



## God Wants Your Heart

God wants your heart, your \_\_\_\_\_ heart, and the hearts of your friends and family. God wants you to \_\_\_\_\_ Him with all your heart. The Bible records God \_\_\_\_\_ to all humanity about the most important things in our lives. God speaks because He wants us to \_\_\_\_\_ Him and to love Him. Our Father in heaven wants to have a close, loving \_\_\_\_\_ with each of us not only in this life but also in the life to come. If we want that relationship, then we must closely and carefully pay \_\_\_\_\_ to the things that He's revealed to us.

Mark 12:28-31 says: "And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, 'Which commandment is the \_\_\_\_\_ important of all?' Jesus answered, 'The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your \_\_\_\_\_ and with all your \_\_\_\_\_ and with all your strength.' The second is this: that 'You shall love your \_\_\_\_\_ as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

God wants your heart, your whole heart, because He wants \_\_\_\_\_. He knows that if He doesn't have your heart, He won't really have you. The Lord knows if He has your heart, He will get the \_\_\_\_\_ of you. God is not content with fair-weather Christians or part-time \_\_\_\_\_ members. Nor is He content with those who listen to the Word of God but never \_\_\_\_\_ or practice what they learn. He asks us to love Him with all our hearts, all our souls, all our minds, and all our strength. Anything \_\_\_\_\_ simply will not do. He expects us to make a \_\_\_\_\_ commitment to serve Him.

### **Our reading today comes from the first letter of John 5:1-3.**

What does it \_\_\_\_\_ to love God with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our minds, and with all our strength? This is love in its fullest \_\_\_\_\_ with the greatest commitment. Such great love is not merely a theory; one must also \_\_\_\_\_ complete dedication to the Lord. Let me suggest these four ways to show that complete commitment.

First, God wants your decision to be a \_\_\_\_\_. A disciple \_\_\_\_\_ to learn from and to imitate his master, his teacher. He seeks in every way to be \_\_\_\_\_ his teacher. The Lord Jesus cautions us, "If anyone would come after me, let him \_\_\_\_\_ himself and take up his cross \_\_\_\_\_ and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my \_\_\_\_\_ will save it" (Luke 9:23-24). When we decide to follow Jesus, we \_\_\_\_\_ putting ourselves first and take up our cross daily to follow Him.

The apostle Paul left his life as a Pharisee and a persecutor of the church to become a Christian who \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord. He said, "More than that, I count all things to be \_\_\_\_\_ in view of the surpassing value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them but rubbish so that I may \_\_\_\_\_ Christ" (Philippians 3:8). In fact, Paul considered himself to be dead to the world, so that he could \_\_\_\_\_ with Christ. He said, "I have been crucified with Christ. And it's no longer I who live, but Christ who lives \_\_\_\_\_ me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by \_\_\_\_\_ in the Son of God, who loved me and \_\_\_\_\_ himself for me" (Galatians 2:20). Christ wants your heart

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**Longer quotations may not appear in the Study Sheet, but can be read in the accompanying transcript.**

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so that you will die with Him to your \_\_\_\_\_ self and be raised with Him as a \_\_\_\_\_ person. He wants to transform your life.

Some believe in Christ but are \_\_\_\_\_ truly converted to Him; they don't want to sacrifice their worldly advantages. Christ is a good thing to them, as long as they don't \_\_\_\_\_ what they have. You remember John 12:42-43 observes, "Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for \_\_\_\_\_ that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of \_\_\_\_\_ rather than the approval of \_\_\_\_\_." Such people may see Christ as God's son, but they're unwilling to make it \_\_\_\_\_. Confession is a public act, and they didn't want to lose their place in their society, so they weren't confessing Him.

Some are willing to follow Jesus until He says something they don't like or \_\_\_\_\_ with. They're more committed to their \_\_\_\_\_ thinking than they are to the Lord. When Jesus taught something that His followers didn't like, John 6:66-69 says: "As a result of this many of His disciples withdrew and were not \_\_\_\_\_ with Him anymore. So Jesus said to the twelve, 'You don't want to go away also, do you?' And Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of \_\_\_\_\_ life. We have believed and have come to \_\_\_\_\_ that You are the Holy One of God.'"

