

“What Jesus Really Taught about Loving God”

TODAY: TWO INTERACTIONS THAT OCCURRED ABOUT THE SAME TIME...

Mark 12:13-17 And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." And they brought one. And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said to him, "Caesar's." Jesus said to them, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." And they marveled at him. A "Test Question" jointly asked (by Pharisees and Herodians!) and "marvelously" answered.

Mark 12:28-34 And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions. An honest question, it seems, asked by a scribe acting on his own behalf [vs. 34 "Jesus saw that he answered wisely..." "You are not far from the kingdom of God"])

THE STARTING LINE: Jesus taught that there are two commandments greater and more important than all the others.

NOTES:

1. It is our love for God that must be whole-hearted.

The simplest way to understand these four "arenas" "Soul, mind and strength" explain "heart" => heart = sum total of all that we love and all that we hate and the whole life is involved in that.

A significant point: we are to love God *more* than we love any people. (Why? Our first love always impacts our other loves. *Don't we all know people whose love for God has been impacted by their marriage and/or their parenting?* For good or for bad!)

NOW WE TIE THESE TWO INTERACTIONS TOGETHER:
 "the things that are Caesar's" vs. "the things that are God's"

2. Our obligation to love God whole-heartedly is based on the issue of ownership.

Whose heart is it anyway? The image of God and the name of God have both been imprinted on "your heart." *Heart, soul, mind and strength:* all four have been given to you by God on purpose.

1 Chronicles 29:14 "But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you."

1 Corinthians 4:7 For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 ... You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. "Redemption" makes us doubly owned!

ACTIONS:

a) Whole-heartedly accept what the Bible says about God owning you.

Psalms 100:2,3 Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into his presence with singing! Know that the Lord, he is God! It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

b) Whole-heartedly present your whole life to God.

Our Bodies Ourselves First published in 1973, it contains information related to many aspects of women's health and sexuality, including menopause, birth control, childbirth, sexual health, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental health and general well-being. Now in its 12th edition, and published in over 20 languages and braille, the current edition, calling itself "a new edition for a new era," contains 832 pages, including new pictures, diagrams, and interviews. The New York Times has called the book "America's best-selling book on all aspects of women's health" and a "feminist classic."

Romans 12:1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

e.g.

1 Corinthians 6:18-20 Flee from sexual immorality. Every other sin a person commits is outside the body, but the sexually immoral person sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body.