

"With All Your Heart"

When the Lord asks us to love Him with all our hearts, what does that mean? Hello, I'm Phil Sanders, and this is a Bible study "In Search of the Lord's Way." And today we're examining loving God with all your heart.

Welcome to In SEARCH of the Lord's Way! We're here to search the Scriptures for God's will. God cares about you, how you think, how you feel, what you intend to do, and what you hold to be right and wrong. God knows your heart. John described Jesus in John 2:25 that, "He did not need anyone to testify concerning man, for He Himself knew what was in man." Thanks for watching or listening. We'd love to hear from you and want to be a part of your life each week.

The heart is the center of a person's thoughts, intentions, and emotions. The heart is also the center of our moral and spiritual life. The conscience, for instance, is associated with the heart. In fact, the Hebrew language had no word for conscience, so the word "heart" was often used to express this concept. The word "heart" appears about 1,000 times in the Bible and is used in wide variety of ways. Now we're complicated human beings with many aspects of our lives.

How we think and feel in our hearts, what we intend to do, and what we regard as right and wrong matter to the Lord. The Lord reminds us in Luke 12 verse 34, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." What we focus our hearts on tells us what our treasure is. And if your heart is set on worldly things, God will become unimportant. But if you love God with all your heart, worldly things will soon lose their attraction.

You see God cares about us; He doesn't look at things the way that we do. 1 Samuel 16 and verse 7 says that, "God sees not as man sees, for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart." What's in your heart? If you give your heart to God, then you're giving yourself also. You won't argue with God but will obey Him.

Now we offer this study, With All Your Heart, free! It's a part of a booklet dealing with things of the heart, soul, mind, and strength. And if you'd like a printed copy of the booklet or of the lesson and live in the United States, mail your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call our toll-free telephone number. That number is 1-800-321-8633. We also have programs and free materials on our website, www.searchtv.org. And you can also see us on YouTube.

We'll now worship in song, read from Mark 12:28 to 32, and consider loving God with all our hearts.

Our reading is from Mark chapter 12 verses 28 to 32. And here the word of God says,

One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, "What commandment is the foremost of all?" Jesus answered, "The foremost is, 'HEAR, O ISRAEL! THE LORD OUR GOD IS ONE LORD; 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 second is this, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.' There is no other commandment greater than these." The scribe said to Him, "Right, Teacher; You have truly stated that HE IS ONE, AND THERE IS NO ONE ELSE BESIDES HIM;

That's a reading from God's holy word. Let's pray together. Heavenly Father we're thankful that You have given us Your will for us to understand. Help us Heavenly Father, because of all the good things You've done for us. To love You with all our heart, soul, and mind and strength. This is our prayer in Jesus name, Amen.

Solomon advises us in Proverbs 23:7, "As he thinks in his heart, so is he." The heart more than anything else reflects the character. How a person pretends to be and what is in his heart can differ. Now God wants us to have a heart that is pure. And if you love the Lord, you will purify your hearts. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 5 and verse 8, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Paul urged in 2 Timothy 2 verse 22, he says, "Now flee from youthful lusts and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart." Now a pure heart arises when we choose the will of God over the will of the devil or the world.

James 4:7 to 8 says, "Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded." Now a double-minded heart means that you haven't chosen whether to serve God or serve the flesh.

The intention of our heart matters. Paul observed in Titus 1 and verse 15, "To the pure, all things are pure; but to those who are defiled and unbelieving, nothing is pure, but both their mind and their conscience are defiled." A pure heart wants to do the right thing and prepares for the challenges of this world. The psalmist wrote in Psalm 119 verses 10 and 11, "With all my heart I have sought You; Do not let me wander from You and Your commandments. Your word I have treasured in my heart, That I may not sin against You." When Jesus was tempted by the devil, he repeatedly turned to what God had written in Scripture. We too need to know what is written.

