
Calvary Church: Coordinated Curriculum 2007-2008

Romans: The Transforming Power of the Righteousness of God

Interlude: The Great Commandment

This interlude lesson is intended to:

allow us to review—see the big-picture after we have focused on the parts. . .

we will seek to practically apply key principles dealing with interpersonal conflict

allow us to examine felt needs based on the truths taught

we all will face interpersonal conflict and need to understand how to deal with it in a biblical and God honoring way

allow us to slow down and insure that we are applying the main point of the section. . .

Are we demonstrating humility and love as we seek to maintain the unity of the Body?

Main idea

A practically review and longer look at the Great Commandment

Now indulge me for a moment

Let's do a review of the first part of the book by reading key verses

Romans 1:16-17 For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 17 For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith, as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith." (ESV)

Romans 1:18-19 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. (ESV)

Romans 1:28-32 And since they did not see fit to acknowledge God, God gave them up to a debased mind to do what ought not to be done. 29 They were filled with all manner of unrighteousness, evil, covetousness, malice. They are full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, maliciousness. They are gossips, 30 slanderers, haters of God, insolent, haughty, boastful, inventors of evil, disobedient to parents, 31 foolish, faithless, heartless, ruthless. 32 Though they know God's decree that those who practice such things deserve to die, they not only do them but give approval to those who practice them. (ESV)

Romans 3:10-18 as it is written: "None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one." 13 "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips." 14 "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood; 16 in their paths are ruin and misery, 17 and the way of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes." (ESV)

Romans 3:20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin. (ESV)

Romans 3:21-26 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus. (ESV)

Romans 4:20-23 No distrust made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, 21 fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. 22 That is why his faith was "counted to him as righteousness." 23 But the words "it was counted to him" were not written for his sake alone, (ESV)

Romans 5:1-2 Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (ESV)

Romans 5:6, 8 For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. (ESV), . . .8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. (ESV)

Romans 6:1-4 What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? 2 By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? 3 Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (ESV)

Romans 6:12-14 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, to make you obey its passions. 13 Do not present your members to sin as instruments for unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and your members to God as instruments for righteousness. 14 For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace. (ESV)

Romans 7:11-12 For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. 12 So the law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good. (ESV)

Romans 7:14-19 For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am of the flesh, sold under sin. 15 For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. 16 Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. 17 So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. 18 For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. 19 For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. (ESV)

Romans 8:1-6 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. 2 For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. 3 For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, 4 in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. 5 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. (ESV)

Romans 8:28-30 And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose. 29 For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. 30 And those whom he predestined he also called, and those whom he called he also justified, and those whom he justified he also glorified. (ESV)

Romans 8:37-39 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. (ESV)

Romans 12:1-2 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. (ESV)

Review of Romans 12:1-15:13 (ppt)

Out of gratitude for our salvation—underserved, unmerited—we respond with “yes” to God whatever He asks.

And what He asks is for us to be properly related to others—to love others.

Romans 12:9-10 Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. 10 Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. (ESV)

Romans 13:8 Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. (ESV)

Romans 13:9-10 For the commandments, “You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,” and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” 10 Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (ESV)

Now, what struck me about this is what Paul leaves out. Do you notice it?

You know the 10 commandments have to “halves.”

The God focused—Relationship with God

Exodus 20:2 Recognition that God is God (He is God and we are not)

Exodus 20:3-11

①3 “You shall have no other gods before me.

Worship only God—I’m the one and only—His glory is Primary

②4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Worship nothing but God—make nothing in the image of God, don’t shrink me down

Ⓣ7 “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

Don’t misuse God’s name—don’t attach God’s name to purposes that are not His—don’t try to use God’s name to try to get something you want

Yet the original intent of this command was to prevent people from attaching God’s name to purposes that are not His. God knew his people would misuse His name to advance their own agendas. The danger is that when we misuse the name of God, we are in danger of missing God.