Trusting the Lord Jesus means trusting what He \_\_\_\_\_. If you deny what He teaches, you're actually denying \_\_\_\_\_. He is Lord, He is the only Lord, and He asked, "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not \_\_\_\_\_ what I say?" (Luke 6:46). Wise men hear the Lord and \_\_\_\_\_ upon what He says; foolish men hear the Lord and do \_\_\_\_\_ act on what He says (Matthew 7:24-27).

Second, loving the Lord with all your heart \_\_\_\_\_ changing the direction of your heart and life. What am I talking about? I'm talking about \_\_\_\_\_. Repentance is turning \_\_\_\_\_ from the sinful and hurtful ways of life and turning \_\_\_\_\_ God and His righteousness. Many today emphasize \_\_\_\_\_, and the Lord Jesus was full of grace and truth according to John 1:14. While Jesus was full of grace, He never \_\_\_\_\_ the word "grace" in Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Yet, Jesus spoke of repentance repeatedly during His earthly ministry.

Matthew 4:17 reveals what Jesus started \_\_\_\_\_ after His forty-day temptation. What was His message? "From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, 'Repent, for the \_\_\_\_\_ of heaven is at hand.'" In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus said, "If your right eye causes you to sin, then tear it out and throw it away. For it's better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off, throw it away. For it's better that you lose one of your members than that your whole body go into hell" (Matthew 5:29-30). The Lord Jesus wasn't interested in our \_\_\_\_\_ an eye or a hand; what He wanted was us to \_\_\_\_\_ of our sins. Repentance is even \_\_\_\_\_ important to us than an eye or a hand.

The Lord Jesus speaks of God's \_\_\_\_\_ over a sinner who repents. The parable of the prodigal son in Luke 15:17-20 says of the sinful prodigal: "But when he came to \_\_\_\_\_, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and I'll say to him, 'Father, I have \_\_\_\_\_ against heaven and before you. I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. Treat me as one of your hired servants.'" And he arose and came to his father." This story of repentance has touched the hearts of millions and called them to repent as well.

When the apostle Paul approached the Stoics and Epicureans on Mars Hill about the true God and Jesus Christ, he ended the message with a call to repentance. He said, "Therefore having overlooked the times of ignorance, God is now declaring to men that all people everywhere should repent, because He

has fixed a day in which He will \_\_\_\_\_ the world in righteousness through a Man whom He has appointed, having furnished proof to all men by \_\_\_\_\_ Him from the dead” (Acts 17:30-31). We’ll \_\_\_\_\_ stand before the judgment seat of Christ and we’ll have to give an account for the things that we’ve believed, for the things that we’ve said, and for the things that we’ve done. You can be sure of it!

Some \_\_\_\_\_ to take in the idea of repentance. They think harshly of a preacher who calls them to repent, thinking that repentance is some kind of a form of \_\_\_\_\_. There is an old practice among the monks called “penance,” where people punished themselves; but this is not of God, it’s of \_\_\_\_\_ origin. The Bible speaks of the opportunity to repent as a \_\_\_\_\_ in Acts 11:18 and 2 Timothy 2:25. Actually, repentance is how our hearts change, and how they change our \_\_\_\_\_ to become what God intended. Repentance heals our \_\_\_\_\_ lives and sets us on the right path to righteousness. Grace relieves the pain and guilt of sin, but repentance \_\_\_\_\_ us and heals our lives.

Third, God wants your heart to be devoted in \_\_\_\_\_. The Lord Jesus told the Samaritan woman, “But an hour is coming, and now is, when the \_\_\_\_\_ worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him \_\_\_\_\_ worship in spirit and truth” (John 4:23-24). God wants \_\_\_\_\_ worship from our hearts and from our spirits. Worship comes from the heart and \_\_\_\_\_ our praise and thanksgiving to God. Ephesians 5:19-20 says that we’re to speak “to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making \_\_\_\_\_ with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father.”

