

# LOVE GOD WITH YOUR WHOLE HEART

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## The Great Commandment

According to the Law of Moses, daily life was to be orchestrated under the scrutiny of 613 specific commandments. Not only to memorize them, but to keep them was a daunting task!

So it should come as no surprise that Jesus was once asked to single out the most important commandment of them all. And this He did with ease. The command that stood head-and-shoulders above the rest, and from which all the others trickled down was this:

*Mark 12:30* *You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.*

The Amplified Bible says, “with your whole heart.”

Some of us who are here today are just getting to know God or wanting to discover how to know Him. But most of us are here today because we love God. Still, it is fair to ask, Do you love Him with your *whole* heart? With everything that is within you?

Do you know that the Bible gives us a way to know if our whole heart is engaged in this relationship with God or not; and if not, how to get our whole heart engaged?

## The Great Commisery

*James 1:2* *Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, <sup>3</sup> because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. <sup>4</sup> Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.*

We all “face trials of many kinds.” Why don’t we also “consider it pure joy”? The answer is because we don’t have the necessary wisdom to recognize God’s hand in our circumstances. When you know that God’s goodness is in control of your life, you will consider it pure joy, regardless of the circumstances.

## The Fount of Wisdom

Where can we get the necessary wisdom? James answers our thought:

*James 1:5* *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him.*

God’s readiness and inclination to give to us what we need are awesome indeed. The we might imagine we will get a scolding for our lack of understanding, we will never get one from God! He doesn’t find fault, He just supplies our need, if we ask Him. There is one caveat though...

## One Caveat

*James 1:6* But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does.

The Amplified Bible says, “no hesitating, no doubting.”

## Believe What?

What must we believe and not doubt to avoid crashing on the shores of life? As the writer of the letter to the Hebrews advises:

*“Anyone who comes to [God in prayer] must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him.”* (Hebrews 11:6)

A double-minded man, or woman, (who doubts that God exists and that He supplies our needs in answer to prayer) is unstable in *all* that he does: overworking to get ahead, rushing from each task to the next, exasperated by every interruption or delay of his pursuit, using people instead of enjoying and serving them. (Whew! I’m exhausted just thinking about it!) Have you known a guy or a gal like that? Is that you?

## Double Your Pleasure

In the 1996 movie, *Multiplicity*, Doug Kinney could use a miracle. A devoted husband, father and businessman, Doug is married to an adoring wife, and a demanding job, both of which leave him little time to enjoy either. With too much to do and not nearly enough time in which to do it in, Doug is ready to snap until he meets world-renowned geneticist Dr. Owen Leeds who believes in “Better living through cloning.” He offers Doug the chance to get control of his life by becoming the ultimate split personality. “Sometimes to get more out of life, you have to make more of yourself,” Doug reasons. If life was complicated with just one Doug, wait until he multiplies. Doug almost loses his wife-- to himself!

Double-mindedness is NOT the usual wrestling match of uncertainty and hope. “Is this from God or is it *just me*?” “Is this *really* the right thing to do?” Double-mindedness is the abject disbelief that prayer has any practical value, or that God cares enough to listen and respond. Double-mindedness is a compartmentalization of the mind’s feelings and perceptions.

At its worst, it results in a dual or multiple lifestyle, where the two paths rarely cross, what psychologists call “dissociative personalities.” In its more common form it is known to us as “emotional blind spots” or preoccupation or “What’s up with him?!” (a typical response to sudden, inappropriate behavior).

## What Causes Double-mindedness?

There are three major causes of double-mindedness: trauma [especially from early childhood, because we tend to develop better coping skills as we grow if we have not been traumatized as a child] (including abuse, injury, inadequacy, grief), guilt (often inappropriately associated with traumatic experiences, but also appropriately connected with poor or wrong choices), which leads us to hide our feelings from others, and overload (juggling too many things), which stretches us to the limits of our emotional capacities and leads us to flee from others.

## Road to Recovery

Here's how to recover from double-mindedness and get your whole heart engaged:

*Psalms 86:11* *Teach me Your way, LORD, and I will live by Your truth. Give me an undivided mind to fear Your name.* (Holman Christian Standard Bible)

To "fear" His name means to respect Him, to honor Him, and to worship Him. How do we do that? Two ways:

### 1. Learn God's way (His purpose)

Insistently doing things "our way" is what leads to double-mindedness. Doing things "God's way" leads to single-mindedness.

*Isaiah 55:8* *"My thoughts are completely different from yours," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine."*

If His ways are beyond our imagination, then we're going to need some help to learn them. The Helpers God has given are His Word and His Spirit.

Familiarity with the Bible opens our understanding of God's ways. We see them in His dealings with Israel in the Old Testament, and in the life of Jesus and the teachings of the apostles in the New Testament.

And the more familiar we become with the text of the Bible, the more clearly we can recognize the voice of the Holy Spirit in our lives. For the Spirit and the Word agree. The written Word was the product of the Holy Spirit moving the hearts and minds of the godly authors.

### 2. Live by God's truth (His teachings)

The second way to honor God with a single mind or united heart is to live by His truth. Jesus said, *"Your Word is truth."* (John 17:

Intellectual familiarity with the Bible is only part of the process.

*James 1:22* *Remember, it is a message to obey, not just to listen to. If you don't obey, you are only fooling yourself.*

*23* *For is you just listen and don't obey, it is like looking at your face in a mirror but doing nothing to improve your appearance.*

Applying God's Word to our daily thoughts, decisions, actions, and relationships is what following Jesus is all about. And it's the road to recovering a whole heart.

Two ways, one Book!

## Prayer of a God-Seeker

With everything else that you seek to accomplish in your life you can also seek to honor God. But not in a separate religious compartment, as on Sunday mornings only. Rather, as an umbrella over all that you do, seek to honor the Lord.

*1 Corinthians 10:31* **Whatever you do, you must do all for the glory of God.**

Would you pray this prayer with me?

*“Give me a heart that doesn't want anything more than to worship you.”* (New International Reader's Version)