Moses spoke for God in Deuteronomy 5 and verse 29, when he said, "Oh that they had such a heart in them, that they would fear Me and keep all My commandments always, that it may be well with them and with their sons forever!" Oh God wants you to have such a heart. Later in Deuteronomy 10:12 to 13 Moses said, "Now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require from you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the LORD'S commandments and His statutes which I am commanding you today for your good?" God wants us to take His words seriously. And Moses urged Israel in Deuteronomy 32:46, "Take to your heart all the words with which I am warning you today, which you shall command your sons to observe carefully, even all the words of this law." We can't love God unless we also listen and obey what He says.

Solomon by inspiration said in Proverbs 4:20 to 23, "My son, give attention to my words; Incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your sight; Keep them in the midst of your heart. For they are life to those who find them And health to all their body. Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of life." When a person listens to God and looks inside his heart, he might see the need to change his ways. If we love God, we grieve when we have sinned against Him. When we think of all His love toward us, we want to get our hearts right with God. In Psalm 86, David recalled God's great lovingkindness and grace. And he sang in Psalm 86:11 and 12, "Teach me Your way, O LORD; I will walk in Your truth; Unite my heart to fear Your name. I will give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, And will glorify Your name forever." Counting our blessings and giving thanks is the root from which our love grows.

Now speaking as God's prophet, Jeremiah wrote in Jeremiah 17:9 to 10 that, "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? (then he says,) "I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds." What does God see in your heart? Does He see that you love Him with all your heart, or does He see that you love sin with all your heart? James 4 and verse 4 warned some corrupt

Christians, “You adulteresses, do you not know that friendship with the world is hostility toward God? Therefore whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”

People often lie to themselves about sin and about salvation. 1 Corinthians 15:33 says, “Do not be deceived: Bad company corrupts good morals.” Now if your heart and your life is surrounded and taking pleasure in things that are evil, those things will corrupt your heart. Galatians 6:7 to 8 explains, “Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life.” Will your harvest reap eternal life?

Now if your heart desires evil, what you’ll end up doing is separating yourself from God. Psalm 66 and verse 18 says that, “If I regard wickedness in my heart, (that is I cherish it) The Lord will not hear.” Again, Psalm 5 verses 4 to 6 says, “For You are not a God who takes pleasure in wickedness; No evil dwells with You.” Oh, God knows what’s happening in your heart. David prayed in Psalm 139 verses 23 and 4 Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me and know my anxious thoughts; And see if there be any hurtful way in me, And lead me in the everlasting way.” We all need to pray that and make the changes so that our hearts are right with God.

You see, God wants something better for you than sin to dwell in your hearts. He wants your heart to look to Christ, to imitate Christ, and to let Christ dwell in your hearts by faith. Paul prayed for the Christians in Ephesus in Ephesians 3:17 to 19, “that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.”

When faith and love for Christ and in Christ dwell in our hearts we begin to know a little of the love of Christ. And how He has that great love for us, though it’s beyond our understanding. Christ’s love is wider than we imagine, longer than we think, deeper than the ocean, and higher than the heavens. I’m reminded of Isaiah 55 verses 8 and 9, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, Nor are your ways My ways,” says the LORD. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, So are My ways higher than your ways, And My thoughts than your thoughts.”

One of the most challenging things in loving God with all our hearts is in being willing to set aside error and to grasp the truth. We must love the Lord with all our hearts, and that means getting our hearts in line with the heart of God and the ways of God. The Lord Jesus said in Matthew 6:24 that, “No one can serve two masters; (no they can’t) for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth. (or mammon) ” Now the same is true of many other things. You can’t serve God and serve yourself. You can’t serve God and serve sin. You can’t serve God and serve human traditions. You can’t serve God and serve today’s worldly culture.

Loving God with your heart means being willing to listen to what He teaches and trust that it’s true and right. Love always begins with listening and giving thanks for what God has done. God wants our hearts to agree with His heart and His teaching. And this means we have to deny ourselves. Proverbs 3:5 to 8 reminds us, “Trust in the LORD with all your heart And do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from evil. It will be healing to your body And refreshment to your bones.”

Our task is to teach what God says, not our opinions. You cannot serve God and serve things that contradict God at the same time. It’s impossible. Many people today have come to hate God because

they listened to the culture of our day and they listen to their own desires. And so they've chosen to love their desires even more than they love God, even more when they know God is right, they still follow their desires. John 12:42 to 43 tells of some Jewish leaders who chose to please people rather than God. The scripture says, "Nevertheless many even of the rulers believed in Him, but because of the Pharisees they were not confessing Him, for fear that they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved the approval of men rather than the approval of God." Now loving God with all our hearts means being willing to confess that you serve the Lord in spite of what other people think.

