

**LIFE OF CHRIST**  
from the gospel of  
**Mark**

**LESSON 40**

**THE GREATEST  
COMMANDMENT**

**MARK 12:28-34**

# Life of Christ

## The Greatest Commandment

## Mark 12:28-34

### Younger Verse

Love the Lord your God with all your heart. Mark 12:30

### Older Verse

Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. Mark 12:30

### Lesson Goals

**Learn that we need to love God with our whole heart**  
**Understand that to love God means to obey Him**  
**Recognize that love is the theme of all God's commands**

### Opener

*We use the word LOVE a lot. We say we love a movie or song, then we tell God we love Him. But what does real love for God look like? Let's listen to what Jesus said about love for God.*

### Bible Story

*Please note: This portion of the lesson is given to help in teaching the lesson. Please read through the story and read it in the Bible. Do **NOT** read from this piece of paper. Instead, make a note sheet and place it next to the story in the Bible.*

Over the last few weeks, we have seen Jesus answer some tough questions. He always had the right answer for everyone. Last week, we learned how to have a giving attitude. Today we will learn about another question someone asked Jesus and His answer.

A group of people came to ask Jesus a question. Those people were called the Sadducees. They did not believe that anyone could come back to life after dying. The Sadducees were sure their question would stump Jesus. Do you think Jesus fell for their trap? No, of course not; and once again, He answered exactly as God wanted Him to.

While they were asking Jesus that question, another person had joined in to listen. He was a teacher who taught the people about God's rules. When He heard how Jesus answered their question, He was very impressed. Then, He too, thought of a question to ask Jesus.

"Of all God's laws and rules in the Bible, which one is the most important to obey?" What do you think Jesus said?

Jesus looked at Him and said, "The most important rule is this: Listen, people of Israel! The Lord our God is the only Lord. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. The second most important command is to love your neighbor as you love yourself. There are not any commands more important than these."

Once the man heard Jesus' answer, He was very excited. He said, "You are right, teacher. Both of those rules are more important than giving up something or making sacrifices." Jesus noticed that this man had responded wisely. Then Jesus said, "You are not far from understanding how to get to Heaven." After that, no one else dared to ask Jesus a question because they could not get Him to say anything wrong.

What does this mean for us? Jesus named four parts of ourselves that are meant to love God. What are they? Heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Jesus says we must love God with all of our HEART. We all have a heart that beats and pumps blood in our bodies. But the kind of heart Jesus was talking about is something different than that. A person's heart means their will—the part of you that makes decisions (choices). If we love God with our will, we will ask God to show us His will and we will obey Him.

A person's SOUL is who they are—their likes and dislikes. So if we love God with all of our soul, we will like the things He likes and not like the things He doesn't like.

A person's MIND means their thought life—what they think about, and how they understand things. A person who loves God will think about things that are pleasing to God. And they will seek God's wisdom and understanding.

How can we love God with all of our STRENGTH? We need to give God ALL of our life. No matter if we are full of energy or tired, we should give God our best.

The second greatest commandment, to love our neighbor as we love ourselves, can be tough! We can only love others like that if we have God's help. These two commandments go hand in hand. The more we love God, the more we will love the people He created.

Jesus went all the way to the cross to show us how much He loves us. We need to accept His love into our lives. Then we can experience this awesome love and share it with others!

#### Review Questions

1. What question did the teacher ask Jesus? (“Which of God’s commands is the most important?”)
2. How did Jesus answer the question? (“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. And love your neighbor as yourself.”)
3. What does it mean to love God with all of your heart? (Obey God’s will.)
4. How can we love God with our mind? (Think about things that are pleasing to God.)

#### Prayer Time

Thank God for loving us and giving us Jesus to die for our sins. Pray that we will show Him our love by living our lives in obedience to Him.

#### Life Application

If you look at each commandment God gave us, it comes back to loving God and others. So if a person truly loves God with all of their heart, soul, mind, and strength and loves others as they love themselves, they will obey all of the other commandments!

In John 14, Jesus said several times that if we love Him, we will obey His commandments (verses 15, 21, 23). We may say we love God. But do we show it by how we live? The best way to show God that we love Him is to give Him our life. This means that we give up *our* will for His will for us.

Planning for Lesson 41  
Things That Will Happen  
Mark 13:1-23

## **Preschool Lesson for The Greatest Commandment**

Hey boys and girls! I have a question. (Hold up a Bible.) What is this in my hand? Yes, that's right; it is a Bible. It tells us all about God and how He wants us to live. God gave us many different rules to obey. Which rule do you think is the most important?

Today we will learn which rules Jesus said were the most important to obey. A teacher heard that Jesus was answering a question. He really liked Jesus' answer. As he listened, he too, thought of a question.

He asked Jesus, "Which of God's commands is the most important for me to obey?"

What do you think Jesus said? He answered, "The most important command is to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. The second rule is to treat other people the way you want to be treated."

Those are very important rules for us to remember. We need to love God more than anyone or anything. Loving God first helps us to be able to treat people the way we want to be treated.

The teacher heard Jesus' answer and became very excited. He said to Jesus, "You are right. Both of those rules are very important to follow."

Jesus heard how excited the man was. Jesus looked at Him and said, "You are close to knowing how to get to Heaven." What else did the man still need to know? He needed to believe that Jesus was God's Son. Jesus died on the cross and came back to life so that we could live with Him, in Heaven. If we understand what Jesus did for us, then we can know in our heart that we will get to be with Jesus one day in Heaven.