Ⓣ8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. (ESV)

Do nothing—take a day off—focus on Me, trust me to provide for you

The man focused—Relationship with others

Exodus 20:12-17

12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

13 “You shall not murder.

14 “You shall not commit adultery.

15 “You shall not steal.

16 “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.” (ESV)

Why would Paul leave out, don’t “bear false witness against your neighbor”?

Let me take a guess—I’m not sure I can prove this—but it seems to make sense. In the next section—Romans 14:1-15:13—Paul deals with dealing with differences, disagreements.

What is the human tendency when we see someone do something we don’t think “Christians” should do—**we tell others.**

So perhaps, Paul intentionally leaves out the command about “bearing false witness” since it was something that was a problem in the church in Rome, since there seems to be a faction between the Gentile Christians and the Jewish Christians.

So back to Romans 13:9-10

When he states that “the commandments are summarized by “love your neighbor” it reminds us of the Great Commandment.

Look at the Great commandment

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 “Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **might**. (ESV)

Matthew 22:35-40 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” 37 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **mind**. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” (ESV)

Luke 10:25-27 And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” 26 He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” 27 And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **strength** and with all your **mind**, and your neighbor as yourself.” (ESV)

Mark 12:29-31 Jesus answered, “The most important is, ‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your **heart** and with all your **soul** and with all your **mind** and with all your **strength**.’ 31 The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” (ESV)

Mark 12:28-44

28 One of the scribes

came and heard them arguing,
and recognizing that He had answered them well,
asked Him,

This is the ___ question—this time by an individual not a group, and by an individual that see that Jesus has answered wisely—and rather than just “amazement” or anger—is his question sincere?

“What” = What kind? Which is the top one?

29

Jesus answered,

“The foremost is,

2 Points
“our”—emphasizes His covenant relationship
“one”—emphasizes His unity

Call

‘HEAR, O ISRAEL!

Deut 6:4-5

Truth

THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD;

Present indicative w/ imperative force calls for a volitional commitment to God that is personal, comprehensive, and wholehearted

30

Command

AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD

1st Tabler

WITH ALL YOUR HEART, Control center, affection
AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, Self-conscious life, immaterial
AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND, Thought capacity
AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.’ Physical, bodily power

“with” –out of, points to the source
“all” –whole being
“your” is singular—personal

All our being—totality

31

2nd Tabler

“The second is this,

‘YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.’ Lev 19:18

1st command—Primary
2nd command—inseparable from the 1st

There is no other commandment greater than these.”

32

The scribe said to Him,

“Right, Teacher;

You have truly stated that

WOW—finally someone agrees and affirms Jesus teaching

Truth

HE IS ONE,

AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM; Deut 4:35

33

Command

AND TO LOVE HIM

Deut 6:5

WITH ALL THE HEART

AND WITH ALL THE UNDERSTANDING

AND WITH ALL THE STRENGTH,

Agreement, but as Luke 10:29-37 show, the question remaining is, “who is my neighbor?”

AND TO LOVE ONE’S NEIGHBOR AS HIMSELF, Lev 19:18

is much more than all burnt offerings and sacrifices.” I Sam 15:22; Ps 51:16-17; 141:1-2; Jer. 7:22-23; Hos 6:6; Mic 6:6-8

34

When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently,

He said to him,

“You are not far from the kingdom of God.”

Heart was softening to Jesus and His teaching

After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.

1. The Greatest command 12:28-34

Believing in Jesus

GOSPEL READINGS

Mark 7:24—30; Matthew 15:21—28

The goal of a disciple of Jesus is relationship, not perfection.

There is no better example of a person who confused relationship with perfection—and got ahead of himself—than Ben Franklin, America’s icon of the homespun man with a mindspun religion. “It was about this time,” he confesses, “I conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection. I wished to live without committing any fault at any time.”

Franklin listed thirteen virtues and began to tame one moral lion per week, hoping he would master one a week. In a journal he assessed himself every evening, marking a • for each failure in a given virtue. Franklin’s list of moral virtues was this: temperance, silence, order, resolution, frugality, industry, sincerity, justice, moderation, cleanliness, tranquility, chastity, and humility.

