

Matthew 22.34-40

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

Love the LORD your God with all your heart

and with all your soul

and with all your strength.

Deuteronomy 6.5

The LORD—YHWH, the God of covenant love

- The LORD God is a God of exceptional, covenant love—
 - ▶ “loved your forefathers” (4.37)
 - ▶ “set his affection on you” (7.7) } 10.15
 - ▶ “loved you and kept his oath” (7.8)
 - ▶ “keeping his covenant of love to a thousand generations” (7.9)
- This one and only God wants to be loved in return.

Love . . .

- The whole duty of a person is to love, both God and others.
- We are to love with “all” of ourselves—

“all your heart, all your soul, all your strength”

God’s whole-hearted love must not be reciprocated in a half-hearted manner, and, Jesus tells us, our love for others must not be less than the love we have received.

All your heart . . .

- The emphasis of “all your heart” (as well as soul) is repeated throughout Deuteronomy.

And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God ask of you but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in obedience to him, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul. (10.13)

- But Moses also reminded them that the LORD God had tested them during the time of wilderness wandering “in order to know what was in your hearts, whether or not you would keep his commands” (8.2). And it is the heart that is the real issue.

The heart of the matter—

Circumcise your hearts and do not be stiff-necked any longer.

Deuteronomy 10.16

- Scripture makes it abundantly clear that everything is a matter of the heart and the condition of our hearts.

Guard your heart above all else,
for it determines the course of your life.

Proverbs 4.23

It's all a matter of the heart—

- ▶ idolatry (Ezekiel 14.2)
- ▶ inappropriate sexual desire (Matthew 5.28)
- ▶ untruth and slander (Matthew 15.18-19)
- ▶ self-promotion (Ezekiel 28.2, 5, 17)
- ▶ envy (Mark 7.22)
- ▶ despise and curse others (Ecclesiastes 7.22)
- ▶ delusion (Isaiah 44.20)

“The human heart is the most deceitful of all things,
and desperately wicked.

Who really knows how bad it is?

But I, the LORD, search all hearts
and examine secret motives.

Jeremiah 17.9-10a

A matter of the heart—

- ▶ calloused and insensitive (Matthew 13.15)
- ▶ pain and grief (Genesis 6.6; Psalm 73.13; Lamentations 2.11)
- ▶ blighted and withered (Psalm 102.4)
- ▶ wounded (Psalm 109.22)
- ▶ anxiety (Proverbs 12.25)

A matter of the heart—

- ▶ joy (Psalm 4.7; 28.7)
- ▶ upright (Psalm 94.14)
- ▶ peace (Proverbs 14.30)
- ▶ meditate (Psalm 19.14; Luke.2.19)
- ▶ assimilate God's word (Psalm 119.11)
- ▶ wisdom (Psalm 90.12; Proverbs 2.10; 14.33)
- ▶ trust (Proverbs 3.5)
- ▶ love (Song of Songs 3.2-4)

They would not be like their ancestors—
a stubborn and rebellious generation,
whose hearts were not loyal to God,
whose spirits were not faithful to him.

Psalm 78.8

When God began killing them,
they finally sought him.

They repented and took God seriously.

Then they remembered that God was their Rock,
that God Most High was their Redeemer.

But all they gave him was lip service;
they lied to him with their tongues.

Their hearts were not loyal to him.

They did not keep his covenant.

Psalm 78.34-37

“What can I do with you, Ephraim?
What can I do with you, Judah?
Your love is like the morning mist,
like the early dew that disappears.”

Hosea 6.4

The rituals and laws of the Prior Order (i.e. the old covenant or testament) point toward and find their fulfillment in Christ and the New Order. One of the most significant of these was the rite of circumcision.

Recognizing that our sin-compromised hearts are incapable of an “all” love, Moses foretold of a spiritual work of circumcision that would go beyond their own efforts—

The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.

Deuteronomy 30.6

In him you were also circumcised with a circumcision not performed by human hands. Your whole self ruled by the flesh was put off when you were circumcised by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead. When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins . . .

Colossians 2.11-13

A people of love because we are loved—

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved . . . put on love.

Colossians 3.12, 14

- First and foremost, we are deeply and dearly loved by God—not because of merit or worth, but because it is His nature and decision.
- Under the new covenant, we do not love out of our own heart, understanding, or ability; we love as people who have been transformed by love and who have a new heart, mind, and ability—we now live and love by the power of the indwelling Spirit.

- However, we choose **how** we will love: whether “all” or “less than.”

- ▶ Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature . . .

Colossians 3.5

- ▶ Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

Colossians 3.12

- ▶ Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.

1 Peter 4.8

Love: a way of life—

Follow God's example, therefore, as dearly loved children and walk in the way of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.

Ephesians 5.1-2

Do everything in love.

1 Corinthians 16.14