

Love God and Love Others

By Terri Stovall

Assignment One

Read the comments related to Mark 12:28 in the section **It's in the Book**. Prepare to share your answers to the following questions: What question did the scribe ask Jesus? Why is it so important to know which commandment is the greatest?

Assignment Two

Read the comments related to Mark 12:29-30 in the section **It's in the Book**. Then read Deuteronomy 6:4-7. Prepare to share your answers to the following question: When and how are parents to teach their children this "first commandment"?

Assignment Three

Read the comments related to Mark 12:31 in the section **It's in the Book**. Then read Leviticus 19:10-18. Prepare to share a list of ways we are to treat people as found in these verses.

Scripture to Memorize

"Jesus answered, 'The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 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.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.'" Mark 12:29-31

Session Goal

Consistent with God's Word and in the power of the Holy Spirit—by the end of this session, disciples will know and understand the two commandments that guide everything they do, every day of their lives.

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She is the coauthor of *Women Leading Women: The Biblical Model for the Church* and a contributing author of *The Teaching Ministry of the Church* and *The Christian Homemaker's Handbook*. Her passion is to equip and enable women to reach women and families for Christ. She and her husband Jay currently live in Arlington, Texas, and enjoy motorcycling as well as traveling the country riding roller coasters.

It's in the Book

30 minutes

Real-Life Scenario

Julie is involved in a small group at church. She goes to every seminar, participates in every mission trip, checks off on a chart her daily Bible reading and is on a leadership team, but she still feels like she is not yet good enough as a Christian and wonders what else she can do. What is the most important thing Julie can do as a follower of Jesus? Why is this so important?

Read Mark 12:28-31 out loud.

Studying the Passage

In the previous lesson we answered the question: "What is a disciple?" We learned that a disciple is someone who denies himself, takes up his cross daily and follows Jesus. Now that we know what a disciple is, let's discover what a disciple is supposed to do.

Verse 28. one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing. Let's set the stage and context for this passage. In Mark 12 we find Jesus confronted by some of the Pharisees, Sadducees and Herodians. These were influential groups in the political and religious arenas of that time. They had been sent to ask Jesus questions to try to trap Him. After Jesus answered several of their questions, a scribe joined the group. A scribe also had influence during those days, primarily as a one who copied, interpreted and taught the law. **What commandment is the foremost of all?** The scribe recognized that Jesus had answered them well, so he asked a sincere question.

The rabbis counted 613 individual laws. Some were negative, or things not to do; others were positive, or things to do. The Jews attempted to differentiate between the laws. They felt some were more significant than others, and breaking the more serious laws had harsher penalties than the lesser laws. The Jews worked hard to keep the laws, especially the more significant ones, to show their love and obedience to God. The scribe appears to be asking sincerely what is the greatest of all the laws to be obeyed.

Assignment One Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week may now share answers to the following questions: What question did the scribe ask Jesus? Why is it so important to know which commandment is the greatest?

Studying the Passage

Verse 29. The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Jesus answered by using two familiar Old Testament passages, the first being Deuteronomy 6:4-5. Known as the Shema, meaning "to hear" in Hebrew, Jews would recite this passage every morning and evening as a confession of faith. The first part, "The Lord our God, the Lord is one," declares that He alone is God and He is our God. This declaration was so important to the Jews that it guided their daily lives.

Assignment Two Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment One** during the week should now read aloud Deuteronomy 6:4-7 and then share answers to the following question: When and how are parents to teach their children this "first commandment"?

Verse 30. you shall love the Lord your God. Because God is God alone and because of the relationship He has with us, the only response is to love Him and give ourselves totally in love to Him. Four times the word “all” is used, emphasizing that He asks for everything that makes up who we are. The first thing you are to do as a disciple is to love Him with all your:

Heart - speaking to your emotions

Soul - speaking to your spirit and your inner person (what you are committed to)

Mind - speaking to your intelligence and thoughts (what you think about and know)

Strength—speaking to your physical body (how you live, act and appear to others)

On Your Own

Consider all four areas mentioned in verse 30. For each area, describe what it would look like to love God with *all* of that area. After a few minutes, have everyone in the group share. What does it look like to love the Lord your God with all your: Heart? Soul? Mind? Strength?

Studying the Passage

Verse 31. You shall love your neighbor. The scribe asked about the greatest commandment of all, but Jesus gave him two commandments as His answer. Again, He referenced a familiar Old Testament passage in Leviticus 19:18.

