

In the gospels, there is a situation where Jesus was asked, “What is the greatest commandment?” For any of us with even a little church background, whenever we think about commandments, our mind probably goes to the number ten. There are ten commandments, and we should obey them. However, for a Jewish person in the days of Jesus, the number would not be 10. Rather, prioritizing the do’s (248 positive commandments) from the do not’s (365 negative commandments) of the Pentateuch was seemingly an overwhelming task. A man comes to Jesus and wants to know, “How do I boil this down to just ONE?”

As you and your group gather, unlike any other time, I believe this is an excellent time to ask ourselves, personally and collaboratively: How do I summarize what God expects of me to one word? And/or how do we condense God’s call to us as a group to one word? Over the next few days, we will look at the answer Jesus gives and how it is interconnected.

Jesus’s reply drives the idea of ONE home even more. He says, “Hear O Israel, the LORD, our God, is ONE.” Jesus is quoting the Old Testament. However, he does not just quote a random verse about what you could eat or should not wear. He is quoting from the unifying verse of the Jewish people. It is called the “Shema.” Every Jewish person would know this ONE command...and that ONE command is rooted in God being ONE. The ONE command that every Jewish person would know is bound up in God’s ONEness.

What does that mean? Does it say that God is ONE and family is TWO and sports are THREE and so on?

Not exactly. The Jewish understanding of God’s ONEness is rooted in his priority. Jesus is not saying that God is at the top of your list; He is saying that God’s place is to give perspective to everything on your list. Every other thing in our lives finds its eternal significance, meaning, and purpose when God is its foundation. On top of that, God - the Son-God in the Flesh- is speaking all of these things directly to the man who is asking... and to us.

Today, we will look at how God’s word shows us what it means for our lives to line up with His direction (One Goal) through His Son (One Way).

What do you think it means for God to have priority in your life?

If someone were to look at the way you live, what things would they see to cause them to believe God is a priority?

ONE

ONE church . ONE camp . ONE summer

Yesterday, we introduced the “Great Commandment”. As we learned, Jesus is quoting from the Old Testament, where the Jewish people were told to ‘love God with their heart, their soul, and their mind.’ However, by using this familiar passage, He does not have to go further because these words are to be written in their hearts. For us, it is essential to think about the directions God gives to the children of Israel.

- Recite them to your children
- Talk about them at home and on the way
- Think about them when you get up and when you rise

These parenting responsibilities seem very important. Think about the different ways people learn. Some learn by listening. Some learn by writing things down. Others learn by repeating words over and over and over and over. Regardless of the preferred learning method, it is critical that everyone learn how to fully love God. God told the children of Israel, “Be devoted to me in EVERY way.”

In Mark’s account of the story, the Jewish man says to Jesus, “you are right, teacher...”(duh-of course Jesus is right). He then repeats everything Christ has said. And Jesus tells him, “You are not far from the kingdom of God.”

That sounds good, right? It is, for all who have believed! But it is also a little sad. because it points out that some may be not far from the Kingdom; but nevertheless, still not miss it. One may know every answer, but still miss Jesus. For us to live in a way that honors God truly, we can only do that through Jesus. Jesus is saying to us:

- Talk about me when you get up and when you go to bed.
- Think about me when you come and when you go.
- I want to be what is on your mind when you wake up and when you go to bed.

Is this anything like your relationship with Jesus?

What are the ways that you are growing in your relationship with Jesus?

The Old Testament mentions ‘frontlets’. They were tied reminders... whenever you saw them, they served as an alarm to ‘love the LORD your God with all of your heart, soul, and mind.’

What reminders do you have to do the same?

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Love the LORD your God with all of your heart, with all your soul, with all of your mind, and with all your strength...

As a parent of four, I am always having conversations with my kids about portions during meal time.

“How much squash do you want?” To which I hear, “None(Nice try...)”

“Do you want more chicken?”, “A little.”

“How much of the cake do you want?”, “All of it.”

I am reminded of this when I read the Great Commandment. The man asks Jesus how best to obey God and Christ replies, “Love Him with all of you.”

Let us look at the words:

- **Heart:** For us, the heart is what thumps in our chest. For the world where Jesus is teaching, used the word ‘heart’ to reference the center of human life. Jesus wants us to love God as if He is the center of our existence.
- **Soul:** The word for soul is tied to hunger or craving. Jesus tells the man to love God as if He hungers after Him. Think about this when we consider several other statements Jesus. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness will be filled. Jesus says He himself is the Bread of life. A devotion to God will be a craving for God. The word for soul is tied to hunger or craving. Jesus tells the man to love God as if He hungers after Him. Think about this when we consider other things Jesus says. Those who hunger and thirst for righteousness³ will be filled. Jesus says He himself is the ²Bread of life. A devotion to God will be a craving for God.
- **Mind:** This word conveys to us that our relationship with God is not only an emotional experience. It means we intellectually interact with God and the truths He provides for us. This is Scripture tells us to Hide his words in our hearts and to ‘set our minds on things above
- **Strength:** We will look at this more tomorrow because it is tied to ‘loving our neighbor as ourselves.’ However, for the person hearing Jesus, it is the outward, active expression of a love for God affecting you on the inside.

When we ask God what He wants, He tells us He does not want a faith that is categorized and filed in different places.

Jesus says, “All of you.” As your week with DYC continues, how have you evaluated your ‘centering your life’ around God?

When you hear ‘craving God,’ do you believe it is a good way to explain the way you interact with Him? How so?

In what ways do you hide his word in your heart?

ONE

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Love your neighbor as you love yourself.

I remember sitting in a seminary classroom where a professor explained Jesus's interpretation of the Shema. He said the Great Commandment is 'the love of God' -love Him with all that is inside of you. He then explained that 'loving your neighbor as yourself' is the love of man for God's sake.

This portion of the Great Commandment is taken from Leviticus 19:18. As with when Jesus quotes the Shema, we see Him taking a piece of passage that has a significant, understood meaning as His reference. In verse 17 of Leviticus, God talks about 'neighbor hate' and how terrible it is. Moses even tells us it is incredibly important, to be frank, and have hard conversations so that we don't live in known sin (harboring animosity) while our neighbor lives in an unknown sin.

God cares for people. Jesus- the promised Messiah- is telling those who follow after Him to use outward, active lives (as in 'loving Him with all of your strength) to combat holding grudges and hostility. Why? Ultimately, God has every right to punish our sin and is just in doing so; however, He does not. He points out our sin for us to receive the forgiveness found in the Messiah.

As we close out our week, are there people in your church group you need to forgive? If so, why not have those conversations and honor God in this season?

In what ways are you seeking to **love** and **care** for those who God loves by using your **time**, **talent**, and **treasures** to show them Jesus?

How can your group choose to show Jesus to those who are far from Him?

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