



Contending for the Greatest Life Part 2

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Series: Contending for the Focused Life

Contending for The Greatest Life Part 2

The greatest man who ever lived
gave us
The greatest command ever given
that we might experience
The greatest life ever offered

Mark 12:28-30

Then one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, “Which is the first commandment of all?”

29 Jesus answered him, “The first of all the commandments is: ‘Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.

- This is the stirring of our hearts—this is true revival. Revival is when we start contending for the 1st commandment in our lives.
- This is how we overcome lust, anger, fear in our life is this.
- This is our place of freedom.
- If we decide to grow in this, we will see victory in these other areas.
- When you struggle with anger, lust, bitterness, you have to turn and focus on this commandment.
- Satan wants to redefine love. Redefine our purpose. His goal, one of the great battle fronts is to get us off track on what love is.

God wants us preoccupied with this commandment. John 14 says if you love me you will keep my commandments. The spirit of obedience doesn't quit. If you love Me, you won't quit.

- The key to greatness in this life is all found right here! We have grown accustomed to evaluating our life according to our accomplishments and achievements but Jesus says, “Beloved, this is it! This is the greatest commandment—if you follow this, everything just lines up. This is success; this is greatness.”
- This is the life we are all longing for—growing in, contending for, battling in our hearts to love God with ALL of our heart, soul, mind and strength.

The Focused Life: 4 Focused Ways to Love Him—we have to Laser Focus on this!

Mark 12:30

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.’ This is the first commandment.

1. Last week: The 1st Focused Way: Love the Lord your God with all of your Heart

- You can’t love God with your natural heart. Can’t be done.
- When we get saved, do you know that you get a new heart! A new heart is your birthright as a Jesus follower.
- You also receive the Holy Spirit, a new heart, a new Spirit.
- Loving God with all our heart means a lot of things but functionally it means:
 - o With your emotions. It means being in love with Jesus. It’s an intimate growing dynamic love relationship with Jesus through the Holy Spirit.
 - o Sanctified emotions! “Enthusiasm” (latin—*God possessed*) flows through asking God to sanctify, purify, revive your emotions.

- o It's an enthusiastic passionate love affection. Like David in Psalm 18: "I will love you Lord."
- o It's not about being dutiful and more about being devoted.

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul,

2. Secondly, Loving God with all your Soul

- The soul is the place of our identity. This is the place where we decide how we will evaluate ourselves: whether we are successful or not.
- The soul is our identity, our deeply held values of how we will measure whether we are successful.
 - o It's the place where we measure success. Identity is how we measure our value.
 - o Our world tells us that the measure of our value is based on popularity, how big our bank account is, what kind of car we drive, who we know, what promotions we've gotten.
 - o To love God with all your soul is that process of renewing your mind, transforming your heart to a new identity.
 - o God's Identity for us: "God loves me; I love God; therefore I'm successful."
 - o It's a revolutionary identity—a biblical identity based on God's Word—God loves me, I love God, therefore I'm successful.
- But the enemy knows that if you get this, your whole worldview will be changed. Thus, it's at the soul level that demons attack us, the world teaches us through shame.
- The soul is that place in our live that we feel shame and sin. It's the soul area that most Jesus disciples can never truly give over to Jesus.

- Shame might be defined as those things in your life that if others knew about them, they would no longer want a relationship with you.
- All of us have shame in our lives, every one of us.
- This is the dark place in our hearts that no one knows about—but God knows.
- This is the dark spots in our heart that we just won't ever talk about, and if we don't they grow, enlarge, and take over.

Connection is why we are here—it's what makes life worth living.

- When you ask people about love, belonging, they always tell you about their broken hearts, their disconnections, and their losses. Why?
- Shame is the fear of disconnection. We all think, “Is there something about me that, if people see it, I won't be worthy of connection?” No one wants to talk about it and the less you talk about it, the more you have it. It's universal. All of us have it.
- Loving God with our soul is loving God with our shame through a renewed identity that we are going to love God with our heart, soul, mind and strength:
 - o How do we do that? We become vulnerable about our shame, we share it, we own it, we take it to the Lord and lay it at the foot of the cross.
 - o If we don't, it comes back...it haunts us, it starts to overcome us.
 - o Loving God with our shame means we confess, we “agree with God” that it's there, it must be dealt with.
 - o Vulnerability is the beginning of breaking the power of shame.

- o Ex. In my darkest days two years ago, God mightily spoke to me from 2 Cor 4:1-6.

