

All of It!

Text: Mark 12:28-34

Mark 12:30: "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment."

The Great Commandment comprising a unique completeness of loving God is found in Deuteronomy 6, Matthew 22, Luke 10 and here in our text of Mark 12. To emphasize this doctrine is not only important, is it essential. Without this essential life-giving driving force of love, what we believe is not believable to an unbelieving world.

When I was a teen struggling with the totally dedicated Christian life, a preschooler taught me in three words what was required. Her dad asked her, "Honey, how much do you love your Daddy?" She replied, "All of it!" And that says it all. Let's break down the four ways that Christ declares the way we may love God with "all of it."

I. LOVE WITH PURPOSE

We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart. The word "heart" comes to us from the Greek word "kardia" meaning "the thoughts and feelings of the mind." This must be the starting point of our relationship with God. The ancient plea of Proverbs 23:26 is, "My son, give me thine heart, and let thine eyes observe my ways." Then we see the promise of a spiritual heart transplant in Ezekiel 11:19b: "...I will take the stony heart out of their flesh..." and culminating in Jeremiah 24:7a: "And I will give them an heart to know me, that I am the LORD: and they shall be my people, and I will be their God...." How thankful we are for the permanence of this transaction as seen in Psalm 108:1a: "O God, my heart is fixed..." Daniel 1:8a says, "But Daniel purposed in his heart..." II Corinthians 9:7a: "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart..." This is the decision-making mechanism.

Did you know there is a danger of throwing your heart away? Proverbs 62:10b: "...if riches increase, set not your heart upon them." In the covenant of marriage, your heart is freely given with determination and permanence in mind. Song of Solomon 8:6: "Set me as a seal upon thine heart, as a seal upon thine arm: for love is strong as death...." The promise of how Judah returns to God is told in Jeremiah 24:7b: "...they shall return unto me with their whole heart." The Psalmist said in Psalm 119:10a, "With my whole heart have I sought thee...." And this is the way we are to always love God--with our whole heart.

II. LOVE WITH PERSONALITY

We are to love the Lord our God with all our soul. The word "soul" comes to us from the Greek word "psyche" meaning "breath, i.e. the vital force that animates the body and shows itself in breathing." This is evidenced in Genesis 2:7, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed

into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” Basically, this is the personality of the individual. Everyone has their own unique personality. The Bible says in I Corinthians 15:45, “And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit.” Christ, the last Adam, through His death, burial and resurrection, has the power to make us alive by the Holy Spirit. And through the captured heart of the believer, the personality is now dominated by a new nature.

Too many times we get judgmental because someone else does not love the Lord in the way we love the Lord with the personality that the Lord gave us. The sanguine personality shows love in a very emotional way and is apt to show outbursts of ecstasy, which often energizes others to join in full commitment to the Lord. The phlegmatic personality is more laid back and expresses love in a quiet and consistent work ethic for God’s glory. The choleric personality is one that often takes the initiative in projects, expressing love by effective leadership. The melancholy personality expresses love in artistic venues of music or creative teaching that is often honed in a lonely atmosphere. Most would conjecture that everyone is at least a combination of two of these personality types with dominance in one. All personality types are needed. I Corinthians 12:18 reminds us, “But now hath God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.”

III. LOVE WITH PREOCCUPATION

We are to love the Lord with all our mind. The word mind comes to us from the Greek word “dianoia” meaning “deep thought, the faculty of the imagination.” This is the New Testament addition, not mentioned in the Old Testament. Our Lord seems to be the one who added this way of loving Him with everything we have.

The Bible says in Proverbs 23:7a, “For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he...”. The imagination is powerful. In Jeremiah 9:14a, the prophet laments that the people have disobeyed God, “...But have walked after the imagination of their own heart...”. This was the epicenter of the beginning of the end of civilization of the Antediluvian world as shown to us in Genesis 6:5, “And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.” If we love the Lord with all our mind or imagination, could we not do the opposite of those who lived before the flood and by God’s grace serve the Lord continually and have an imagination thinking righteously continually?

IV. LOVE THE LORD WITH POWER

We are to love the Lord with all our strength. The Greek word for strength is “ischus” which means “force, ability, might or power.” This is where “all of it” eventually must end up, i.e., exercising loving our Lord with all the power of our being. Any casual observer of a life may tell where one’s heart is. Allow me to illustrate.

A hard working boy from the Midwest grows up, married and he and his wife had one daughter and adopted another daughter. He loved his girls, and

was successful in business. However, no one took the place his wife and daughters held in his heart.

And so he began to imagine--he imagined a better amusement park. He used his talents in cartoon drawing to help him imagine a place that could become what he would call "the happiest place on earth." And thus, the idea of Disney Land and later Disney World were created. Walt Disney was quoted, "I only hope that we never lose sight of one thing--that it was all started by a mouse." I submit to you it was not started by a mouse; it was started by the love for two girls, Diane and Sharon.

Think of what great expectations await the Christian who is so in love with the Savior that his or her love drives them to imagine things that have never been done--missions that have never been accomplished--evangelistic enterprises that have never been tried. In D. L. Moody's youth he heard a man who was about to die say, "It is yet to be seen what God can do with one man totally surrendered to God." Moody said, "By the grace of God, I'll be that man!" After a lifetime of phenomenal service for his Lord and personally witnessing over two and a half million people come to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ, Dwight L. Moody lay on his deathbed. And as he was soon to die, he was overheard saying, "It is yet to be seen what God can do with one man totally, wholly surrendered to God." Just imagine! Would you be that man? Would you be that woman? It will require, "all of it!"

-Pastor Pope-