



The Christian life can be expressed in three loves: the love of God, the love of self, and the love of others. Everything we do is born out of love.

The people of Jesus' day believed in the law of God as the expression of the life God wants us to live. So it is that one day, the Jewish religious leaders asked Jesus which commandment was the greatest. Rather than pointing to laws referring to our actions, Jesus spoke of laws of love.

The Greatest Commandment  
Matthew 22:34-40

**34** When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, **35** and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. **36** "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?"

**37** He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' **38** This is the greatest and first commandment.

**39** And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

### The Love of God

The love of God is the starting point of our spiritual journey. Everything we do should be centered in this one great love.

### The Love of Self

Because God loves us, we must learn to love ourselves. Self-hatred gets us nowhere. If God is gracious to us, so we should be gracious to ourselves

### The Love of Others

Note the connection between love of self and love of others. As we learn to be gracious to ourselves, we will learn to be kind to others as well.

### **Providence: the power by which God orders the circumstances of our lives.**

One of the ways we can love God is by recognizing God's providence. If we open ourselves to God, the Spirit of God will often illuminate us to God's activity. Soon, we can see the hand of God at work in every area of our lives.

## APPLICATION *for personal growth:*



The keeping of a **journal** whether paper or electronic, can help us align ourselves with God's purposes. As we compile entries, we can begin to chart where we are headed. Our recognition of God's work can become one of the ways we worship God and grow in our assurance of God's love for us.

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## SCRIPTURE *for further study*

Read **1 Corinthians 13** for a biblical definition of love. Notice that love is expressed not in our feelings but in our actions.

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## QUESTIONS *for discussion*

Are you more prone to be hard on yourself or gracious to yourself?

Have you ever felt that God was ordering the circumstances of your life?

Why do you think God loves human beings so much?



**Your Notes** *what God is saying to you:*

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