



What does it mean to love God? The dictionary defines love as a loyal, strong and deep affection arising out of the desire to place another person's desires above our own. In other words, loving God means that we are more interested in living according to His will rather than following our own.

God actually proved this theory about love as Paul states in Romans 5:8: “But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” In other words, God placed our interests above His own, in desiring that we be saved and redeemed, even to the point of sacrificing His Son for our sake.

Paul also described love in detail in 1 Cor 13:4-8; “Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.”

Therefore, to love God means we must have an unwavering, unbreakable and unparalleled deep devotion to please God above ourselves, and as a result know and obey His commandments, as Christ taught us. Are we ready to so love God?

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“So he answered and said, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.’”

Luke 10:27

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HOW TO LOVE GOD



Interestingly, Jesus did not simply say to love God, but as well incorporated strong words to describe how to love God in saying, “with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.” Additionally, notice the word “ALL” on all four requirements to truly love God. That obviously brings the seriousness and importance of truly loving God wholeheartedly, rather than superficially claiming to love Him.

How then are we to love God? God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah this way; “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. (Jer 29:13) In essence, to love God, we must know what He wants, and this is accomplished through the study of His Word. That’s why Jesus is quoted in John 14:15, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” How can we keep His commandments if we don’t know them?

That’s why Paul said in Gal 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.” Psalm 119:2-3 says: “Blessed *are* those who keep His testimonies, who seek Him with the whole heart! They also do no iniquity; they walk in His ways.”

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One thing I have desired of the LORD,
that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house
of the LORD all the days of my life,
to behold the beauty of the LORD,
and to inquire in His temple.”
Psalm 27:4

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LOVING GOD
WITH ALL OUR HEART



To love God with all our hearts implies the understanding that it is not love as the world defines it, but rather how much our love for God must flow from deep within ourselves. We know that the heart is the central and innermost part of a person. In essence, it represents the moral nature, which differs from the intellectual aspect of a person.

Proverbs 23:26 describes how God longs for us to surrender to Him this way: “My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways.” In other words, giving our hearts to God implies that we surrender our will to follow His ways.

That’s why also the apostle John gave us this warning; “Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that *is* in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever. (1John 2:15-17)

In simple terms, loving God with all our heart comes down to putting God at the very center of our life, just as with a child who can’t wait to jump into his parent’s arms. Are we totally in with God or only part-time followers of Christ?

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“If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.” Col 3:1-2

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LOVING GOD
WITH ALL OUR MIND



The mind is the element of an individual that feels, perceives, thinks, wills and reasons. It is the actual intellectual part of a person. To grow, in any aspect of our lives, is subject to our personal will and decision making. Who we really are is the direct result of our life decisions, based on whether we choose to allow God or the world to influence us.

That's why, loving God with all our mind refers to the responsibility we have to will to love Him, and to love Him not simply in words, but most importantly in making the decision to walk in the path of His will for our lives. That's why Paul said in Romans 12:2, "And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what *is* that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." In other words, renewing our minds involves diving head first into the Word of God, the very source of God's will.

Our responsibility therefore involves both making a personal commitment of the mind to study His Word faithfully and steadfastly, and associating with fellow believers in a church body that teaches the pure Word of God.

Is our mind still wandering around, or have we made a willful commitment to love and surrender our will to God?

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“Bless the LORD, O my soul;
and all that is within me,
Bless His holy Name!”

Psalm 103:1

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LOVING GOD
WITH ALL OUR SOUL