## **Hands-on Activities for**

Make some hearts from red construction paper. Cut one of them in half. Show the children the piece of a heart. Tell them that God doesn't want a part of our hearts—He wants all of us! Discuss what that means. He wants to be in charge of all of our life—not just certain parts. Now show them a whole heart. Have older kids make their own. Have them write on the heart different parts of their life—school, home, church, friends, sports, etc. Pray that we will give God every area of our lives.

Practice finding Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18 in the Bible. You may want to have a Bible open to the Table of Contents so that they can begin to learn where the books are located. This can be lots of fun!

Do an object lesson to help the kids see how we must love God with all of ourselves. Bring an electronic device to class. Share that you will let someone use it—except you will take out the batteries (or another part of the device). Obviously the device will not work. Share how you must have the whole thing for it to work. Explain that in the same way, God wants *all* of us, not just part of us.

It's not Valentine's Day, but you can still have fun making Valentine's cards and giving them to friends. Write "Love God and others." on the cards.

There are many songs about loving God and others. Examples: "This is My Commandment, That You Love One Another," "Beloved, Let us Love One Another," "Amazing Love," etc. Choose one or two to sing with your class.

**Love the Lord  
your God with all  
your heart.  
Mark 12:30**



Love the Lord your God  
with all your heart, all  
your soul, all your mind,  
and all your strength.  
Mark 12:30



# Word Search

## The Greatest Commandment

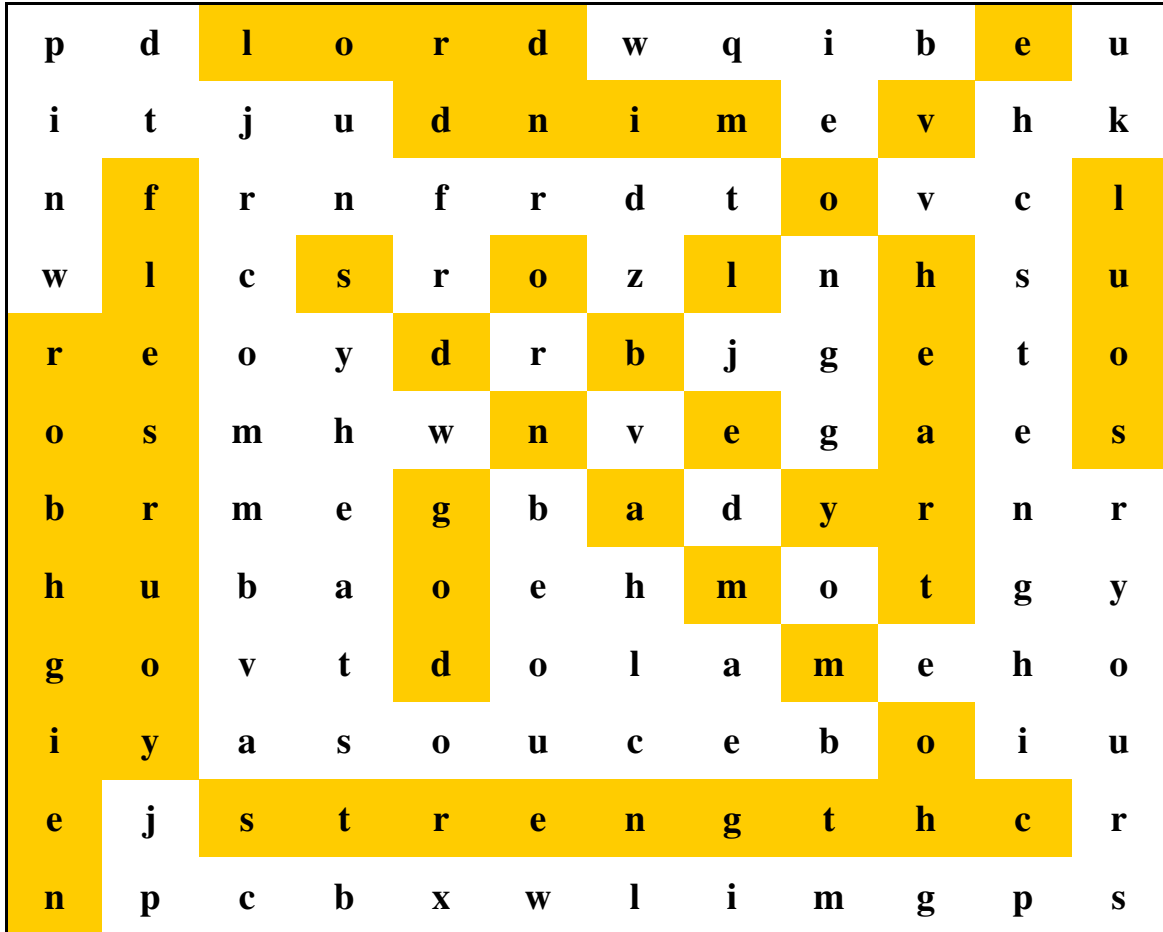
p	d	l	o	r	d	w	q	i	b	e	u
i	t	j	u	d	n	i	m	e	v	h	k
n	f	r	n	f	r	d	t	o	v	c	l
w	l	c	s	r	o	z	l	n	h	s	u
r	e	o	y	d	r	b	j	g	e	t	o
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g	o	v	t	d	o	l	a	m	e	h	o
i	y	a	s	o	u	c	e	b	o	i	u
e	j	s	t	r	e	n	g	t	h	c	r
n	p	c	b	x	w	l	i	m	g	p	s

love	Lord	God
heart	soul	mind
strength	neighbor	commands
yourself	obey	



# Word Search

## The Greatest Commandment



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heart	soul	mind
strength	neighbor	commands
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Jesus said the most  
important c\_\_mm\_\_nd  
is to love God with

ALL

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