

FAMILY WORSHIP HELPS

WEEK 42

THIS WEEK'S FOCUS

QUESTION 42: *What is the sum of the Ten Commandments?*

ANSWER: The sum of the Ten Commandments is, To love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves.

MONDAY

Praise: Sing Psalm 119E

Scripture: Read Mark 12:28-34

Key Thought: *The aim of the commandments is love.*

Questions:

- ☞ Do people usually associate “commandments” with “love”?
- ☞ Are the Ten Commandments mostly stated positively (Thou shalt) or negatively (Thou shalt not)? How did Jesus state them?
- ☞ Why do we tend to see the commandments as a burden instead of as a guide for how to love God and one another?
- ☞ When we break God’s commands, who is the supreme object of our love?

Prayer

Notes: Having seen that God at first gave the moral law to man as a rule for his obedience, and then summarized the moral law in the Ten Commandments, we move now to the summary of the law given by Jesus in Mark 12:30-31. Here (as well as in parallel passages in the other gospel accounts) our Lord reduced the whole teaching of the law to two commandments: To love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, and with all our mind; and our neighbor as ourselves. Seen in this light, the Ten Commandments are a prescription for perfect love, both toward God and our fellow man. Most people, when they think of commandments, think in terms of obligations and duties rather than love. This is because sin has so affected our hearts that we see love as a burden, since love involves putting God and others ahead of our own personal needs and desires. This is why the Law as given to Moses was stated in such a way that it was designed to confront the sinful inclinations of our hearts, which are inclined to do what we ought not to do and to leave undone what we should do. The sinful heart of man is naturally inclined to forsake God, worship idols, defame God’s name, break the Sabbath, kill, lust, steal, covet, and lie. To these natural urges, the Law says, “Thou shalt not . . .” Jesus summarized the Ten Commandments, however, not with a negative pro-

hibition, but with a positive imperative: “Love the LORD your God...and love your neighbor. . . .” We are to see the moral law as a blueprint for expressing love toward God and our neighbor. Consequently, when we break God’s commands, we show that the supreme object of our love is self rather than God.



TUESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 119E

Scripture: Read Deuteronomy 6:4-9

Key Thought: *We are to love God above all else.*

Questions:

- ☞ What does it mean to love God?
- ☞ Why should we love God?
- ☞ How are we to love God? What does this mean?
- ☞ Can a sinner love God in this way without being born again? Why?
- ☞ Do you love God above all else?

Prayer

Notes: The first and greatest commandment, according to Jesus, is to “love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.” Love, according to Thomas Watson, “is a holy fire kindled in the affections, whereby a Christian is carried out strongly after God as the supreme good” (commentary on the *Catechism*). It means delighting in an object (in this case, God Himself) and committing oneself totally and completely to the pursuit of it at any cost. We are to delight in God, first, because of His beauty and glory in Himself. There is no more worthy object of love than God, who is perfect in holiness, mercy, goodness, and truth. Second, we are to delight in God in response to His grace toward us. “We love Him because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). This love toward God, according to Jesus, is to be absolute and comprehensive. We are to pursue God’s glory with every part of our being fully engaged to that purpose: heart, soul, mind, and strength. The distinctions between these things are not crystal clear in Scripture, but in general, heart refers to the seat of the will; soul refers to the seat of emotions or passions; mind refers to the thought life; and strength refers to the use of the body. What Jesus is saying is that the moral law requires that all of our decisions, feelings, thoughts, and actions are to be directed completely toward the pursuit of God. Obviously, the ability to love God in this way comes only through the Holy Spirit’s work of grace.



WEDNESDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 119E

Scripture: Read Psalm 119:161-176

Key Thought: *Real love for God bears visible fruit.*

Questions:

- ☪ Does the Bible speak of love as a feeling or an activity?
- ☪ What visible fruits of love for God can you see in the Psalm 119 passage?
- ☪ Are these fruits of love for God visible in your heart and life?

