

What's So Great About Following Jesus? - The Great Commandment
Lynn Haven UMC
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Introduction

⁶“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” ³⁷Jesus replied: “ ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ ³⁸This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ ⁴⁰All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:36-40 NIV)

The Great Commandment is just that. It's not an option or something we choose to do if things are going well and we feel like it. If we truly desire to live a Christ-like life...

We are to love God.

We are to love others.

Every day.

Digging Deeper

Love God.

‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’

- How can you ensure that you are loving the Lord your God fully? What can you do every day to put Him in the driver's seat of your life?
- 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV) tells us “But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect,” Have you ever been challenged or ridiculed when proclaiming your love for God? How did that make you feel and how did you respond?

Love others.

Do we really love others? Think about it for a minute. Do we really even see each other? We maneuver through our lives on autopilot, oftentimes unaware of the people standing right next to us. If you've seen the movie “Avatar”, you might recall a scene in which the leading lady, Neytiri, says to her love interest, Jake, “I see you.” It is a powerful moment because she means so much more than physically seeing him. She is telling Jake that she sees beyond his physical exterior and into who he really is on the inside. What a world it would be if we all really took the time to SEE each other!

- Discuss ways you could place more emphasis on really seeing and interacting with people whom you might not ordinarily stop to take notice of due to a busy schedule or introversion.

It's not easy to love others when they are not acting in ways that are lovable. But those are usually the people who need love the most. Have you ever heard the expression “hurt people hurt people”?

- Share an experience you have had dealing with someone who was difficult to love and how you overcame that by using God's love for us as your behavior model?

It can also be difficult to love people who are not in our same demographic. God doesn't want us only to love those who look, think and feel exactly like we do. He wants us to love EVERYONE.

- How much time do you spend interacting with people of a different age, ethnicity, social status or religious belief? If your answer is very little, or none at all, what are some things you can do to create this kind of diversity in your life?

Conclusion

As Christians, loving God should be the easiest thing to do if we truly trust Him and believe His word and promises for us. And if we love Him in this way, by natural progression our God-filled hearts and minds will force our bodies to move in the direction of loving His people in the way He intends.