

***“You Shall Love The Lord Your God”*** By Ed Terry Delivered 8/12/18  
1<sup>st</sup> John 5:1 – 5; John 21: 15 – 23; Exodus 20:1 – 21; **Matthew 22:34 – 40 (Sermon)**

One of the Pharisees came to Jesus with a trick question; ***“what is the greatest commandment”***

Jesus said; ***“Love The Lord your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul and with all of your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it; Love your neighbor as yourself. All of the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”***  
(Matthew 22:37 -40)

The dictionary defines love as affection, good will, devoted to someone, a passionate attachment to someone.

But in 1<sup>st</sup> John we learn that ***“God is love”*** and ***“love comes from God”***. (1<sup>st</sup> John 4:16, 4:7)

And 1<sup>st</sup> John 3:16 tells us; ***“This is how we know what love is: Jesus laid down His life for us.”***

You see love is more than feelings or words - love is action.

Love is a choice we make to put another’s needs and desires ahead of our needs and desires.

Love is sacrificing our self for someone else.

1<sup>st</sup> John 4:8 tells us; ***“Whoever does not love does not know God because God is love.”*** (1<sup>st</sup> John 4:8)

Jesus said; ***“Love The Lord your God with all of your heart ...”*** (Matthew 22:37)

The heart is the center of our emotions.

When you love someone you are attracted to them, you just want to be with them, and you will sacrifice your time and your money in order to develop a close relationship with that person.

You will do any and everything to please them and to impress them.

If we love God with all of our heart we will look forward to spending time talking to Him and listening to Him in prayer.

If we love God with all of our heart we will not do anything that is not pleasing to Him.

If we love God with all of our heart we will tell all of our friends how great The Lord is and what The Lord has done for us.

Psalm 86: 12 says; ***“I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart.”***

***“Love The Lord your God with all of your soul ...”***

Your soul is the spiritual side of you.

Your soul is the real you and your soul will live forever. (Matthew 10:28)

The difference between humans and animals is that humans have a soul or a spiritual dimension.

(Genesis 2:7)

Because we have a soul we have a capacity to know and to love our creator God who is a spirit.

We have the privilege of having a close personal relationship with The Lord.

But with this privilege comes responsibility.

We are accountable to Almighty God for all of our thoughts, all of our words, and all of our actions.

Jesus said; ***“what good is it for a man to gain the whole world and yet forfeit his soul.”*** (Mark 8:36)

Psalms 84:2 shows us what it means to ***“Love The Lord your God with all of your soul ...”***

***My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of The Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for The Living God.”***

***“Love The Lord your God with all of your mind ...”***

The mind is the intellectual part of us. Our minds allow us to reason and to make intelligent choices.

We do not have to rely on instinct to make decision.

God gave humans the mental capacity to know Him and God gave us His Word so we could learn about Him and to know how to live a life pleasing to Him.

If we love God with all of our minds we will want to know everything about our Lord.

If we love God with all of our mind we will look forward to reading and studying our Bibles.

If we love God with all of our minds we will pray like King David in Psalm 27:11; ***“Teach me your way O Lord; lead me in a straight path...”***

Jesus said we are to love Him with **all** of our heart, **all** of our soul, and **all** of our mind.

We are to love The Lord with all that we are.

Anything less than our entire being is unacceptable to The Lord.

Half hearted love is just as unacceptable as half hearted commitment.

We are to love The Lord with all that we are.

When we think about Jesus' answer we see that Jesus said the two most important things in life are our relationship with Almighty God and our relationship with our neighbor.

When we look at The 10 Commandments we also see that The 10 Commandments are about our relationship with The Lord and our relationship with other people.

The Pharisees and many Christians today miss the whole point of The 10 Commandments.

Sadly many Christians mistakenly think The 10 Commandments do not apply to us today since they are part of The Old Covenant and as Christians we are under The New Covenant of Grace.

But listen to what Jesus said in Matthew 5:17-19 Jesus said, ***“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from The Law until everything is accomplished. Anyone who breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”***

So we need to take a fresh look at The 10 Commandments since they are about us having a love relationship with God and us having a love relationship with other people.

In Deuteronomy 6:6-7 God commanded His people to constantly think about and to teach our children about The 10 Commandments.

The Lord said keeping His commandments is the basis of experiencing the fullness of a relationship with their Creator God and to receive all of the benefits of being His chosen people.

Just as God chose Israel to represent Him God has also chosen Christians to represent Him.

1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:9-12. tells us we are a ***“chosen people”***; we are to abstain from sinful desires; we are to lead a holy life, and we are to declare the praises of The Lord so that the pagans will see our good deeds and glorify God.

As Christians we represent The Lord Jesus Christ.

We cannot represent The Lord and all of the benefits God offers to an unsaved world unless we are living like God commanded us to.

The Ten Commandments state the basis of God’s expectations for us.

The first four commandments tell us how to relate to God.

The last six commandments teach us how to relate to one another.