Prayer

Notes: Yesterday a groundwork was laid for talking more specifically about the practical outworking of real love toward God. In the Scriptures, love is never seen as a mere feeling abstracted from real-life application. Genuine biblical love is always evidenced through action. So also, it is not enough merely to profess to love God with our lips, if our lives do not support what we say. In Psalm 119:161-176, no less than fifteen specific evidences (or fruits) of love for God may be identified. See how many you and your children can recognize, and then examine your own lives to see if these fruits can be seen in you. Here are some examples to get you started:

1. Willingness to face persecution (v. 161)
2. Deep joy and delight in the word of God (v. 162)
3. Hatred of wickedness (v. 163)
4. Constant and frequent communion with God (v. 164)



THURSDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 119E

Scripture: Read Matthew 7:12; Luke 10:25-37; Galatians 6:10

Key Thought: *We are to love our neighbor as ourself.*

Questions:

- ☪ According to Jesus, what is the second greatest commandment?
- ☪ Why should we love our neighbor?
- ☪ How are we to love our neighbor? What does this mean?
- ☪ Why did the lawyer in Luke 10 ask Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?"
- ☪ What answer did Jesus give to him? Why did Jesus tell this story?
- ☪ Do you love your neighbor as yourself?

Prayer

Notes: We have noted that the first table of the Law shows us how we are to love God, while the second table shows us our obligation to love our neighbor. This love toward our neighbor is expressed through Moses in a series of prohibitions against abusing our fellow man (do not kill him; do not take his wife; do not steal what is his; do not lie to or about him; do not desire to take what is his). Again, Jesus summarizes these laws with the positive statement: "Love

your neighbor as yourself.” In doing so, He shows us that the Law has not only a negative application, in forbidding certain harmful practices, but also a positive function, in directing us to seek the very best for our neighbor. The lawyer who questioned Jesus in Luke 10 was looking for a loophole that would allow him to choose to show kindness to those that he decided were worthy of his love. Jesus responded with the parable of the Good Samaritan, showing this Jewish lawyer that the command included even those who seemed to be the most unlovable. Who are the Samaritans in your life?



FRIDAY



Praise: Sing Psalm 119E

Scripture: Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-8; John 15:12-14; 1 John 3:16-19

Key Thought: *Real love for others is self-sacrificial.*

Questions:

- ☞ Is love a feeling? How does Paul define love?
- ☞ What specific things does love do?
- ☞ What specific things does love not do?
- ☞ Are you laying aside your desires for the sake of Christ and those you love?

Prayer

Notes: We have seen that the Law of God commands us to love our neighbor “as ourselves.” But our obligation does not stop there. In Christ we are also required to love our neighbor more than ourselves, even being willing to lay down our lives for them. Jesus defined the greatest love as “laying down one’s life for one’s friends.” Of course, Jesus was not just talking, for He went on to powerfully demonstrate this great love on the cross. Citing the example of Jesus, John tells us that we also should be willing to lay down our lives for our brothers. From this we learn that the nature of love is self-sacrifice. The self-sacrificial nature of love is fleshed out in Paul’s famous practical definition of love, found in 1 Corinthians 13. At virtually every point it can be seen that the outward expression of love involves laying aside our own desires for the sake of the object of our love. John says that we ought to love our brothers in this way, “because He laid down His life for us.” In other words, it is not only the example of Jesus, but His powerful presence in the hearts of His disciples, that issues forth in a life that is marked by self-sacrificial love.



Note: Only five lessons per week are included. You are encouraged to lead your family in worship seven days a week. On weekends, you may want to review or build upon the lessons from the previous week, discuss the sermon from Sunday morning, or work on questions from the Catechism or memory verses. These lesson suggestions are intended to provide a simple framework for parents to build upon. You are not limited to this content. The habit of morning and evening family worship is the biblical ideal. We hope you can use these lessons as a starting point for the development of a blessed practice of family worship in your home.