After sweating his way through his system for a while, he admits: “I was surprised to find myself so much fuller of faults than I had imagined.” Indeed! When the moral life becomes a system of dots on a chart of moral progress toward perfection, the moral life unravels into externalism and futile attempts to tame wild lions. If a person is telling the truth, what he or she discovers in the human heart is an unconquerable sinful disposition that is in need, not of taming, but of renovation, as Dallas Willard has explained so well. Or, in the words of John Ortberg, we are to “morph indeed”—we discover that we are to be changed from the inside out.

It is this “morph indeed” business that leads Christians to make the claim that discipleship is about relationship and not perfection. Let I be given a D for moral standards, let me quickly add that the relationship will inevitably create good, moral persons. The issue is one of order—and discipleship begins, Jesus says, with relationship.

BELIEVING IS A RELATIONSHIP

Everyone knows that anyone claiming “I am a disciple of Jesus” had better be a good person. In fact, we’d all agree that such a person would have to be extraordinarily good. We might shy away from saying they have to be perfect, but

we might as well admit that inside we are holding any person making such a claim to a pretty lofty standard. But Jesus, so it seems to me, would not have joined us in these thoughts. He thinks the primary point is about “believing.”

According to the Gospel of Mark, the very first expectation of Jesus for a disciple is this: “Repent and *believe* the good news!” To “believe” is to have “faith” and to “trust?” (Each is a translation of the same Hebrew or Greek term.) Faith and trust are what Jesus wants, and these express a relationship to Jesus rather than moral perfection.

Faith can be analyzed theoretically, but it is best understood when it is seen in action in the real world. A good place to begin, therefore, is Jesus’ encounter with the Syro-Phoenician woman. Jesus is “on a vacation” from his ministry demands in Galilee and needs rest. This woman is “on a mission” from her daughter, who is spiritually ill with demons tormenting her and needs help. The mother hears that Jesus is in town, finds him, and disturbs his vacation—and herein lies the gateway to the biblical idea of faith. Jesus at first puts her off, but her faith won’t let go, and Jesus responds to her persistent faith by healing her daughter.

If we describe a disciple as one who believes in Jesus, which this woman does, we also need to remind ourselves that believing is a dimension of love. This is clear if we substitute “trust” for “believing” or “faith?” Love and trust are constant friends. The *Jesus Creed* calls people to love God (by following Jesus) and to love others. To follow Jesus as an act of love means to trust him.

The *Jesus Creed* is not a system for moral improvement like the one used (temporarily) by Ben Franklin. This is not to say that any of Franklin’s virtues is unacceptable to a disciple of Jesus. But, a disciple is someone who engages Jesus as a person by trusting him, and because of that relationship, begins to live out the virtues Jesus talks about. It all begins here, in this order, and if it doesn’t begin here, it doesn’t begin at all.

A leader tries to entrap Jesus on the Law, but He teaches that the Law is fulfilled in love.

A religious leader, who saw how well Jesus answered the Sadducees, asks Jesus a summary question.

12:28-37 Properly directed love fulfills the law.

- a) Setting: Question by a Scribe 12:28
 “What commandment is the foremost of all?”
 What is the most important?

He had been impressed by Jesus’ answer to the previous question and so ventured one of his own. The rabbis counted 613 individual statutes in the law, 365 which were negative and 248 positive. Attempts were made to differentiate between the “heavy,” or “great,” and the “light,” or “little,” commandments. **The rabbis also made attempts to formulate great principles from which the rest of the law could be deduced.** The most famous example comes from Hillel, who when challenged by a Gentile, “Make me a proselyte on condition that you teach me the whole law while I stand on one foot,” replied, “What you hate for yourself, do not do to your neighbor: this is the whole law, the rest is commentary; go and learn” (b *Shabbath* 31a). The question arose out of a works-righteousness understanding of the law and the keeping of its commandments.¹

