

“What is the Greatest Commandment?”
Matthew 22:34-40

I. Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment (vs. 34-36).

- A. The question was an attempt to trap Jesus in His own words.
- B. The lawyer who asked Jesus the question was also a scribe.
- C. The lawyer seemed to be sincere.

(Mark 12:28, 34 (28-34))

II. Jesus responded that the greatest commandment was to love God (vs. 37-38).

- A. In His answer, Jesus quoted from the book of Deuteronomy.
- B. Love for God is the mark of a true believer.
- C. Love for God will be manifested in obedience to Him.

(Deuteronomy 6:4-9; John 14:15, 23-24; 1 John 2:3-5; 5:2-3)

III. Jesus added that the second greatest commandment was to love your neighbor as you love yourself.(vs. 39-40).

- A. In His answer, Jesus quoted from the book of Leviticus.
- B. Genuine love for God will result in a genuine love for people.
- C. Love is the fulfillment of the law.

(Leviticus 19:18; Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:13-15; Ephesians 5:28-29; Philippians 2:3-4; 1 John 4:7-8)

Scripture References and Notes

Mark 12:28

One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, “What commandment is the foremost of all?”

Mark 12:34

When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.”

Deuteronomy 6:4-9

⁴ “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. ⁶ These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. ⁷ You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. ⁸ You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. ⁹ You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

John 14:15

“If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.

John 14:23-24

²³ Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. ²⁴ He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father’s who sent Me.

1 John 2:3-5

³ By this we know that we have come to know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ The one who says, “I have come to know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him; ⁵ but whoever keeps His word, in him the love of God has truly been perfected. By this we know that we are in Him:

1 John 5:2-3

² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. ³ For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

Ephesians 5:28-29

²⁸ So husbands ought also to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his own wife loves himself; ²⁹ for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also *does* the church, ³⁰ because we are members of His body.

Philippians 2:3-4

³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Galatians 5:13-15

¹³ For you were called to freedom, brethren; only *do not turn* your freedom into an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. ¹⁴ For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the *statement*, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” ¹⁵ But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.

Romans 13:8-10

⁸ Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled *the law*. ⁹ For this, “YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY, YOU SHALL NOT MURDER, YOU SHALL NOT STEAL, YOU SHALL NOT COVET,” and if there is any other commandment, it is summed up in this saying, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.” ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of *the law*.

1 John 4:7-8

⁷ Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. ⁸ The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Exodus 20:3-4, 7-8; 11-17

³ “You shall have no other gods before Me. ⁴ “You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.

⁷ “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain. ⁸ “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

¹¹ For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. ¹² “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you. ¹³ “You shall not murder. ¹⁴ “You shall not commit adultery. ¹⁵ “You shall not steal. ¹⁶ “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. ¹⁷ “You shall not covet your

neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Mark 12:32-34

³² The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM; ³³ AND TO LOVE HIM WITH ALL THE HEART AND WITH ALL THE UNDERSTANDING AND WITH ALL THE STRENGTH, AND TO LOVE ONE'S NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF, is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices." ³⁴ When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.