

CALVARY CHAPEL OF PHILADELPHIA

**CHILDREN'S MINISTRY**

**1ST GRADE**

**TEACHER'S PACKET**

**SUNDAY MORNING**

Study 24

*The Greatest Commandment*



# The Greatest Commandment

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

**Objective** This lesson will show how the Christian life can be summed up by loving the Lord and your neighbor, just as Jesus taught in Mark 12:28-34.

## Key Verses

Mark 12:28-34—Main Teaching Passage

Matthew 22:34-40 (Parallel Passage)

Mark 11:27-12:27 (Context)

Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Leviticus 19:18

1 Samuel 15:22; Psalm 51:16-17

**Memory Verse** - Mark 12:30

"And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment."

## Hook

Review last week's memory verse, Ephesians 4:26.

Have all the students stand up. Tell them that you are going to make some new rules, and if any of them break a rule, they have to sit down. Then make up some silly commands (no coughing, no laughing, you must speak in a funny accent, etc.) Do this until everyone has sat down. Make the rules more difficult if students are not getting eliminated quickly enough.

When we have lots of rules, it can be hard to keep track of them all. Today, Jesus is going to tell us which rule is most important.

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

# BOOK

The day after He cleansed the temple, Jesus went back to Jerusalem and once again entered the temple. While there, the religious leaders began asking Him a series of questions. They were angry that Jesus had so many followers and wanted to defeat Him. In Mark 11:27-12:27, we see that their plan was to trick Him into either admitting that He didn't know an answer or saying something that would make the people angry. They asked him about His authority, heaven, marriage, and taxes, and Jesus gave the perfect response to each question.

Then a scribe asked Jesus another question: Which commandment is the most important one of all? Matthew tells us that this was another test. Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy 6:4-5, which tells us to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. He then added a second commandment, Leviticus 19:18, which commands us to love our neighbor as ourselves. When the scribe heard this answer, he was impressed. He exclaimed that loving God and loving your neighbor is far more important than offering sacrifices. Jesus was pleased with the wisdom of this response and encouraged the scribe that he was not far from the kingdom of God. After that, no one else dared to ask Jesus any more questions. He had proven that He was far too wise to fall for one of the religious leaders' tricks.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

# LOOK

When we think about the Old Testament law, we usually think of the Ten Commandments. However, the Old Testament, and specifically the first five books, contains hundreds of laws that the Israelites had to follow. These laws told them not only how to act, but what animals to sacrifice, how to plant their crops, what they could eat, what they could touch, and much more. Then the Pharisees added more of their own rules, making it difficult to keep track of all these commandments. The Pharisees hoped that, by asking this question, Jesus might treat one part of the law as more important than the rest, and thus make God's law seem unimportant.

Notice something important about Jesus' answer: Jesus in no way denies the importance of any of God's commands. Instead, Jesus gives the heart behind all the laws. Jesus does not put these commands over and against the law. He gives us the two commandments which, if we keep, we are fulfilling the whole law. If a person is loving the Lord with all his heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving his neighbor as himself, he is keeping the whole law.

# LOOK (Continued)

Jesus' answer is one that agrees with the teaching of the Old Testament. In 1 Samuel 15:22, Samuel told Saul that obedience to God is more important than sacrifice. Psalm 51:16-17 says that God desires our hearts more than sacrifices. The point is that following God is not about a list of "dos" and "don'ts." Instead, if we focus on what's most important, all the rest will fall into place. This doesn't mean that God's commands are unimportant, as He gives them to us for a reason. However, if we're loving the Lord with all our being and loving our neighbors as ourselves, we know that we're obeying the rest of God's laws too.

There are many things that Jesus asks us to do or not do. We are supposed to read our Bibles, pray, spread the Gospel, be kind to others, and help those who need it. We are not to be prideful, lie, speak unkindly, fight, or disobey our parents. These are just a few of the many ways we are called to live as Christians. This might sound overwhelming, but we don't need to live in constant fear of accidentally breaking one of God's commands. Instead, all we have to do is love the Lord and love our neighbors. If we do that, everything else will follow. Calling these the greatest commandments doesn't make the rest unimportant, but it gives us perspective on how God wants us to live our lives.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

# TOOK

As a class, memorize Mark 12:30.