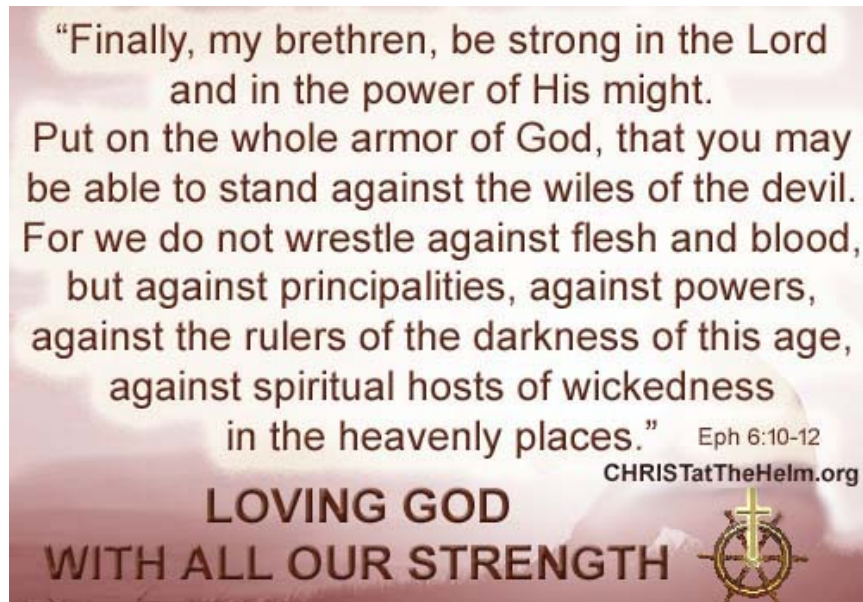
Many scriptures allude to the soul within us. How could we define the soul? In simple terms, the soul is the spiritual and eternal essence that God placed within us, to differentiate us from all other creation. It's a person's moral nature that guides and evaluates right from wrong. So, loving God with all our soul infers that we live with the ardent desire to do as God wills for us, rather than follow our own will.

That's why Psalm 19:7 says, "The law of the LORD *is* perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the LORD *is* sure, making wise the simple." In essence, it is through feeding on God's Word that we acquire the knowledge of right and wrong, thereby generating an ardent desire to love and serve God, with all our soul, all that is within us. It is to voice our praise through all aspects of our lives, in obedience to His Word.

We get such a clear description in David's Psalm 23:1-3, "The LORD *is* my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters. He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness For His name's sake."

That's why Jesus said in Mat 16:26, "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul?"

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Strength incorporates the capacity to withstand great force or pressure for endurance, firmness and toughness. Then, what does it mean to love God with all our strength?

Paul tells us to put on the full armor of God so we can have the proper strength to face serious temptations from the enemy of our faith. We must acknowledge that our human nature has been weakened through sin, and accordingly we must rely only on the strength of God to face the enemy. That's why in Chron. 16:11 we are told to “Seek the LORD and His strength.” Then, Joshua 1:9 says, “Have I not commanded you? Be strong and of good courage; do not be afraid, nor be dismayed, for the LORD your God *is* with you wherever you go.”

Physical strength is achieved through exercise, labor and determination to build into our body firmness and endurance to face the tasks of life. In the same vein, spiritual strength is only acquired through being empowered by God, thereby Paul's encouragement to put on the whole armor of God.

Therefore, to love God with all our strength requires we discipline ourselves to seek Him through thick and thin in His Word, standing firm against the enemy, follow His will, thus allowing us to so love God.

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“Therefore, whatever you want men
to do to you, do also to them,
for this is the Law and the Prophets.”

Mat 7:12

LOVING OUR NEIGHBOR AS OURSELVES

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In God's commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves, two questions come to mind: Who is my neighbor, and what does it mean to love my neighbor? Obviously, our neighbor is any and everyone that lives as a human being on this planet. And while we must admit many aren't loveable, they however fit the description of God's commandment.

Then, how and to what extent should I love my neighbor? Jesus answered it clearly in Luke 6:31 saying "And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise." This tells us that at the very core of loving our neighbors, we should desire for them the greatest blessing that God can provide anyone, and it is that they would be saved through Christ.

That revelation alone should make us realize how much our life testimony is important, as well as our attitude of love and sharing God's Word. It isn't conditional on their attitude or response, but rather on the fact that we as well were once lost but now are found in Christ.

The apostle John highlighted it in no uncertain terms; "Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love." 1John 4:7-8

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What can we expect if we truly love God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength?

Jesus answered this question in John 14:21, “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

In essence, our all encompassing love for God and Christ has for core purpose to be obedient to His commandments, His will, and therefore if we do, Christ will manifest Himself to us. That gives us the assurance that the Lord will always be our source of faith, peace and strength, no matter the circumstances of life. Deut. 7:9 says, “Therefore know that the LORD your God, He *is* God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments.”

As born again Christians, we are in a covenant with God through faith in Christ, and that covenant implies we repent, surrender our lives to Christ and follow Him. God’s promise is that if we do, He will not only be our very source of peace, joy and strength in this life, but even more importantly He gives us eternal life in His presence. That’s God’s eternal blessing for those who love Him.

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