



# 10 Minutes in God's Word: The Greatest Commandment: Loving God

Barry Shafer From: <https://www.youthworker.com/articles/10-minutes-in-godaes-word-the-greatest-commandment-loving-god/>

Love God. Love others.

That's the boiled-down version of the top two greatest commandments. The succinctness has made the phrase a go-to church vision statement and convenient personal mission statement. This is all good, but is the phrase becoming a cliché?

What does it look like to love God? In all honesty, for me it sometimes looks like this: Screw up less today than I did yesterday. But I want it to be more than that. I'm grateful to have found help, and it's in the full-blown version of the greatest commandment as told by Jesus in the gospels.

## The Scripture

As you read Jesus' words, which were a response to a question about which commandment is the most important, notice the four specific expressions Jesus gave for loving God.

"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: '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 mind and with all your strength'" (Mark 12:29-30). (Note: Jesus was referring to Deuteronomy and likely quoting the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament. This is why you'll see variations between the words by Jesus and the words in Deuteronomy.)

## Think About It

We don't want to push these four expressions of love too far. The big picture is simply to love God with all we've got, but we don't want to miss any helpful nuances either. So, let's dig a little deeper.

### ***All Your Heart***

You've probably heard the familiar description that the heart is the "seat of our emotions." That's helpful, but can we get more specific? What are you passionate about? What kind of conversation always draws you into it? Those things come from the heart. Devoting our deepest passions and our greatest enthusiasm to serving and trusting God is a great picture of loving God with all our heart.

### ***All Your Soul***

This is the part of us that never dies, and it's something we're to care for while we're here on earth. Yet we give the soul surprisingly little attention. Imagine your soul as a bathtub with a faucet of spiritually edifying input and a drain for spiritually detracting output. Which is pouring faster, the faucet or the drain? Love God by caring for the soul in a way that causes the bathtub to spill over.

### ***All Your Mind***

The Greek word used for "mind" points to the inner part that gathers and processes information, ultimately forming our outlook on life. Several disciplines, such as philosophy, apologetics or theology, can deeply involve the mind with regard to God. These disciplines are needed, but one sure way we can show our love to God is to dedicate our minds to knowing Him through the information that is most accessible and so dear to His heart—His Word.

### ***All Your Strength***

This is one of the only places in Scripture that puts our strength in a positive light. Most Scripture speaks of accentuating our weakness and letting God's strength work through us. Here we're called to tap into our physical strength as a source of energy for loving God. How can I give God my best energy? I can start by spending time with Him during the most alert period of my day when possible rather than giving Him a rushed morning moment or a drowsy bedtime hour.

### **Apply It**

Explore and experience these four expressions. How can you love in these four ways this week?