This teacher is not asking which laws need to be obeyed and which can safely be ignored. He is asking, “What is the fundamental premise of the law on which all the individual commands depend?” Jesus gives an orthodox reply from the daily confession of Israel known as the *Shema*. The confession proclaims that God is the only God, and one is to love him with one’s whole being: heart, soul, mind, and strength. **But one cannot love God in isolation** from one’s other relationships in life. For this reason, Jesus couples the command to love God with the command to love one’s neighbor as oneself (*Lev. 19:18*; cf. *Rom. 13:10*; *15:1 – 2*; *Gal. 5:14*; *James 2:8*).²

Is he sincere?

Mark seems to leave it more neutral, while Matthew includes some indication that this “lawyer” may not be totally sincere.

Matthew 22:34-35 But when the Pharisees heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered themselves together. 35 One of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, (NASB95)

He came with **no apparent hostile or hidden motive** to appraise Jesus’ skill in answering a much-debated subject in scribal circles. Traditionally the scribes spoke of 613 individual commandments of the Mosaic Law—365 negative ones and 248 positive ones. While

¹ *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Pradis, Book Version: 4.0.2

² Garland, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Mark*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 1996, p. 476.

they believed all were binding, they assumed a distinction between weightier and lighter statutes and often attempted to sum up the whole Law in a single unifying command.

In light of this debate, this **Law** teacher **asked** Jesus, **Which** (*poia*, “what kind of”) commandment **is the most important** (*prōtē*, “first”) of them all?³

b) Answer by Jesus 12:29-31

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 “Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one! 5 “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (NASB95)

“LORD” = YHWH –Israel’s God, the God who chose Israel

So YHWH is the God who is and who reveals Himself actively especially to Israel as the powerfully present God who is faithful to His Word (promises)

“our God” = emphasizes His covenant relationship

“LORD is one” = unity

In telling this story only Mark included **Deuteronomy 6:4** here. Its relationship to the words that follow is important. God is to be loved completely and totally (**Mk 12:30**) because he, and he alone, is God and because he has made a covenant of love with his people. In the covenant God gives himself totally in love to his people; therefore he expects his people to give themselves totally (“soul,” “mind,” and “strength”) in love to him.⁴

? 🗨️ How should we define love?

“love” = ἀγαπάω

—especially of love as based on evaluation and choice, a matter of will and action⁵

—**seeking the highest good in the one loved**

—self-sacrificing

“Love, a term almost indefinable, **is unconditional regard for a person that prompts and shapes behaviors in order to help that person to become what God desires.** Love, when working properly, is both emotion and will, affection and action.”⁶

Love is our inner commitment to God that is expressed in all our conduct and relationships.⁷

sn A quotation from Deut 6:4–5. The fourfold reference to different parts of the person says, in effect, that one should love God with all one’s being.

See also

Deuteronomy 11:13-24

13 “It shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, 14 that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil. 15 “He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied. 16 “Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them. 17 “Or the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you. 18 “You shall therefore impress these words of mine on your heart and on your soul; and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. 19 “You shall teach them to your sons, talking of them when you sit in your house and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you rise up. 20 “You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates. 21 so that your days and

³ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor Books: Wheaton, IL

⁴ *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Pradis, Book Version: 4.0.2

⁵ Friberg, T., Friberg, B., & Miller, N. F. 2000. Vol. 4: *Analytical lexicon of the Greek New Testament*. Baker Books: Grand Rapids, Mich.

⁶ Scot McKnight, *The Jesus Creed*, Paraclete Press, Brewster, MA, 2004, p. 8.