The Lord Jesus said in Luke 14:26 and 7 that, "If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple." This may sound harsh at first. Now He's not telling us to hate our families. He is contrasting our love for Him with our love for individual members of our families. "Hate" here is a comparative term. It calls us to make a choice when we are pulled in two directions. We must hold fast to our God rather than reject God even for a loved one.

We must recall how much the Lord has loved us and what He has done for us. How that Jesus died on the cross for our sins. And He bore all the punishment for us. 1 Peter 2:24 reminds us, "and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed." Now Jesus was not saying that we are not to love our parents and children. Oh, I freely confess to you I love my parents, my wife, my children, and my brothers and sisters. But I cannot let my love for them lead me away from my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. I must even deny myself, take up my cross daily, and follow Him.

When the Lord speaks, we listen because we love Him with all our hearts. What the Lord commands matters, because we love Him the most and know that He's wiser than we are! We love Him; and we love His wisdom and His will. We know that He's the One who has the gospel that saves and the words of eternal life. We know that He's the One raised from the dead. We know that He will one day judge us in righteousness. We know that He's both our Lord and Savior. And if we wish to be saved, we must accept Him also as our Lord. Christians belong to the Lord because they chose to follow the One who loves us. 2 Corinthians 5:14 and 15 explains, "For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf."

Let's pray. Oh Father help us to love You with all our heart and soul and mind and strength. And always put You first in everything. In Jesus name, Amen.

When David realized his great sin with Bathsheba and the killing of Uriah, he prayed in Psalm 51:7 to 11, "Purify me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness, Let the bones which You have broken rejoice. Hide Your face from my sins And blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, And renew a steadfast spirit within me. Do not cast me away from Your presence And do not take Your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Your salvation And sustain me with a willing spirit."

Do you wish you were clean and right with God? Unresolved sin leaves a stain in our hearts and an ache in our souls. Romans 6:16 to 18 says, "Do you not know that when you present yourselves to someone as slaves for obedience, you are slaves of the one whom you obey, either of sin resulting in death, or of obedience resulting in righteousness? But thanks be to God that though you were slaves of sin, you became obedient from the heart to that form of teaching to which you were committed, and

having been freed from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.” Oh, you don’t have to be a slave to sin, guilt, and shame.

Hear the gospel, believe Jesus died for your sins and rose again, repent of those moral failures, confess Jesus Christ is the Son of God, and be baptized in the name of Christ so that your sins will be forgiven, just as Acts 2:38 in the first gospel sermon teaches. Now perhaps you were once one who served the Lord and His church but have left Him. Don’t let your heart harden, return to the Lord in love, repentance, and obedience. My friend today is the best day to get right with God.

We hope our study, *With All Your Heart*, has caused you to consider your heart. This lesson in our little booklet dealing with the “Heart, Soul, Mind, and Strength” are offered free. And you can have one. And if you live in the United States and you want a free printed copy, send your request to In Search of the Lord's Way, P.O. Box 371, Edmond, OK 73083 or send an e-mail to searchtv@searchtv.org. Or, you can call the Search office toll-free at 1-800-321-8633. There’s a schedule of our programs and a map of churches in your area at www.searchtv.org. SEARCH is on YouTube! Subscribe to our channel, “SearchTVMinistry” and like the programs you watch. We also offer free Bible Correspondence courses. Now if you write to us and want one don’t worry, we’re not asking for money. We’re here to help you draw close to God.

We ask that you show God your love by worshiping at church. You need a church family. And if you can attend, don’t neglect worshiping at church. There’s probably a church of Christ near you. If you’re looking for a healthy, Biblical church home, we’ll gladly help you find one. We’ll be back next week, Lord willing. So keep searching God’s Word with us. Tell a friend about this program and encourage them to watch. As always we say, God bless you and we love you from all of us at In Search of the Lord’s Way.