Read Leviticus 19:18 out loud.

Assignment Three Feedback

The person who completed **Assignment Three** during the week can now report on how we are to treat our neighbor based on Leviticus 19:11-18.

Discussion Question

Much of what is written in Leviticus is written in the negative, detailing what we are not to do. What can we do that shows positively that we love our neighbor?

Studying the Passage, Mark 12

Verse 31. There is no other commandment greater than these. Jesus intended for the first and second greatest commandments to go hand in hand. Matthew records that Jesus said loving God with our whole being is the “great and first commandment” (Matthew 22:38). Then, He immediately says, “And a second is like it” (Matthew 22:39). In order to fulfill the greatest commandment to love God completely, we cannot help but love people. This is the second thing we are to do as disciples.

Read Mark 12:32-34 out loud.

Verse 32. right, Teacher. Remember the scribe who asked the question? He clearly reiterates and affirms Jesus’ answer.

Verse 33. much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. He revealed that he truly understood when he said that to follow these two commands are more important than

burnt offerings and sacrifices. In other words, the commandments were more than going through all the rituals of worship.

Believers today can go through the motions of attending church, praying, reading the Bible and even being involved in leadership at church, but if we do not love God with our whole being and also love the people around us, we come up short.

You are a disciple who has chosen to deny yourself, take up your cross and follow Him. Every day, as a disciple, God has commanded you to do two things. First, love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. Second, because you love God with your whole being, you love your neighbor as yourself.

Heart and Hands

8 minutes

Read again **the Real-Life Scenario** near the beginning of the lesson. Consider whether your answers have changed during the session

Be silent for two or three minutes. Thank Jesus for His sacrifice and for the gospel. Adore Him for His glorious reign on the throne of heaven. Then ask the Holy Spirit to reveal to you:

1. A way the Scriptures you studied today will change your heart for the glory of Christ.
2. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to stop doing something for the glory of Christ.
3. Or a way those Scriptures will lead you to do something for the glory of Christ.

Write what the Spirit reveals to you below and then be ready to share what you have written with the group.

Since Last Week

5 minutes

Give the group this update: "In our last session I made a commitment to. . . . I want to let you know how that turned out. On that same issue I think the Holy Spirit now is leading me to . . ."

Grace-Filled Accountability

5 minutes

Disciples can agree on a way to hold one another accountable. Confessing faults with other disciples allows them to offer grace, insights, and encouragement. Even more important is confession to Christ, the source of true forgiveness and cleansing.

Planning for Evangelism, Missions, and Service

5 minutes

Groups of disciples always are making preparations for evangelism, missions, and service. Use these minutes to work on the next plan.

Prayer

7 minutes

Every disciple will pray aloud, offering praise to Jesus, thanking Him specifically for His gracious acts, making heartfelt confession, committing to actions flowing from the Bible study, praying toward evangelism locally and globally, and interceding for others as prompted by the Holy Spirit.

At Home: Nail It Down

This week we have tried to answer the question: “What is a disciple to do?” In Mark 12:29-30, Jesus tells us that a life of discipleship really comes down to two things.

The first thing you are to do is to love God with every ounce of your being: your heart, your soul, your mind and your strength. These four areas cover emotions, the inner person, intelligence, thoughts and our bodies. God asks for every part of us.

The second thing we are to do is to love people. If we fulfill the first commandment, we will love others. You cannot truly do one without the other.

These two commands should be the guiding force over everything you do, every day, as you continue to follow Jesus.

The scribe who asked the question seemed to hit the nail on the head when he declared that doing these two things is more important than all the rituals of worship and religion. Not that we stop acts of Christian service, but if we don't do them out of a love for God and a love for people, then we are simply going through the motions.

How are you doing as a disciple? Ask yourself three questions.

1. Is there an area of my life—heart, soul, mind, or strength—with which I do not love God completely?
2. How am I showing my neighbor that I love them as God commanded?
3. Am I keeping these two commandments a priority or have I let all the good I do at church become more important?

Follow up Question

What guides what you do every day as a disciple of Jesus?

The Making Disciples curriculum is a gift from Southwestern Seminary to those who, for the glory of the Father and in the power of the Spirit, will spend a lifetime embracing the full supremacy of the Son, responding to His kingly reign in all of life, inviting Christ to live His life through them, and joining Him in making disciples among all peoples.