Sadly, many today have confused worship, which is something we \_\_\_\_\_, with entertainment, which is something we \_\_\_\_\_. They think they have worshiped when they’ve only heard or watched someone \_\_\_\_\_ perform. God wants \_\_\_\_\_ Christian to participate in worship, not simply a select \_\_\_\_\_. God expects us \_\_\_\_\_ to sing from our hearts, commune, and give. We should \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts for worship and focus on God as we come together to praise and adore our Creator.

Fourth, God wants your dedication in \_\_\_\_\_. Romans 6:16-18 says, “Don’t you not know that if you present yourselves to anyone as obedient slaves, that you’re slaves of the one whom you \_\_\_\_\_, either of sin, which leads to death, or of obedience, which leads to righteousness? But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have \_\_\_\_\_ obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, you’ve become slaves of righteousness.” Obedience from the heart is not some mindless \_\_\_\_\_ but an authentic giving of ourselves to the Lord. God doesn’t want half-hearted, half-done obedience, where we choose to do \_\_\_\_\_ what we like or what we agree with. That’s not obedience from the heart.

Obedience from the heart recognizes the form or the \_\_\_\_\_ of the doctrine, the teaching. Just as Noah built the ark according to God’s instructions, and just as Moses built the tabernacle according to God’s instructions, and the Lord Jesus always pleased the Father (John 8:28-29), so we too should \_\_\_\_\_ God from our hearts by doing things like He teaches them. The Lord Jesus said, “If you love Me, you will \_\_\_\_\_ My commandments” (John 14:15). He repeated this thought in John 14:23, “If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.”

Obedience is \_\_\_\_\_ we love God. Love \_\_\_\_\_ us to do what God commands. Love moves a person to listen closely and to respond accurately to what God \_\_\_\_\_. Keeping God’s laws carefully as Christ \_\_\_\_\_ it is not Pharisaical or legalism. It’s how we love Christ! Second Corinthians 5:14-15 says, “For the love of Christ \_\_\_\_\_ us, because we’ve concluded this: that one

has died for all, and therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised.” When we love God, we obey because we want to \_\_\_\_\_ Him. We obey even when we don’t understand all the \_\_\_\_\_ why. We obey even when obedience leads us to \_\_\_\_\_ or to do something really difficult.

We might someday have to say what Jesus had to say in the Garden of Gethsemane. Matthew 26:37-39 explains: “And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled. And he said to them, ‘My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.’ And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, ‘My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as \_\_\_\_\_ will, but as \_\_\_\_\_ will.’” Loving the Lord with all our hearts means doing the Lord’s will the Lord’s way rather than doing what we desire our own way. So, Christians who are faithful say, “Wherever He sends us we will go, whatever He teaches we will believe, whatever He requires we will gladly do. We love Him. And we’re not here to argue with Him but to obey Him.”

Matthew 27 tells of Pilate’s attempt to \_\_\_\_\_ Jesus rather than to punish Him. He proclaimed Jesus’ innocence more than once; but when the Jewish leaders insisted Jesus be crucified, Pilate \_\_\_\_\_ the repercussions and gave in to their demands. He knew the right thing to do was to release Jesus, but he gave in to the \_\_\_\_\_. I can explain a pagan, non-believer’s actions like Pilate easier than I can explain why a person who \_\_\_\_\_ to love Jesus becomes indifferent to Christ. How can people ignore the One who died for our sins and opened for us the door to eternal life?

Does your heart belong to the Lord Jesus? If you love Him, obey Him. Do you believe in Him with all your heart? Have you from the heart repented of sin, and have you turned to the Lord? Will you confess Jesus Christ as the Son of God? Will you be baptized? Baptism into Christ is the immersion of a penitent believer in water to forgive his sins. When the people on Pentecost wanted forgiveness, Peter said to them, “Repent, and each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). They gladly received his word and 3,000 were baptized. They simply obeyed from the heart, because they wanted to be right with God.

Are you a brother or a sister in Christ who’s forgotten what God has done for you? Have you become indifferent? Have you stopped worshipping at church? Have you taken up sinful habits? Repent, confessing your sin and ask God to forgive you.