for our neighbor as for our self.

The scene is the Temple area where theologians and scholars gathered to discuss the 613 requirements of the Jewish faith relating to the individual. The religious leaders honestly wanted to know which ONE was most important.

### **I. THE QUESTION FROM THE RELIGIOUS TEACHER.**

**(Mark 12:28).** One of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that Jesus had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? It was an honest question, *Look at His answer...*

**Mark 12:29-31** 29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 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.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."

In verses 29-31 Jesus combined three Jewish law statements from the Old Testament, and made them into one. **(31) There is no commandment greater than these.** *Word observations...*

**1. The word HEAR speaks of God's oneness.(29) 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.** The people of Israel commonly repeated these words, to remind them that their worship of God was that of one God. The Canaanites worshipped many gods, which were idols.

**2. Verse 30 refers to a note called Mezuzah in Deut. 4:4-9.** This note was nailed to the door post of a Jewish person's home. **Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.**! This note reminded them each time they left their home and returned that all parts of their life was to serve God in love.

**3. Finally, Jesus says in (31). "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thy self."** This is a quote from Leviticus 19:18.

Jesus combines these three Jewish laws into one. And if they are one, they cannot be separated. That means there are no options to follow one part and not the others.

**It's this commandment that forms the groundwork for the essential love affair with God.** Loving God involves five distinct parts that move in a progressive order. *Let's look at...*

## **II. THE PROGRESSION OF THE LOVE AFFAIR**

**1. We are to love the Lord God with all our heart. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart** In the Bible, the term heart almost always refers to the "will" of a person.

In order for you to have a love affair with God, it first requires an act of your will, a decision. God becomes the focus of your thoughts, the number one priority of your life, and the object of your attention. *So, how do you do this?*

**How do you build a relationship with anyone that leads to love?** It starts by spending time with that person, finding out things about that person, by listening to that person. It's the same with God. Loving God with all our hearts requires spending time with Him, finding out things about Him, and by listening to Him.

Listening is probably the most vital spiritual discipline when it comes to focusing our wills. Listening to Him in Sunday school, in the worship service, in personal Bible study are ways you can listen to God. If you are truly trying to listen to Him, you have begun the love affair. You started by loving Him with all your heart.

**2. The Soul in the Bible usually refers to your emotions. 30 Love the Lord your God with all ... your soul.** After spending time with Him, and discovering His great love for you, realizing that if you were the only human being alive on the earth, He would have died to purchase your salvation. Emotionally, when you realize how much God loves you, you can't help but fall in love with Him, because of how much He loves you.

**3. The Mind what you think about 30 Love the Lord your God with all your ... mind.** That's what loving Him with all your mind means

Those of you who are married, or are in a relationship with another person right now, I want you to think about those first days, weeks, and months when you first fell in love with that person. I can guarantee you that you think or thought about that person all the time. Their hair, their smile, their touch, their words. When you're really in love, all you can think about is the object of your love.

**4. Strength in the Bible talks about your actions. Love the Lord your God with all ...strength.'** Two examples of how your actions get involved in loving God.

**1) Loving God with all our strength, when we pray, means we focus on God:** who He is, what His power is like, asking Him what He wants and for His will, then ask things on our list.

**2) Loving God with all our strength means we don't take God's name in vain.** Using God's name in such a way where it is merely used to punctuate a sentence, or convey the forcefulness in our conversation, doesn't show God very much respect and love. If we really love Him, we will look for ways to honor His name, not dishonor it.

**5. The final part to loving God is "loving our neighbor as ourselves". (31). The second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.** Here is where the progression of thoughts, emotions and actions in our love affair with God starts to become very important.

When you love someone, the things that are important to that person become important for you.

Now, if we are really loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength...then it follows that what is important to Him will become important to us. Right? So, what's important to God? Very simple...people!

People matter to God so much, that He came to earth as a man He lived among us and taught us about how to have a relationship with Him that will last forever. He redeemed us, by paying the debt that

was owed because of our individual sin. ...He conquered death and gave the Holy Spirit, third person of the Trinity to us to comfort and guide us. God did all that, because He loves people. All people matter to God. So if we love God, people will matter to us as well.

**Do you see the progression.** You must first love God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, then as a by-product of your love for God, you must love people. You must show your love for God by loving what he loves...people.

You cannot do one without the other, look at the sentence structure of verse 31 again. It says, "There is no commandment (singular) greater than these. (plural)" If you think you can love God and not love your neighbor, you are just kidding yourself, and disappointing God. You will be a dysfunctional Christian,

### **Conclusion**

The Christian author, Henry Blackaby, says, "Everything in your Christian Life, depends on the quality of your love relationship to God. If that's not right, nothing in your life will be right."

Friends, a true love relationship with God, on His terms, not yours...One that involves your heart, soul, mind and strength... then loves your neighbor as yourself, is more important than any other single factor in your life. Because that essential love affair is at the heart of why God has left you here on this earth.