



WEEK ONE: LOVE GOD

By Dan Roseman
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God showed His love for us by saving us—we show our love for Him through our actions toward Him and others. The most important thing God said we could ever do is to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. What does that look like as we respond to God? As we respond to others?

Where Am I Today?

- 1) Suppose someone asked you: “What is the one thing I could do for you that would show you most clearly how much I love you?” What would your answer be?

Into the Bible

- 2) People asked Jesus questions all the time. Sometimes they asked because they wanted to learn, sometimes they asked so they could seem smart, and other times they asked questions to try to trick Jesus. In Matthew 22, religious leaders tried to trick Jesus three times, and failed. They were trying to be Biblically accurate, yet they missed the point of the Bible. Read the following passages. According to Jesus, what is the point of the Bible? Where have you tried to be true to the Bible, but entirely missed the point?
 - a. **Matthew 22:34-37**
 - b. **Luke 24:27, 44-47**

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- 3) Jesus' answer to the question in Matthew 22 was surprising. The Pharisees were probably expecting Him to name one of the Ten Commandments. Instead, He quoted from the *Shema* in Deuteronomy 6. This is a passage from the Old Testament that Jews were supposed to repeat twice a day. Read the following passages where the Bible shows how to love God. What does a life of loving God look like, according to these passages?
- a. **Deuteronomy 6:4-9**
 - b. **Romans 14:17-18**
 - c. **Philippians 4:14-18**
 - d. **Colossians 1:9-12**
 - e. **1 Thessalonians 4:1-5**
 - f. **1 Timothy 2:1-4**
 - g. **Hebrews 13:16**

How Does This Apply?

- 4) In the weekend message, Mike Madding talked about four specific ways that we can love God with all that we have. They included:
- a. Love God with the first day of your week—honor the Sabbath.
 - b. Love God with the first hour of each day—connect with God daily by reading your Bible.
 - c. Love God with the first of your pay—where your treasure is, your heart will be also. Use your possessions for God's kingdom.
 - d. Love God by seeking Him first—abide in the vine.

This list is not exhaustive. It's impossible to make a definitive list on exactly how to love God. Discuss with your Life Group how you can apply the four ways to love God above, as well as any other Biblical way to love God. What would that look like?

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Digging Deeper: Going Further on Your Own

- 5) It's impossible to love God without knowing that He loved us first. If you try to live an obedient life that's good enough for God to love you and be pleased with you, you're fighting a losing battle. However, if you believe that, in Christ, God is already *pleased* with you, you can live a life that pleases God in faith.

As an example, when Jesus was baptized, God the Father spoke from heaven that He was pleased with Him. At this point in Jesus' life, He had never preached a message, performed a miracle, or publicly outwitted a religious jerk. Yet because of God's pleasure and His desire to delight the Father, Jesus lived the most fruitful life of ministry in the history of the world. If you are a Christian, Jesus' perfect life has been credited to you. God is pleased with you. Christians are created *for* good works, not *by* good works. How does this knowledge free you to live a life that's pleasing to God, rather than heaping a burden on you? Check out the following verses:

Matthew 3:17

Mark 1:11

Romans 5:6-8

Hebrews 11:6

Matthew 11:28-30

Luke 3:22

Ephesians 2:8-10