

# GROUP GUIDE

## CHURCH NAME

### SERIES TITLE

LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, SOUL, MIND, AND STRENGTH

MATTHEW 22:34-40

DATE

## MAIN POINT

Jesus demands that we love God with every faculty of our being and love our neighbor as we love ourselves.

## INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

**Think of someone who you love—a spouse, child, family member, or friend. How do you show this love?**

**How is loving God similar to loving this person?**

**How is loving God different?**

Our culture treats love as a basic individual right. People are free to love and express that love however they want. A couple may marry if they fall in love and divorce when they fall out of love. Those who have affairs are presented as courageous—willing to risk everything for the freedom to love. Jesus makes clear demands about whom we must love and how we must love. Jesus demands that we love according to the absolute standards that the Creator God has established.

## UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

**ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ MATTHEW 22:34-40.**

**What makes loving God the greatest command?**

**What is generally the biggest obstacle that gets in your way from loving God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?**

**What do you think the relationship is between the demands to love God and love your neighbor?**

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In this session of *What Jesus Demands from the World*, John Piper focuses on Jesus' demand that we love God with every faculty of our being and the related demand to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. In doing so he will answer four important questions: What is the relationship between loving God and loving Jesus? What is the nature of this love? Where does this love come from? How important is this love?

**WATCH THE VIDEO TEACHING FOR SESSION 2 FROM JOHN PIPER.**

**What about the video clip resonated with you most?**

**In the video, Dr. Piper answered four questions about love. Which question discussed did you find most helpful? Why?**

**The Great Commandment emphasizes loving God with all your heart, soul, and might. What do each of those aspects of a person's being represent?**

**What are your emotions or thoughts about the extent to which God loves and cares for His children?**

Jesus highlights the call to love God with all that we are as the greatest commandment in the Bible, as expressed in Deuteronomy 6:4-5. This is followed by and closely related to the command in Leviticus 19:18 to love your neighbor as yourself. In Matthew 22:40, He says, "On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." The implication is that love is the foundation and motivation for the hundreds of divine commands in the Old Testament. Have no gods beside me, do not make a graven image, do not take the Lord's name in vain, honor the Sabbath day—love for God is behind them all.

**ASK A VOLUNTEER TO READ LUKE 10:25-37.**

**What are your observations about love from this parable?**

**In your understanding, what do you think the problem was with the lawyer's question, "Who is my neighbor?"**

The lawyer asks, "Who is my neighbor?" because he wants to justify himself. He wants to show everyone that he checks the moral box and shows love to those people that he's obligated to love. Jesus does not answer the question but instead redirects the focus to another set of questions. Who is worthy of my love? To what sort of person am I? Do I show merciful, sacrificial love to other people when they're in need? Luke 10:27 tells us that the lawyer correctly understood that the two chief commands in the Law were love the Lord your God and love your neighbor as yourself. He knows the right theological answer, but his interaction with Jesus shows that he actually does not love God nor his neighbor as God demands.

You see, the crucial question we must consider is not "Who is my neighbor?" but "How has Jesus loved me?" Jesus

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humbled Himself to wash the feet of His disciples, even those who He knew would soon betray, deny, or abandon Him. The Lord loved and laid down His life for His enemies—like us. When we see ourselves as the undeserving recipients of such love, our self-justifying excuses fall away and we begin to love others as Jesus demands.

### APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

**What are the dangers of focusing on Christ's love apart from His commands? What about Christ's commands apart from His love?**

**How might you explain to a nonbeliever or a new believer the relationship between knowing God and loving God?**

**Is there someone in your life who you need to extend forgiveness to as a means of growing in Christ? What are some of the difficulties of doing so?**

**What most frequently stands in the way of you truly loving others? What are some tangible expressions of this kind of love you might practice this week: At your workplace? In your home? With your friends?**

### PRAYER

Thank God for the significance of His love for His children. Pray that your group would learn what it looks like to fully delight in the treasure that is given to us in Jesus Christ. Ask God for wisdom as you dive into His Word this week.

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