



## Day 1

# Love

**Silence (2 minutes)** Take some time to be quiet, to calm down, and to listen. What has God been teaching you? What are the next steps He wants you to take? How is your spirit doing?

**Scripture** *"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.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."* Mark 12:29-31

**Discussion** Jesus was asked by a teacher of the law what was the greatest commandment and the above Scripture is His reply. The most important thing we can do with our lives is to love God with all of our heart. This first commandment includes our feelings, thoughts, life, and power. Jesus was quoting from Deuteronomy 6:4-6, which then continues with, *"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates."* Clearly, we are to love God in every aspect of our lives, whether it's relationships, emotions, finances, recreation, employment, or anything else. We are to ponder them, discuss them, and pass them on to our children. The second commandment Jesus names comes from Leviticus 19:18, *"Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against one of your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord."* In Luke's Gospel Jesus' answers the question *"who is my neighbor?"* (Luke 10:29) by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan. With this parable, Jesus illustrates that Christians are to love everyone, regardless of our divisions. After all, God has made everyone in His image! As Christians, how can we claim to love God if we hate his creation? Would anyone feel loved here on earth if we walked up to them and said "I love you so much, but you seriously need to fix your kids. They are just ugly, rude, immoral, little scoundrels. But I really do love you." Of course not! If we truly are to love God with all our hearts, we must love those that God loves!

**Application** Take some time to consider an area of your life where you may not be very loving toward others: a difficult coworker, a stressful extended family member, or wayward sibling. Ask God for clarity on how you can better love Him in this area and for Him to show you how to love this difficult person with Christ-like love.

**Prayer** Father, there is no life apart from You. You are the Creator of everything and have created me. All that I have has come from You. I owe You my commitment and love with all of my emotions, my values and goals, my thoughts, my strength, and my power. You are God and You deserve to be honored. Thank You for showing me who You are through Jesus that it is a joy to love You. I praise You that You are loving, powerful, holy, and good. Thank You that when I was like the beaten and robbed man, You had mercy on me. You took the initiative and rescued me. I commit myself to follow You. Please help me mature in loving You and showing mercy others. Thank You. I love You, Father. Amen.

**Silence (2 minutes)** Talk to God about what you are learning. What are your fears? Where are your hangups. Pray for direction.

**Scripture memory** for the week: *"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.' The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no commandment greater than these."* Mark 12:29-31

