

FOLLOW ME

The Gospel of Matthew

WEEK 2 - THE MOST IMPORTANT COMMANDMENT OVERVIEW

After coming to Jerusalem and beginning his final week before the crucifixion, Jesus teaches daily in the temple. Here, his teachings reveal not just his expert subversion of the religious leaders of Israel, but the profound beauty of his kingdom message. When they are trying to trip him up about the “most important commandment,” Jesus quotes from two Old Testament laws which encapsulate the entire Spirit of God’s desires. Although the basic formulation, “Love God, love others,” is familiar to many of us, the two laws he quotes gain even more significance when seen in their original context. One is from a passage about wholehearted dedication to the teaching of God. The other is from a series of laws promoting true justice, mercy, and equality among the people. Jesus is not just cleverly answering a trick question; he is inviting his followers into a profound and whole-life commitment to the desires and teachings of God.

*You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul,
and all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment.
A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’*
Matthew 22:37-39

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do you agree that love takes work? Give an example of what that means to you.
2. Read [Matthew 22:34-40](#).
 - a. Why did the Pharisees ask Jesus about the *most important commandment*? (see also [Psalm 2:2](#).)
 - b. What can we learn from the Bible about loving God and loving others? (read [Deuteronomy 6:1-9](#), [1 John 4:19](#), [Leviticus 19:9-18](#).)
 - c. Why did Jesus put these two Old Testament commandments together - to love God and love others? (See also [John 15:5](#).)
 - d. Explain what Jesus means by [verse 40](#). (see also [Matthew 5:17-18](#).)
3. Describe what it means to love God with all our heart, soul, strength, and mind. (From [Deuteronomy 6:5](#), [Matthew 22:37](#))
4. Where do you see the three themes we have been exploring in [Matthew 22:34-40](#)?
 - a. kingdom manifesto
 - b. discipleship manual
 - c. story of fulfillment
5. Amy mentioned the song, “They’ll know we are Christians by our love.” How are we doing with this?