Make a list of some of the things Jesus commands us to do or not do. Ask if it is possible to break any of these commands if we are loving the Lord with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and loving our neighbor as ourselves.

**Pray:** Thank the Lord for giving us these commands to help us live for Him. Ask for help in keeping these two commandments.

**Parent Question:** Why does Jesus call Mark 12:30-31 the two most important commandments?

# FURTHER STUDY

## Commentary on Mark 12:28-34 by David Guzik

### 4. ([Mark 12:28-34](#)) Which is the greatest commandment?

Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?” Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the LORD our God, the LORD is one. And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment. And the second, like it, is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no other commandment greater than these.” So the scribe said to Him, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth, for there is one God, and there is no other but He. And to love Him with all the heart, with all the understanding, with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.” Now when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, He said to him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.” But after that no one dared question Him.

a. **Which is the first commandment of all?** With this question, they tested Jesus to see if He would show disregard or neglect for some area of the Law of Moses. Instead of promoting one command over another, Jesus defined the law in its essence: love God with everything you have and love your neighbor as yourself.

b. **Love the LORD your God... love your neighbor as yourself:** In this we see that what God really wants from man is **love**. We can obey God without loving Him, but if we do love Him obedience will follow.

i. Jesus said this was the **first of all the commandments**.

- It is the first commandment in regard to age. Before Adam and Eve had any other command, they were commanded to love the Lord their God who created them.

- It is the first commandment in regard to priority. Every other act of obedience is empty if we do not love God first.

c. **To love Him with all... and to love one’s neighbor as oneself, is more than all the whole burnt offerings and sacrifices:** The scribe’s response to Jesus was right on the mark. It is easy to think that religious ceremony and devotion are more important than love for God and our neighbor, but this isn’t the case. A thousand empty burnt offerings do not mean more to God than a single act of love done in His name.

# FURTHER STUDY

## Commentary on Matthew 22:34-40 by David Guzik

### D. Question from a Scribe.

1. ([Matthew 22:34-36](#)) Question from a lawyer among the Pharisees: which is the greatest commandment?

**But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?"**

a. **When the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered:** Matthew gives us the fascinating scene of the opponents of Jesus working hard to embarrass Him — and working unsuccessfully.

i. "*They came together* probably echoes deliberately the plotting of the heathen against God's anointed in [Psalm 2:2](#)." (France)

b. **Asked Him a question, testing Him:** This question was also planned to trap Jesus. In asking Jesus to choose one **great commandment**, they hoped to make Jesus show neglect for another area of the law.

i. "The Rabbins reckoned up 613 commandments of the law; and distinguished them into the greater and the lesser. These later they thought might be neglected or violated with little or no guilt." (Trapp)

2. ([Matthew 22:37-40](#)) Jesus answers: Loving God and your neighbor.

**Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."**

a. **Jesus said to him:** Perfectly understanding the essence of the law, Jesus had no difficulty answering. Instead of promoting one command over another, Jesus defined the law in its core principles: **love the LORD** with everything you have and **love your neighbor** as yourself.

i. It is clear enough what it means to **love the LORD** with all we are, though it is impossible to do perfectly. But there has been much confusion about what it means to love **your neighbor as yourself**. This doesn't mean that we must love ourselves before we can love anyone else; it means that in the same way we take care of ourselves and are concerned about our own interests, we should take care and have concern for the interests of others.

ii. **The first and great commandment:** "In respect of order, quantity, and dignity." (Trapp)

b. **On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets:** God's moral expectation of man can be briefly and powerfully said in these two sentences. If the life of God is real in our life, it will show by the presence of this love for God and others.

i. "Moses summed up all in the ten commandments, to which, truly interpreted, all the precepts of Scripture are reducible. Christ here brings the ten to two." (Poole)