

Sermon Notes

Practical Lessons for Understanding the Word of God



Loving God

KEY PASSAGE: Matthew 22:34-40 | **SUPPORTING SCRIPTURE:** Deuteronomy 6:1-9 | Ezekiel 18:4, 20 Matthew 7:7
John 14:1-3, 9, 14, 20 | Philippians 4:19 | Hebrews 13:5 | 1 John 1:9

SUMMARY

If you ask the average person if he loves God, his answer will probably be, “Yes.”

However, many people who sincerely believe they love the Lord are mistaken. Sadly, they may not even know Him. Words alone are no proof of love. In fact, we use the word love rather loosely, ascribing it to the most treasured people in our lives as well as our trivial preferences.

When the Pharisees challenged Jesus to name the greatest commandment, He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matt. 22:37). That’s why the Lord should have a prominent place in our hearts and our love for Him should permeate every area of our lives.

SERMON POINTS

To love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and mind simply means we express our love for Him continually in our innermost being—both emotionally and mentally. It’s an act of giving ourselves totally to Him for His purposes and joy. As He pours out His love to us, our eyes are opened to see His good purposes, and we desire to honor Him with obedience.

Misconceptions About Loving God

Tragically, many people don’t understand how to truly love God. Even sincere believers can miss out on this awesome experience because of several misconceptions such as:

- **Mistaking the fear of the Lord for love of Him.**
We can revere God by recognizing He is holy and

just, but that doesn’t necessarily mean we have fully given our hearts, souls, and minds to Him.

- **Confusing our need with love.** Most of us are quick to bring our cares and concerns to the Lord in prayer because we need His help, but that may merely be evidence of our need for Him, not our love for Him.
- **Equating serving God with loving Him.** Instead of being motivated by devotion to Christ, some people simply enjoy the satisfaction that comes with serving.
- **Assuming that our giving is always a sign of love.** If we simply put money into the offering plate because we’ve been taught it’s the right thing to do or from a sense of duty, that’s not showing true love for who God is to us personally.
- **Thinking that religious acts equal love for God.** Singing, teaching, preaching, and sharing the gospel may not be expressions of love if they are done only out of obligation.

Why don’t people love the Lord?

Some people say they love God, but want nothing to do with Jesus. However, since the Father and Son are one, no one who rejects Christ can love God (John 14:1). Although the Lord’s love extends to all people, many reject Him because:

- They don’t know Him.
- They’re afraid of the Lord’s judgment.
- They’re uncomfortable because their sin doesn’t mix with His holiness.
- They don’t want to alter their lifestyles.
- They think loving the Lord would inhibit their conduct and lifestyle choices.

- They feel uncertain about God and the future because they have no assurance about what awaits them after death.
- They can't understand why the Lord allows tragedies and disasters to happen. They don't realize God has a definite, loving purpose in whatever He permits.

Why should we love God?

The Lord is an awesome heavenly Father, and if we don't love Him, we lose out on the greatest relationship we can experience. Furthermore, we can't truly love other people until we first love the Lord because He enables us to love the unlovely. The Lord has made Himself very real and knowable through the pages of Scripture and in the person of Jesus, and the more we learn about Him, the more reasons we'll discover to love Him. Consider that:

- **The Lord created us.** The sovereign Ruler of the universe made each one of us, and He is the only reason we exist.
- **He's given us His Son.** Jesus came into the world to show us how our heavenly Father is loving and forgiving, and to give His own life as a ransom so we could be forgiven and have an intimate relationship with the Lord.
- **God has made commitments to us.** This alone should provide the motivation we need to love Him with all our hearts. For example, we know:
 - The Lord will never leave nor forsake us (Heb. 13:5).
 - He'll supply all our needs (Phil. 4:19).
 - He'll answer our prayers (Matt. 7:7).
 - He has forgiven our sins (1 John 1:9).
 - He has given each of us at least one spiritual gift that enables us to live productive, fruitful lives and accomplish whatever He asks.
 - He fills us with the Holy Spirit, who empowers us to live in a way that pleases and honors God.
 - Christ has prepared a place for us in heaven and will someday come again to take us there (John 14:2-3).

- The Lord will give us beautiful and perfect resurrected bodies.
- Through Jesus, we can have personal relationships with God that transcend any other human relationships.

The evidence of our love for God

When we genuinely love the Lord, our lives and lifestyles will be transformed. We will:

- Desire to obey and serve Him.
- Delight in sharing Him with others.
- Trust Him.
- Crave fellowship with Him.
- Desire to worship and give to Him.
- Want to defend Him and the gospel.
- Make time to study His Word.
- Be willing to suffer for Him.

RESPONSE

- Does your life show others that there is something different and special about you? Is the difference due to a closer relationship you now have with the Lord than the way it was in your past?
- Do you have inner satisfaction and contentment that no amount of success, prosperity, or popularity can provide?
- As you learn more about your heavenly Father, does your love for Him grow? Does this love permeate your life in ways that will demonstrate to others that you live for His glory and purpose in everything you say and do?

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