

September 4, 2022

Matthew 22:34-40

by Ken Weliever

I haven't counted them, but Bible commentator Warren Wiersbe claims the Jews documented 613 commandments in the Old Law, 248 positive and 365 negative.

Supposedly they had divided the commandments into two basic categories, "heavy" or "important commandments" and "light" or "unimportant commandments." Thus, one could focus on the "heavy commandments" and not worry about the "unimportant commandments."

So, the issue among the religious leaders was an ongoing debate. "What is the greatest commandment in the Law?"

This is the question put to Jesus in an effort to trap or test Him. Jesus' response, however, hit the heart of the issue

37 Jesus said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."

38 This is the first and great commandment.

39 And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'

40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."

This is a passage we've heard all our lives. We've read it. Studied it. Listened to preachers exegete it. But have we really applied it to our lives on a personal basis? In our spiritual walk? In our relationships? In our homes? Our churches? Our neighborhoods? And with those who are hurting as did the Good Samaritan in

Jesus' classic parable recorded in Luke 10?

The word "love" in our English language has been diluted in its usage as we speak of loving our homes, cars, clothes, kids, and chocolate pie. It's well documented that the Greeks had four words translated "love," three of which are found in Scripture.

Here the word "love" is from the word "agapoo" which speaks to a love of the will. An unconditional love. "It means that to God we must give a total love," writes William Barclay "a love which dominates our emotions, a love which directs our thoughts, and a love which is the dynamic of our actions. All religion starts with the love which is total commitment of life to God."

The essence of God Himself is love (1 Jn. 4:7-10). The Bible is a story of love. God's love for humankind. A love that was epitomized in sending His Son on a rescue mission from heaven to earth to redeem fallen mankind. A love that still loves even when it is unrequited. Thus, we were made to love. To love Him. And love those made in His image.

To love God with all of our hearts involves the entirety of our being. The heart is not the physical organ, but the seat of our emotions. Our passions. Our affections. Our desires. Our purposes.

To love God with all our souls refers to our unique and distinct identity. It's the essence of our spirit. The very breath of our being.

Welcome!

When you visit our assemblies, you will be received friendly, kindly and courteously. We believe this to be the natural attitude of those who truly love God and mankind. Though you may at first be among strangers, we hope that you will come to know us well and count us as your friends.

We offer Bible studies as well as correspondence courses for those interested in learning more about what God expects of us.

Important Dates

Our fall meeting with Zeke Flores is scheduled for September 18-21

If you know of upcoming events, please inform Darrell so they can be included here.

Prayer Requests

To love God with all of our minds means to thoroughly seek understanding of who He is, what He desires, and how we please Him. This calls for critical thinking and logical reasoning, using our intellect to know Him and His will for our lives.

This love, however, cannot end with our Creator, it must issue itself in a love for others. For the welfare of our fellow man. If we claim to love God, yet fail in our love for others, we are deceiving ourselves. The beloved John expressed it in these pointed and penetrating words:

If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen? And this commandment we have from Him: that he who loves God must love his brother also. (1 Jn. 4:20-21).

There's no magic formula for loving God and others. It must come from a heart that humbly acknowledges God's presence, power, and provisions. Thanksgiving leads to thanks living. It begins as we dig into His Word to really know God. And it issues itself in prayerful communion and communication with Him.

When we realize how much He loves us, and how blessed we are, we can look at others through a different lens. We see them as fellow creatures with a soul created in God's image. And seek their welfare, as much as we would seek our own.

To begin this journey and to find personal fulfillment in following the two Great Commandments, we must "Draw near to God and He will draw near to you" (Jas. 4:8).

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Jack Wilson is still struggling with pain and limited mobility.

Jerry Richardson is still undergoing treatments to strengthen his immune system.

Karen Hallmark has improved but continues to struggle and could use our prayers. She had an infection this past week.

Dinah Williams is at home and continues to have mobility issues.

Don Simmons is home and still struggling with his breathing; he is on oxygen at all times. **Alene** is having hip issues.

John Miller (Dyanne Turner's brother) is under treatment for cancer.

Andrea Ayers is recovering from surgery on her jaw.

If you know of someone that needs to be on this list, please tell Darrell (email preferred) and provide updates so names stay on the list as long as needed.

"praying at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end, keep alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints,"
(Ephesians 6:18 ESV)

The Oaks West church of Christ is a group of individual Christians who have been added to the Lord's body through baptism (Acts 2:38, 47; Gal 3:26, 27), and have joined themselves together (Acts 2:42ff) in an effort to do the Lord's will.

We are not a part of any larger organization - we do not follow any man-made creeds and we do not answer to anyone other than the Lord.

Our standard of faith and practice is the Word of God. We believe in the God of revelation (Eph 3:1-7; 2 Tim 3:16-17) and follow his instructions in an effort to have an ongoing relationship with him (1 John 4:7-11; 5:3).

Our times of study and worship are open to all, and our members are happy to meet with interested individuals or families for study.

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