

“The First and Great Commandment”

I. Introduction

A. Jesus gave a succinct answer to the question, “which is the greatest commandment in the law?” Consider some things Scripture teaches related to what Jesus called “the first and great commandment.” **Matthew 22:36-38**

II. “Because He First He Loved Us”

A. The love we’re to have for God is rooted in the love He’s shown us. While surrendering our will to God’s will is commanded, the instruction He gives concerning this is built on the foundation of *His* love for *us*. **1 John 4:19; Romans 12:1**

III. The Depth of God’s Love

A. The fact that “we love Him because He first loved us” demonstrates how the things Scripture teaches about God’s love need to be allowed to get into our hearts, a doing so strengthens *our* love for *Him*. Loving Him as we should is motivated by thinking of the lengths to which He’s gone to pay the debt we cannot pay. **1 John 4:8-10; Romans 5:6-8**

IV. The Appropriate Response

A. While we could never fully repay God for all He’s done for us, what we *can* do in response to His love is to give our lives to the One who gave His Son for us. This is really the only appropriate way to respond to such rich love as what God’s shown us. **Romans 12:1-2; Song 189, v. 4; 2 Corinthians 5:15**

V. The Mindset of Love for God

A. If we love God as we should, we’ll share the aim in life that Paul expressed. Love for God leads one to truly surrender all to Him, allowing Him to mold us and make us according to *His* will. **2 Corinthians 5:9; Philippians 1:21; James 1:21** (cf. *Songs 128, 146, 332*)

VI. The Proof of Love for God

A. While love for God begins in the heart, genuine love for God will be proven through our actions. More specifically, it will be proven by keeping His commandments. **John 14:15; 1 John 5:3**

VII. Conclusion

A. While “the first and great commandment” is well-known in the religious world, Scripture shows us that we cannot turn this commandment into whatever we want it to be. Genuine love for God involves heeding all that He commands us as we truly surrender our will to His. While this lifestyle demands commitment and hard work, it’s the only appropriate way to respond to the love He’s shown us. **Matthew 22:36-38**