



Shelby Christian Church

CORE 52: NEW LENS - THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

MARK 12:29-31, EXODUS 20 * 9/28/2025

MAIN POINT

What is most important to God?

INTRODUCTION

What are some of the unique or quirky ways you've shown love to someone you are close to (spouse, child, parent, etc.)?

What are some ways you've seen the word "love" used that fall short of the biblical meaning?

How do you respond to this statement: "Our love of God can only be enacted through our care for our neighbor"?

Who is someone in our life that you find difficult to love?

As followers of Christ, one of our lifelong goals is to grow in Christlikeness. This journey of transformation continues throughout our lives. As we learn to reflect Jesus more fully, it's essential that we follow His command to love God and love others. Jesus didn't just teach this—He lived it. To follow Him well means to love well, just as He did.

UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ MARK 12:29-31

Why do you think Jesus emphasizes love as the foundation of the commandments? In what ways do you find it easy or difficult to love God with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength?

How are the first and second commandments connected? How does loving God influence how we love others?

What does it mean to love your neighbor "as yourself" in practical terms? Who is our neighbor?

In Mark 12:29-31, Jesus identifies the two greatest commandments. The first is to love God with all one's heart, soul, mind, and strength, emphasizing complete devotion to Him. The second is to love one's neighbor as oneself, which is inseparably connected to the first. Together, these commandments summarize the essence of God's law, highlighting love as the guiding principle for both our relationship with God and with others.

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ EXODUS 20

How does God introduce Himself before giving the commandments (vv. 1–2)?

Which commandment(s) stand out to you as particularly challenging or convicting?

Why do you think God begins with commands about our relationship with Him before addressing our relationships with others?

How do the commandments reflect God's character and His desire for His people?

What is the connection between obedience to God's commands and the concept of love for Him?

Are there any modern "idols" in your life—things you might be putting before God? How can you address them?

How do the Ten Commandments guide our daily choices, priorities, and attitudes?

How can we rely on God's Spirit to help us obey His commands, rather than depending on our own strength?

Can the ten commandments be summed up by obeying Mark 12:29-31? How?

Exodus 20 records God giving the Ten Commandments to Israel at Mount Sinai. The commandments outline God's expectations for His people, emphasizing the importance of loving and honoring God, as well as living righteously in community. The first four commandments focus on our relationship with God, calling for exclusive devotion, reverence, and obedience. The remaining six commandments guide how we relate to others, promoting justice, respect, and integrity. Together, they reveal God's character and provide a moral and spiritual framework for His people.

APPLICATION

Can you give an example of what it looks like to love God with all your (answer one at a time): Heart, Soul, Mind, Strength/Resources?

Brainstorm together some of the spiritual dangers of loving God with only one or two parts of our person. For example, what spiritual problems could a person encounter if she loved God with her mind but not her heart? Or if he loved God with his resources but not his soul?

Can you give practical examples of interplay between fear, obedience, love, and service in one of your relationships (parent/child, husband/wife)?

If you were asked "are you neighborly?" How would you prove it? Strategize as a group one corporate act of kindness you could do in your community.

PRAYER

COMMENTARY

Mark 12:29-31

Verse 29: "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.'" - Shema: Jesus quotes the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-5), a central declaration of Jewish faith affirming God's oneness. Recognizing God as one underscores exclusive devotion to Him, rejecting idolatry or divided loyalty.

Verse 30: Wholehearted Love: This command calls for total commitment—emotion (heart), will and life (soul), intellect (mind), and energy (strength). Essence of Faith: True obedience is rooted in love, not merely ritual or external compliance.

Verse 31: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” - Connection to the First Commandment: Loving God naturally flows into loving others; the two are inseparable. Practical Ethics: Jesus elevates relational love as central to moral and spiritual life. Caring for others reflects one’s love for God. Balance: Love is not only inward or spiritual; it is expressed outwardly in relationships and actions.

Exodus 20

Introduction (vv. 1–2) - God identifies Himself as the one who delivered Israel from Egypt. His authority is rooted in His past actions and covenant relationship with His people. Obedience flows from God’s grace and demonstrates faithfulness.

First Four Commandments (vv. 3–11) – Relationship with God - No other gods (v. 3): Exclusive devotion to God, rejecting idolatry. No idols (v. 4–6): Worship must be directed to God alone; false images are forbidden. Do not misuse God’s name (v. 7): God’s name represents His character and authority; reverence is required.

Remember the Sabbath (v. 8–11): A day set apart to rest and honor God, reflecting trust in Him and His provision.

Last Six Commandments (vv. 12–17) – Relationship with Others - Honor parents (v. 12): Respect for authority and family structure. Do not murder, commit adultery, steal, lie, covet (vv. 13–17): Guidelines for ethical and loving behavior toward others. Significance: These commandments promote justice, integrity, and community well-being, reflecting God’s character in social life.