Deuteronomy 10:12-13 tells us that The Lord’s commandments are ***“for your own good”***.

The Ten Commandments God’s blueprint for human behavior and relationships and they tell us how to experience the abundant life that God has planned for all people.

Without rules there is fear and chaos.

These limitations God has placed on us are not to hurt us or prevent us from enjoying life.

The Ten Commandments are a gift from God so that all people can enjoy Him and enjoy the life He has given us while we are on earth.

1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 1:8 tells us the law is good if it is used properly.

God wants to protect us from things that He knows will destroy us and ruin His best for us.

This morning we will look at the first three commandments and we look at the other seven on the following Sundays.

The first Commandment is; ***“You shall have no other gods before me”***.

The first commandment is the foundation for the other 9 commandments.

No other gods before me means *“instead of me” or “that take priority over me”*.

God said *“I am to be the only God in your life”*.

The sad thing is there are many gods that people put before the One True Living God of The Bible; the god of personal pleasure, the god of material possessions, the god of *“me first”*, the god of money, the god of my family, the god of power, the god of intellect, and / or the god of beauty.

If you recognize Almighty God as the only exclusive Supreme Being you cannot simply dismiss His commandments because you do not like them.

If there is only one God and if He is the only Savior of sinful people then God commands must be obeyed.

If God is the only God in our life then The 10 Commandments do not have to be posted on the walls of the Courthouse and schools because they will be posted in the hearts of every Jew and every Christian and the testimony of our lives cannot be silenced.

No other gods before me means I will give The Lord first place in my life.

No one or thing will have a higher priority than The Lord!

The second Commandment prohibits us from all forms of idolatry.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment deals with **whom** we are to worship and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment deals with **how** we are to worship.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment has to do with worshipping the right God and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment is about worshipping the right God in the right way.

In Biblical times pagan had many idles. They carved wooden images of animals and people and worshipped them.

Today most people do not have carved or molded idols but many people have idols they worship.

Your money can be an idle if it is more important than worshipping The Lord.

Your house, or your car, or your job, or your pleasure is an idle if it keeps you from worshipping The Lord.

You shall not make unto thee any graven image means; I will worship no one or no thing but The God of The Bible and that includes my job, my possession, my hobbies, and / or every other aspect of my daily life.

Any man made image of a god is nothing less than rejection and hatred of The One True Living God of The Bible.

Most Christians think that this is the easiest commandment to keep since they do not bow down to a golden calf in their living room.

But since The 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment is the most repeated of The 10 Commandments in The Bible we need to take a closer look at it.

Since The One True God of The Bible is invisible any image or picture we make is an attempt to fit God into our thinking.

No picture and no image of God can capture the power, the majesty, or the glory of God.

God cannot be contained and we do not control God.

There is also a danger that any image or picture of The Lord can become a good luck charm.

Today our idols are more in us than on a shelf.

Rather than us making God in our image we need to let God mold us into His image.

Verse 5 gives us the reason we are not to have any idols; ***“for I am a jealous God.”***

God is jealous for our undivided attention and for our total commitment to Him.

In The Bible idolatry is considered as spiritual adultery.

Verse 5 also tells us the sever punishment for idolatry; ***“punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generations who hate me.”***

Here we see God equates idolatry with hating God.

This is a long lasting punishment for idolatry but in verse 6 God said; ***“I will show love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments”.***

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment prohibits misusing the name of The Lord your God.

Many people think this commandment just prohibits cursing in God’s name.

But it means much more.

A name represents a person, their personality, their characteristics, and everything they stand for.

All Christians bear the name of Christ.

When we accepted The New Covenant of Grace we accepted the responsibility to represent Jesus Christ and His way of life to the people around us.

2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 5:20 says; ***“We are therefore Christ’s ambassadors.”***

As Christians our life is to reflect all of the holy characteristics of Jesus.

Failure to faithfully represent all of Jesus’ holy characteristics is misusing God’s name.

Our life style either rebukes or reveres God’s name.

To falsely represent or a failure to represent God’s name is breaking The 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment.

Most unbelievers will not curse around a Christian who reflects Godly characteristics.

***“You shall not misuse the name of The Lord your God”*** means I will honor God’s name in the way I speak and the way I act.

Not only will I refrain from using bad language, I will not speak in ways that are degrading to other people because all humans are made in God’s image.

I will build up with my words I will not tear down.

The first three commandments call for a lifestyle that is controlled by a close loving personal relationship with The Lord.

Jesus said, ***“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.”*** (Matthew 22:37-38)

You see our obedience to the first three commandments is our response to God’s unconditional love for us and His unlimited amazing grace given to us.

God’s word to us today clearly tells us that our relationship with God and our relationship with one another are the two most important things in life.

And Jesus is saying that both of these relationships are to be based on love.

Love is the greatest gift of all the spiritual gifts and love never fails.

The choice to live a life of love is truly ***“The Most Excellent Way.”*** (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 13:1)

**AMEN**