⁷ Garland, *NIV Application Commentary, New Testament: Mark*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, © 1996, p. 476.

the days of your sons may be multiplied on the land which the LORD swore to your fathers to give them, as long as the heavens *remain* above the earth. 22 “For if you are careful to keep all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him, 23 then the LORD will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess nations greater and mightier than you. 24 “Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours; your border will be from the wilderness to Lebanon, *and* from the river, the river Euphrates, as far as the western sea. (NASB95)

The command, **Love** (lit., “you shall love”) **the Lord your God** (Deut. 6:5), calls for a volitional commitment to God that is personal, comprehensive, and wholehearted. This is emphasized by the repeated words **with** (*ex*, “out of,” denoting source), **all** (*holēs*, “the whole of”), **your** (sing.) and the various terms relating to the human personality—**heart** (control center; cf. Mark 7:19), **soul** (self-conscious life; cf. 8:35-36), **mind** (thought capacity), and **strength** (bodily powers). The Hebrew text does not mention “mind”; the Septuagint omits “heart”; but Jesus included both terms, stressing the comprehensive nature of the command (cf. 12:33; Matt. 22:37; Luke 10:27).⁸

Mark 12:30

AND YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD

WITH ALL YOUR HEART,	Control center—affections
AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL,	Self-conscious life
AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND,	Thought capacity
AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH.’	Bodily power

Deuteronomy 6:5 “You shall love the LORD your God
with all your heart
and with all your soul
and with all your might. (NASB95)

LXX	mind, soul, strength
Hebrew (MT)	heart = considered the seat of the mind —volition and intellect soul = being (Hebrews saw “soul” as the real self) strength = physical (body)

Matthew	heart, soul, mind
Mark	heart, soul, mind, strength
Luke	heart, soul, strength, mind

It is not possible here to engage in a full discussion of the textual variants among the Synoptic renditions of the Shema,⁸⁴ but it is worth noting that only Mark cites Deut 6:4 (“Hear, Israel, the LORD our God is one LORD”) and only Mark uses the Greek preposition *ek* (“with”), as does the Septuagint, in rendering “with all your heart,” etc. Matthew and Luke employ *en*, clearly reflecting the Hebrew preposition *b* (*bēt*). On the other hand, Matthew alone limits the list of psychophysical terms to “heart,” “soul,” and “mind” (Gr. *dianoia*, almost always the translation of Heb. *lēb*, “heart,” in the LXX). Matthew appears to distinguish between “heart” and “mind” by viewing “heart” (Gr. *kardía*) as synonymous with love or affection.⁸⁵ This is likely the way Mark and Luke take “heart” as well. They both, however, add to the list “strength” (Gr. *ischus*), a translation of Hebrew *mē’ōd*. The Septuagint also translates the Hebrew noun as “strength” but by a different Greek noun (*dynamis*). A comparison of the order (heart, soul, mind in Matthew; heart, soul, mind, strength in Mark; heart, soul, strength, mind in Luke; heart, soul, strength in the MT; and mind, soul, strength in the

⁸ Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Victor Books: Wheaton, IL

⁸⁴ For detailed discussion see W. Dittmar, *Vetus Testamentum in Novo. Die alttestamentlichen Parallelen des Neuen Testaments* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1903), 50–51.

⁸⁵ BAGD, 404.

MT Masoretic Text

LXX) among the various lists suggests that Mark and Luke add “mind” to the MT/LXX formula whereas Matthew substitutes “mind” for “strength.”

Again it is impossible here to enter the debate about Synoptic traditions,⁸⁶ but several observations may be made about the New Testament use of this Old Testament text and the implications for theology.⁸⁷ First, it is clear that citation is not necessarily synonymous with quotation. Second, the variety of ways in which New Testament authors cited the same Old Testament texts reveals that their concern was not with the letter of the cited passage but with its intent, its fundamental message. Third, in this case, at least, nothing was subtracted from the meaning of the Old Testament passage by the Gospel writers. In fact, Mark and Luke fleshed out the original text by dividing the Hebrew term *leb* into its proper semantic categories of emotion (or feeling) and mind (the intellect). As for Matthew’s use of “mind” for original “strength” or “might,” it is possible, with many scholars, to understand mind as both the formulator and expeditor of action, that is, thought at work.⁸⁸ In any event, all three citations of the Shema agree in demanding that one love God with all his being if he is to claim to be obedient to the first and great commandment.⁹

The fourfold reference to different parts of the person says, in effect, that one should love God with all one’s being.

