

## *The Greatest Commandment*

*“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37)*

**Why do we love God?** We love the Lord our God because He created us and He first loved us. The Lord God is our Creator of heaven and earth and everything in it. He created everything by His Word. He created a man, Adam, in His own image and likeness and a suitable helper, the woman, so they could live a better life. He placed them in the Garden of Eden, providing them everything they need. The Lord God walked and talked with the man and the woman and continued to have fellowship with them in the garden until the time they committed sin and their sin separated them from God. Yet, the Lord God is faithful to His creation and to those who fear Him: To Noah who revered the Name of God, God commanded him to build an ark and protected him and his family from the flood. God was with Abraham who willingly obeyed God’s command. The Lord God was with Isaac, and He was with Jacob. The Lord God was with His people who became slaves to Pharaoh in Egypt, and He was with Moses. The Lord sent miraculous signs and wonders, great and terrible events upon Egypt and Pharaoh and his households and through Moses the Lord God brought out His people into the land He promised to their forefather Abraham. God created us and had given everything that we need to live an abundant life.

In spite of God’s faithfulness to His creation, man’s sinfulness continued. **“But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners Christ died for us.” (Romans 5:8)** We love God because He first loved us and gave His own Son Jesus Christ to give us life eternal and life abundantly. The Lord Jesus Christ died on the cross to pay the price of our sins he was buried but raised from death on the third day to give eternal life to everyone who believes in Him and obeys His word. God loved us so much and had given His own Son to die for us. He had been faithful to His word and promises to us so we ought also to show our real love to Him and complete obedience to His word. To love God totally is the perfect way of living.

How do we love God? An expert of the Law came to Jesus one day and asked: **“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:36-37)**

**1. Love the Lord your God with all your heart:** Shall we check and identify what is in our heart? Is the Lord Jesus in our heart or someone else or something else? Is it money, job, business, or other name has been always our topic when we speak? We cannot deny that person or thing is in our heart and that becomes our god. **“For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.” (Matthew 12:14)** Let us remember that God is a jealous God and He commanded us, **“You shall have no other gods before me.” (Deuteronomy 5:7)** We cannot love the living God and serve the idols of wood or stone. The Lord God is our Provider, our Shepherd, our Refuge our Banner, our Master and King. Money, silver, gold or other possessions sometimes replaces God in our heart. But the word of God says

**“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasure in heaven where moth and rust do no destroy and where thieves do not break in and steal for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” (Matthew 6:9-21)** We cannot keep wealth and God in our heart together. **“No one can serve two masters, either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” (Matthew 6:24)**

- 2. Love the Lord your God with all your soul:** The soul is the center of our emotion and feelings, the center of our decision making and will. The question is, who is controlling our soul? Ourselves or the Spirit of God. Do we take decisions from God or we decide by ourselves? If we are the master of our own life we live in discord and controversies. But if we allow and keep Jesus to be our Master and King we will experience a real joyful and peaceful life that only the Lord Jesus can give, as He promised: **“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (John 14:17)**
- 3. Love the Lord your God with all your mind:** If we are in love with someone, we always think of him or her. Hour after hour we are thinking how we can please him or make her happy. Do we think more about God? How can we please God and how we will obey His commands? Do we desire that in everything we do we give glory to God? We often think how we become famous in this world, but have we thought how to be famous in God’s eye? **“Don’t you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.” (James 4:4)**
- 4. Love the Lord your God with all your strength:** God has given us healthy bodies and He has equipped us with many gifts and talents to serve Him. We should not abuse our bodies but care for it. We should keep our bodies away from immoral and filthy things like adultery, homosexuality, smoking, drinking, etc. If we love God we should keep our body pure and healthy because it is the temple of the Spirit of God. **“Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you? If anyone destroys God’s temple, God will destroy him; for God’s temple is sacred, and you are that temple. You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” (1 Corinthians 3:16-17; 6:20)**

**Dear Beloved:** **“The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear the Lord our God, so that we might always prosper and be kept alive, as is the case today. And if we are careful to obey all this law before the Lord our God, as he has commanded us that will be our righteousness.” (Deuteronomy 6:24-25)**

**Prayer:** **“Father God, I come before You in the name of Jesus who died on the cross and rose up from the dead on the third day to give me eternal life. Lord, thank You for your love to me. I offer my life to you. Come and take my heart, my soul, my mind, all my strength and my whole being. This is my prayer in Jesus’ name, Amen”**