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**SERMON TITLE** If You Love the Lord, part 7

**SERIES**

**DATE** 3/10/2024

**KEY SCRIPTURE** Matthew 22:37-39

**SYNOPSIS**

**HIGHLIGHTS**



## ☞ If You Love the Lord

**John 14:15**

**If you love me, you will keep my commandments.**

**True love will be shown and, to demonstrate your love for the Lord, you will obey him.**

☞ Today, we will be in **Matthew 22...**

Matthew 22:37–38

And He said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the first and greatest commandment.

## ☞ Love God

I know this is kind of redundant... If you love the Lord, you will love God. But let's flesh it out a bit. This love for God is agape, which means a deep kind of love. In the context here, the word involves the idea of affectionate reverence, prompt obedience, and grateful recognition of benefits received.

We've already talked about some of the ways this love is expressed. This kind of love is demonstrated when we seek God first, above all other things. (Matthew 6:31-33). It's also shown when we seek his kingdom and righteousness. When we give these things top priority in our lives, then we are beginning to love God as Jesus says it here.

Adam Clarke comments that this kind of love focuses all the thoughts and desires on a single object and **prefers** it over everything else. So, to love God in this context is to be continually thinking of ☞ him and **giving him priority and preference over everything and everyone else.**

We are to love the Lord, our God. Lord = owner; master; authority. To genuinely love him, we must start with the simple acknowledgement of who he really is. He is Lord. We are his servants. He has ultimate authority in our lives. We are simply stewards of what he gives us.

**You are to love him with all your heart, soul and mind.**

**All** = the whole; complete; throughout.



**Heart** = the center of all physical and spiritual life; the source of the thoughts, passions, & desires. So, focus your thoughts and desires, your whole life on God. To love the Lord with all your heart is to be willing to do anything in order to **please God**.

**Soul** = literally, breath; the vital force which animates life. With every breath you take, love and honor God. Until you draw your last breath, love God. To love God with all your soul is to be ready **to give up** anything for his sake.

Ephesians 5:2

...Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

**Mind** = thoughts; way of thinking; imagination; ideas. To love God with all your mind is to **see God in all things** and to **think of him at all times**. Let your imagination focus on the Lord. Let your ideas be motivated by love for him. If you're constantly thinking of him, you will see him in so much more of life.

Are you getting this? To love God in the way Jesus commands is to always be thinking of him and how to please him to the extent that you would give up anything to do so.

☞ *Matthew Henry... Our love of God must be a **sincere** love, and not in word and tongue only. It must be a **strong** love - we must love him in the most intense degree. It must be a **singular** and superlative love - we must love him more than anything else.*

When Jesus was asked to summarize the whole of the law and prophets, he reduced it down to just two simple statements. The first was "Love God." It doesn't get much more straight-forward than that!

Matthew 22:39

And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'

☞ **Love others**

This love for others is the same word as we just discussed regarding God. However, rather than talking about the heart, soul and mind, Jesus says, "as you love yourself."

**As yourself** = in the same manner.



David Guzik... *This doesn't mean that we must love ourselves before we can love anyone else; it means that in the same way we take care of ourselves and are concerned about our own interests, we should take care and have concern for the interests of others.*

What sort of things matter to you? What needs do you have? What desires do you have? Those are also important to others, and we are to take all that into consideration as we relate with each other.

Adam Clarke... *We owe to our neighbor what we have a right to expect from him. We are taught ☞ to **bear with and forgive him**; to **rejoice** in his happiness, **mourn** in his adversity, desire and delight in his prosperity, and promote it to the utmost of our power; to instruct his ignorance, help him in his weakness, and risk even our life for his sake. In a word, we must do everything in our power, through all the possible varieties of circumstances, for our neighbors, which we would wish them to do for us, were our situations reversed.*

☞ **Treat people as you want to be treated. The Golden Rule.** "In everything, treat people the same way you want them to treat you, for this is the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 7:12). This is perhaps one of the most famous commands of Jesus. Can you imagine how the world would change if we all lived by this principle? How would you like people to treat you; talk to you; honor you; respect you; love you? Then, do that for them!

**This is a strong theme in the teaching of Jesus: Love one another.**

John 13:34... "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another."

John 15:12... "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you."

John 15:17... "This I command you, that you love one another."

☞ **Ultimately, this command requires us to serve others.** In Matthew 20:26–28, Jesus established a counter-intuitive principle for attaining greatness: "*Whoever wants to become great must first make himself a servant.*" Jesus goes on to wash the disciple's feet. Imagine that! The Son of God washing the dirty feet of men! He actually went beyond the Golden Rule. He didn't just do what he would want others to do. He did more!

Once again, Jesus sets extremely high standards for us. Love God – make him your top priority in everything, being willing to give up anything in order to please him. Love others – bear with, forgive and serve others. These high standards require us to lean into the Holy Spirit. It's the Holy Spirit which desires the things of God and helps us in our weakness. (Romans 8)

☞ **If you love the Lord, then love God with all you've got and love others as yourself.**