

BHOP BASIC PRINCIPLE #1: INTIMACY WITH GOD

*“Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul,
with all your mind and with all your strength.” Mark 12:30*

I. The First and greatest commandment, loving the LORD our God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength

II. The first and greatest commandment

a. Jesus defined the commandment as the *first* commandment, and also as the *great* commandment.

b. Why this commandment is first?

iii. It is the first priority to God. The #1 thing God wants to do in your life and in your ministry is that you would love Him above all else.

iv. He is a Person_

i. God has everything yet He is searching for something that He still wants first. What does God search for? What does He want most and first? He wants our voluntary love.

b. Why is this commandment great?

i. It is great in terms of its *impact on God’s heart*.

ii. It is great in terms of its *impact on your own heart*.

c. Warning to us: The church of Ephesus

“I have this against you, that you have left your first love...” (Rev. 2:4)

“I am afraid, lest as the serpent (**Satan**) deceived Eve by his craftiness, your minds should be led astray from the simplicity and purity of devotion to Christ.” (2 Cor 11:3)

d. Enduring to love God to the end

i. David sustained his passion for God for decades that he referred to as “all” the days of his life.

One thing... I seek...all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord... (Ps. 27:4)

ii. Daniel sustained his prayer life with passion for decades (from about age 16 to 82 years old).

“Daniel...knelt down on his knees three times that day, and prayed and gave thanks before his God, as was his custom since early days.” (Dan. 6:10)

V. Shifting paradigms: making the First Commandment first

- f. We must continually realign our life to make the First Commandment our first priority. Our first loyalty and preoccupation is to Jesus Christ, then secondly to His mission and our role in it.

“The only way to keep true to God is by a steady persistent refusal to be interested in Christian work and to be interested alone in Jesus Christ.” O. Chambers

- e. It is from the first commandment that the second commandment will flow with power and sincerity because of the love of God being poured out in our hearts (Rom. 5:5).
- f. What about loving others? If you love God, you will love others far better, and your ministry toward others will be far more consistent.
- g. When we work without intimacy we work as a slave or a hireling. Service without the foundation of devotion leads to burnout, disappointment, and wounding

VII. HEAR the Word

- h.** “hear” -_Shema is the Hebrew word for ‘hear’. Jesus’ most repeated exhortation in the NT was, “He that has an ear, let him hear” (Mt. 11:15; 13:9, 43; Mk. 4:9, 23; 7:16; Lk. 8:8; 14:35; Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22; 13:9).

⁴ Hear (Shema), O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one! ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. (Deut. 6:4-5)

Jesus interpreted what they were meant to “hear”. Namely, that loving God is His first priority and what He considers the greatest way to live. Do not apologize for your intensity in your vision to love Jesus.

³⁷ You shall love the Lord...³⁸ This is the first and great commandment. (Mt. 22:37-38)

IX. The call to obey - You shall love the LORD

- j. Love is defined by obedience.

Jesus defined loving God as being deeply rooted in a spirit of obedience (Jn. 14:21; Deut. 6:1-9). There is no such thing as loving God without seeking to obey His Word.

¹⁵ If you love Me, keep My commandments...²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me...²³ If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word... (Jn. 14:15-23)

- “Affection-based obedience” is obedience that flows from experiencing Jesus’ affection for us and giving it back to Him. It is the strongest, deepest and most consistent obedience. Greatest example: Jesus’ obedience to the Father in going to the cross because He wanted us to be with Him forever and to behold His glory (Jn. 17:24).
- “Duty-based obedience” is our commitment to obedience even if we do not feel God’s presence. God’s Word requires that we obey God without feeling inspired to do so.
- “Fear-based obedience” is obedience motivated by the fear of negative consequences. Scripture has many “do’s and don’ts” such as do not commit adultery, steal, etc. We sin when our heart is unsatisfied with God, because we are looking for quick pleasures to satisfy in place of finding our satisfaction in God.

XI. Loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength

I. Loving God with all our heart - The heart speaks of our emotions, affections, longings that effects every decision we make.

- i. Choosing to set our heart (affections, longings, emotions) on God.

“Because he has set his love on Me, therefore I will deliver him...”(Psa. 91:14).

- ii. Power of choice - God gives us great worth through the freedom He gives us in the power to choose where we set our hearts. This is part of the great dignity for us as we’re created in God’s image.

“May the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God...”(2 Thess. 3:5)

m. Loving God with all soul - our soul speaks of our personality, our unique person. We have countless opportunities to walk humbly and loving the Lord throughout our day by guarding our speech.

“Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers. Do not grieve the Spirit of God...” (Eph. 4:29-30).

- n. **Loving God with all our mind** - taking time to fill our mind with God’s word. Time is a precious gift we have.

- iii. Meditating on the word of God - Psa. 119:11

Hebrews 4:12 “The Word of God is living [supernatural power dynamic - to transform our emotions and bring revelation to our minds], and active/powerful, sharper than a double-edged sword, it pierces to the division of soul and spirit.”

- iv. The Word of God has powerful impact when it hits the heart

- 1. Builds us up - awaken and empower our hearts and tenderizes our spirit.

- o. **Loving God with all our strength/resources** - seeking to love God with our natural strengths. Entails making a choice to give our strengths over to God thru the fasted lifestyle. This positions us to embrace our weakness and lean into Him while drawing from His strength.

- xvi. Grace to live the fasted lifestyle - as it relates to ALL of my strength and ALL of my resources.

- 17.** Grace = power, enabling of the Spirit. Embrace my weakness of fasting by giving up my strengths to God and trusting Him as He gives us grace.

- 2. Purpose of a fasted life - to draw near to God

But he said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. 2 Cor. 12:9

Five natural strengths -

1. Finances: Doing it in secret, because more than being known to others that we give, God is looking at our hearts. Interacting with the One who sees!
2. Serving people: giving them our time and energy.
3. Fasting food: Fasting is not radical - it’s normal Christianity!
4. Fasting time: dedicating our time to prayer.
5. Blessing our enemies: anyone who is resisting your plans/goals

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Mt. 6:21

The cost of love - “I tell you the truth,” he said, “This poor widow has put in more

