The Greatest Commandments

(Teens Loving God & Others)
(Matthew 22:37-40)

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Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Questions for Teens to answer:

Why should we love God?
(What are the reasons why God is worthy of my love?)

How should we love God?
(Practically speaking, how do I show my love for God?)

Why should I love Others?

How can I love others the same way I already love myself?

What gets in the way of me loving God & Others?
(Why do I often struggle with really loving God & Others?)

V. 35

"Tempting Him" - testing Him
After hearing Christ's good answer to the Sadducees, this lawyer (doctor of the Law of God; a master in the Scriptures) tested Him with an ethics exam.

The Jews of Christ's day had documented 613 commandments in the Law (248 positive and 365 negative) (Wiersbe, p. 81).

V. 36
"The great commandment" - Which command is paramount? reigns supreme? ranks as the top? is first and foremost?

Loving God is not merely a N.T. priority, but is an eternal priority that also applied to the Old Testament saint.

SEE - Deut. 6:4-7
Deut. 10:12

HOW should we love God?

"Heart . . . soul . . . mind. . . strength" = Love Him with your whole being; with everything you have.

When we love God totally (with our whole being), He is:

1.The center of my affections

"Heart" - my inner being which thinks, feels, and chooses (what I feel deeply about reflects my priorities).

2.The center of my life

"Soul" - the immaterial part of man as it relates to this life (what I live for reflects my priorities).

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"Mind" - my ideas, convictions, thoughts, philosophies of life should revolve around God. (what I spend my time thinking about [dwelling on, pondering] reflects my priorities).

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"Strength" - my physical ability (so translated in I Pet. 4:11), talents, etc., should be used for God (what I use my abilities on reflects my priorities)

WHY should we love God?

Basic Answer: He made me and He redeemed me. His love for me, motivates my love for Him. *1 John 4:19 We love him, because he first loved us.*

1.Loving God is the key to obedience
(the greatest stimulus [motivating factor] to obeying God is to love Him)

I Jn. 5:3 - "For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous."

--Love makes obedience easy!

The reason "Love" is stated as the top priority attitude is because it is the motivating factor behind everything we do.
If one loves God, he will seek to please God.
If one loves God, he will be holy.
If one loves God, he will do right.
If one loves God, he will keep His commandments.
--John 14:15, 21

2.Loving God is the key to close fellowship with Christ

Jn. 14:23 - "Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."
I Cor. 8:3 - "But if any man love God, the same is known of Him."
Ja. 4:8 - "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you . . ."

3.Loving God is the key to blessedness.

Showers of benefits fall upon those who make it their priority to love God.

Rom. 8:28 - "...All things work together for good to them that love God..."

Ja. 1:12 - "He shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him."

*SEE Psalm 91:14-16

If the greatest command is to love God, then the greatest sin is to not love Him!

"If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be anathema" (I Cor. 16:22).

God foretold that in the last days men would be "lovers of their own selves . . . lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God" (II Tim. 3:2, 4).
As the End draws near, lovelessness will be a sign: "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold" (Mt. 24:12).

V. 39

Note: Jesus does not command us to "love ourselves"; we automatically do already (Eph. 5:29 - *"For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it, even as the Lord the church")*

It is natural to love yourself; it is supernatural to love others int he same way as you love yourself.

How do you know when you are loving others the same way as you love yourself? Ask yourself: What do you do to help or benefit yourself? Do the same for others.

You are concerned about:
--Your relationship with God . . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your health, wealth, prosperity. . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your protection. . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your pleasure . . . then concern yourself with others'
--Your success . . . then concern yourself with others'

If you love God, totally, you will love others mutually.

A true love for God will manifest itself in a love for others who were made in God's image. No one can love God without loving our brother (I Jn. 4:20, 21).

Christ's combines Lev. 19:18 with Deut. 6:5 to summarize the whole Law.

V. 40

All of the Old Testament Law and prophets could be hung on these two commands. The pole that supports the hanger holding all of God's commands is love.

Rom. 13:9-10 - *"For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."*

Gal. 5:14 - *"For all the law if fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."*

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