Leviticus 19:18 ‘You shall not take vengeance, nor bear any grudge against the sons of your people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD. (NASB95)

Jesus redefined the term to mean “anyone with whom we have dealings at all” (cf. [Luke 10:25-27](#)). Mitton, in a most practical application of this verse, remarks that “neighbor” embraces

→ all within our home, those we meet at work, in our church, and in recreations. And more than that: our employer is our neighbor too; so are our work people, all who serve us in shops, the men who empty our dust bins and those who try to keep streets and parks clean. So too are the people of Jamaica, of West Africa, of Kenya, of Germany and of Russia. If we love our neighbors as we love ourselves, we shall want for them the treatment we should want for ourselves, were we in their place. (*Gospel of Mark*, p. 99)¹⁰

Adding “loving others” as part of the command, the creed, show that horizontal relationships are vital to discipleship.

I John 3:14-18 We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He who does not love abides in death. 15 Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him. 16 We know love by this, that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. 17 But whoever has the world’s goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in him? 18 Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

I John 4:8 The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

I John 4:10-12 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. 11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has seen God at any time; if we love one another, God abides in us, and His love is perfected in us.

⁸⁶ Cf. Marshall, *Gospel of Luke*, 443.

⁸⁷ For the principles of interpretation involved in the NT use of the OT in general, cf. O. P. Robertson, “Hermeneutics of Continuity,” and P. D. Feinberg, “Hermeneutics of Discontinuity,” both in *Continuity and Discontinuity: Perspectives on the Relationship between the Old and New Testaments*, ed. J. S. Feinberg (Westchester, Ill.: Crossway, 1988), 89–108 and 109–128, respectively.

⁸⁸ Cf. R. H. Gundry, *The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew’s Gospel* (Leiden: Brill, 1967), 22–23.

⁹Eugene H. Merrill, vol. 4, *Deuteronomy*, electronic ed., Logos Library System; The New American Commentary (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2001, c1994), 165.

¹⁰ *Expositor’s Bible Commentary*, Pradis, Book Version: 4.0.2

1 John 4:20-22 If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. 21 And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also. (NASB95)

The “Great Commandment” is a simple way to summarize our goal, and it is an often repeated command in Scripture— That God be our all in all—in everything we do, think, and say—all our attitudes and actions should reflect our life’s purpose or goal—to love the Lord with all our being and our neighbors as ourselves.

Loving God with all our being—making God the center of our focus—that is active worship.

We must love God and others with all that we are—every part of our being.

Jesus made love the most important thing in life, because “love is the fulfilling of the Law” (Rom. 13:8–10). If we love God, we will experience His love within and will express that love to others. We do not live by rules but by relationships, a loving relationship to God that enables us to have a loving relationship with others.¹¹

Application

? What does this passage—the Great Commandment—teach us about what it takes to be a disciples (Spiritual Formation)?

In relationship to God?

So we are to be yielded completely

No compartments, no rooms kept from God

In relationship to others?

High priority of relationship

Key Point: It’s not about rules, but about relationship!

Not details but commitment

Not duty but delight

1 John 3:11 For this is the message that you have heard from the beginning, that we should love one another. (ESV)

1 John 4:7 Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. (ESV)

Priority of Relationship

With all

With those who disagree

With the weak

Dealing with conflict

Personalities

Background

Expectations

Practices

Opinions

Likes and dislikes

So the call to love even those who disagree must be a result or an outflow of our commitment to the Lord.

How much to do we love the Lord

—that is how much we are to love others.

—that is how much we must be willing to give of ourselves for others

—that is how much we are to be willing to put up with the weak

¹¹ Wiersbe, W. W. 1996, c1989. *The Bible exposition commentary*, Victor Books: Wheaton, Ill.