Therefore, since we have this ministry, as we have received mercy, we do not lose heart. 2 But we have renounced the hidden things of shame, not walking in craftiness nor handling the word of God deceitfully, but by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God (vulnerable). 3 But even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, 4 whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. 5 For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

Two Critical Steps to Breaking the Power of Shame

1. Being vulnerable with some brothers and sisters in our life about the secret places of our life.
 - o Get it out in the open so demons have no place to hang on.
 - o We need “bloodstained allies.”
 - o When you get your shame out in the open, you get set free. The grip of the shame is loosened.
 - o We quit posing, pretending, and projecting being a “Good Christian” and get real about our sins.
2. Invite the Light of Jesus to shine in our hearts.
 - o You have to fight for this, contend for it; it's a battle.
 - o To be laser-focused on our shame, our soul, and saying, “God I want to be wholehearted.”
 - o Wholehearted means to love God with your WHOLE heart,

heart, even the dark secret places.

- This how we break the power of porn, adultery, alcoholism, anger, greed, lust, lying.
- When we start loving God with our soul, we quit posing, pretending, and projecting to be a “good Christian” and start living the greatest life—no more lies.
- Key words: Authenticity! Integrity! Being in public what you are in private.
- We must make authenticity and integrity the focus of loving God. Instead of retreating into our shame, we say, “Lord I give you this shame area and I need you to empower me to love you right here, right now!”
- Then the Father says to the Son, “Wow, He gets it. He’s beginning to love us with his soul. That’s the love we have for each other.”

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We love God with all of our heart—our emotions, our will.
We love God with all of our soul—our identity and our shame.

3) We love God with all of our Mind.

Romans 12:1-2

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service. 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.

- We first present our whole selves to God—our body, soul, and spirit by the renewing of our minds.

- Our minds control our emotions, our bodies, our souls.
- Transformation is only possible through the renewing of our thinking—this is quite frankly why loving God with our souls is mentioned. Our mind must decide to deal with our shame and our hiddenness.
- There must be a battle plan for our love. We renew our mind with what God says about you—he loves you! He loves you.
- Many of you today don't feel God's love, you've never truly heard God say, "Steve, I love you, you are my child. I want the same love that was in God's heart for Me to be in you."
- John 15: "Abide in My Word...abide in My love."
- The most profound way we love God with our mind is through our eyes—meditating, studying, loving the Jesus of God's Word.
- Ex. I'm a Word guy! God spoke to me to be a man of the Word and the Spirit. We study God's Word through the illumination of the Spirit. Remember back, before you were born again, the Bible was just sooo boring! Then Jesus came in. The Holy Spirit came in!!
- PB&J is all about loving God with all our mind.
- Romans 12:3-12:
 - We get a right view of ourselves and it knocks us right off our high horse.
 - We start to have illumination about our spiritual gifts.
 - And it all adds up to a new love for ourselves and others.
- You renew your identity, defeat shame in your life, through God's Word. God's Word is more power than His name, because the Word defines the name!

- I just love the beginning of Ps 119,

***Blessed are the undefiled in the way,
Who walk in the law of the Lord!***

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***Blessed are those who keep His testimonies,
Who seek Him with the whole heart!***

We love God with all of our heart—our emotions, our will.
We love God with all of our soul—our identity and our shame.
We love God with all of our Mind—through loving God’s Word.

Fourthly, we love God with all of our strength.

- This is what gives us strength in our lives—this is our time, energy, and money.
- Your most important asset in this life is how you use your time, energy, and money.
- How you use your time—what you do with your time—loving God with how you use your time.
- How you utilize your energy—your physical resource of energy is what gets us up in the morning.
- How you focus your money—FBI once said that if they could get a hold of a man’s check book they could tell you within 90% accuracy what the values and vision were for that person.
- Ex. When you put money in that box every Sunday, when you give to Compassion, when you tithe, that’s loving God with your strength.
- Ex. When you go on the Springs Initiative and pain those houses, that’s loving God with your strength.
- Ex. When you got ready for our worship service, you got your kids ready, you drove here, you’re sitting here, that’s loving God with your strength.

- God sees that. The Son says to the Father, “They are loving us with their wholeheart! Isn’t that awesome!” This is how God measures success.
- Renew your identity in Christ, with the Word

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God wants us preoccupied with this commandment. If you love Me, you won’t quit.

- Quitting is way over-rated, over-sold.
- Drawing back and coasting is sooo boring!
- Love with all your strength—engage your strength in loving God.
- We’ve all been given various assignments. The enemy wants you to quit.
- Coasting is overrated. It makes us bored.

The Great Commandment has the Greatest Impact on God’s heart.

- When you love God it moves God’s heart. A father is moved when his children love him. When his children delight in him, it moves his heart.
- But we have to stay with it. Renewal in it. It will impact our hearts more than anything else we do.
- All of our lives are three steps forward and two steps back, this is the greatest impact on my heart. I feel connection with God and people when I’m in this mindset in my heart.
- When we think of the will of God, we think of what we will do instead of what we will become. This is the greatest will of God!
- The greatest calling is not the size of your bank account but the size of your heart.

- We need to re-sign-up with this dream; this is the primary dream for our life.
- Walking in the great commandment must be the primary dream of your life. Everything else is secondary to this!