

Doctrinal Summary of
Love: The Greatest Commandment

In Mark 12:30 Jesus identifies that the greatest commandment in the Law is to love God.

“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 word “love” is translated from the Koine Greek word ἀγαπήσεις (“ah-ga-pae-seis”) which more literally means, “you really will perform the continuous type of action in a point in time in the future to self-sacrificially pursue that which is best for another regardless of the response received because of your own integrity and volition.” It refers to love that pursues what is best for another without any concern for personal interests. Thus, it is self-sacrificial and selfless in its entirety. It does not place any expectations or strings attached onto the one being loved but unconditionally seeks to relate to and provide what is best for that individual.

The word “heart” is translated from the Koine Greek word καρδιάς (“kar-di-ahs”) which more literally refers to, “the programmable belief system of man which is the source of his actions, based on response.” The heart in Scripture refers to man’s belief system comprised of neurological networks and constellations that interrelate and function in complement with the various systems in man’s body. It is programmable through the individual’s volition contained within his soul. What a man is persuaded to rely on moves into his belief system and becomes the source of every action he accomplishes (cf. Prov. 4:23; Matt. 12:34-35). Loving God with all of one’s heart requires man to pursue what is most beneficial to God, namely that which is glorifying to God, with every aspect of his belief system.

The word “soul” is translated from the Koine Greek word ψυχῆς (“psu-chaes”) which more literally means, “the unique essence and identity of a person or being, based on response.” It refers to the functioning being that may or may not be contained within a material or immaterial body. It is the individual and not his shell. The soul of man is comprised of volition, mentality, conscience, emotion, and world view. It works with the mind and the heart to carry out decisions. Loving God with one’s entire soul requires man pursue what is best for God with all that he is, glorifying God over self entirely.

The word “mind” is translated from the Koine Greek word διανοίας (“di-ah-noi-as”) which more literally means, “active thought process that evaluates, filters, understands, and draws conclusions, based on response.” It refers to the stream of conscious thought that runs like a ticker tape through the individual’s mind and about which he makes decisions. Loving God with all of one’s thought process requires that man pursues what is best for God with all that he thinks and determines.

The word “strength” is translated from the Koine Greek word ἰσχύς (“is-chus”) which more literally means, “personal ability to function effectively, based on response.” It refers to the inherent ability an individual has to carry out the tasks he determines to accomplish whether through physical strength or mental fortitude. Loving God with all one’s strength requires that man pursue what is best as far as he is able to do so.

Though originally a part of God’s covenantal relationship with Israel (cf. Deut. 6:4-6), this command is universally applied to the church and all man by virtue of God’s design and purpose for man to be an agent of His used to glorify Him to Satan & Company. Thus, loving God is the greatest command for man.