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A publication of  the adult discipleship ministry of Triangle Community Church.

Talk together about the glory of God's kingdom. —Psalm 145:11
Love the Lord your God and **walk** in all his ways. —Joshua 22:5

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

- When Jesus was asked what is the greatest commandment in God's law, without hesitation he said:
1 *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."*
Does it seem at all strange to you for someone to **command** others to love them? Why or why not?
- 2** What does the fact that supreme love for God is commanded suggest to you about God? About us?
- 3** For a typical day in your life what do you think supreme, love for God would look like? Be specific. (See Pastor Doug's **five practical expressions of love toward God** in the [Sermon Summary](#).)
- 4** When Jesus was asked for the **single**, greatest commendment in Scripture, he added a **second**. **Why** do you think he did that?
- 5** Jewish scholars count **613** commands in the five books Moses wrote (Genesis—Deuteronomy). Jesus said that **all** of them depend on these two Great Commandments. What do you think that means?
- 6** See if you can classify each of the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17) under the rubric of "Love God supremely and love your neighbor as you love yourself."
- 7** The Great Commission is found in each of the Gospels and in Acts (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 16:15; Luke 24:46-47; John 20:21-23; Acts 1:8). Mark's version, the most succinct of the five, commands: "Go into **all** the world and preach the good news to **all** creation." Acts 4:12 adds: "There is salvation in **no one else**; for there is **no other name** under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved." How can we justify these commands in light of today's commitment to diversity?
- 8** How is it **loving** (the second Great Command) to change people's religion (the Great Commission)?
- 9** Who told you about Jesus, and helped you repent of your sins and believe in him? Tell us your story.

Application-Challenge

- Commit to becoming an extraordinary follower of Jesus Christ through growing in the disciplines of worship, fellowship, instruction, ministry, evangelism, and stewardship.
- 10**

- 1 Some people may feel awkward about admitting any strangeness to this command—after all, it's in the Bible! Practice your delivery and intonation in asking this question so that folks sense that they have permission to admit to sensing any oddness in this command. Make sure you ask “Why or why not?”
- 2 Possible answers include:
 - God **deserves** supreme love.
 - God has the **right** to command it.
 - It doesn't happen automatically.
 - We were created for that purpose.
 - It is **right** for God to receive our supreme love.
 - We don't automatically love God.
 - To not love God supremely is sin.
- 3 Help group members not simply parrot back Pastor Doug's five practical expressions, but rather to use them as a spring-board to identifying what, in their lives, would qualify as extremely concrete and specific expressions of love for God. In other words, their answers would be couched in terms of their specific situation (in terms of their spouse, their kids, their particular job stresses, extended family commitments, etc.)
- 4 Simply find out what group members **think**. You're not aiming at teaching anything yet (that will come next).

[FYI—The answer is that we have both vertical (God-ward) and horizontal (mankind-ward) obligations.]
- 5 All of the specific vertical and horizontal commands are simply specific out-workings of love. For example, since God is the only god there is, and since he created us, it is not loving to make an idol, and thus the Bible forbids idolatry. For example, on the horizontal level, since we don't like being lied to, loving others as we love ourselves requires that we be truth-tellers.
- 6 Let your group wrestle through this exercise, but here is the answer:
Commandments 1 - 4 (Exodus 20:1-11) are vertical commands, regarding supreme love for God.
Commandments 5 - 10 (Exodus 20:12-17) are horizontal commands, regarding how we love our fellow man.
- 7 Don't go onto 8 until your group has wrestled with the question: “How can we justify these commands in light of today's commitment to diversity?” Let them feel and grapple with the tension between the Great Commission and today's culture.
- 8 The short answer is: “It's not loving to let someone go to hell.”
My favorite approach to getting at that answer is to use parallel situations in which someone is engaged in a self-destructive behavior (alcoholism, gambling, harsh treatment of his children, unwise investments, etc.), and those who love him confront him and try to change his mind.
- 9 This question is designed to take the theoretical, conceptual discussions of 7 and 8 , and bring them into the “flesh and blood” realities of someone helping **them** change **their** minds and come to believe in Christ. Try and hear every group member's story. Note—you may find that some group members are iffy on whether or not they truly are saved. Take note of these situations, and then go to **TwoWaysToLive.com** to learn how to help them come to faith in Christ.
- 10 Ask folks (rhetorically, not with a show of hands) if they've signed the commitment card included in this week's Talking Points, Walking Points. Ask them to do so, if they've not yet. This is for their own good.

Sermon Summary (Key Texts: Matthew 22:37-40 & 28:18-20)

Here at Triangle Community church we like to say that we have two great commitments: we are committed to **the Great Commandment** and to **the Great Commission**.

The Great Commandment(s) (Matthew 22:37-40). One day a lawyer approached Jesus and testing him asked, “Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus taught that all of the commandments in the Old Testament can be distilled down to just two: [1] Love God supremely, and [2] Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Obey these two, and you will fulfill the will of God. Piece of cake, right? No—the only person who has ever loved this way is Jesus himself. And, we don’t just barely miss the mark; since these are the greatest commandments, failure to love God and others are the greatest sins! That is why we so desperately need a Savior. And after Jesus saves an individual, Jesus then also becomes the model for living. What does it look like to love God and others? Jesus reveals at least **five practical expressions of love toward God**.

(1) Give God first place in your life (Exodus 20:3). We all have little rival god’s in our lives—something that we’re willing to sin in order to get, or sin when we don’t get it. That is a rival God, an idol of the heart. Something has become more important than pleasing and obeying God—and we’re all guilty! Yet the command remains, “Have no gods before me.” **(2) Cultivate an attitude of gratitude** (Romans 14:6). All that we do should be done with thanksgiving to God in our hearts. Of all people, Christians should be the most grateful (James 1:17). **(3) Trust God—especially when your circumstances don’t seem to warrant it** (Hebrews 11:1, 6). Faith is simply taking God at his word. If God declares something to be true, if he makes a promise, faith takes hold of it, and doesn’t let go, even if, at the moment we can’t see the fulfillment. **(4) Adopt God’s priorities as our own** (Matthew 6:33). Genuine love for God boils down to a deep desire to please pursue those things that are most on God’s heart—and people are at the top of his list (Micah 6:8)! Finally, our love of God is reflected when we **(5) Commit to keep his commandments** (1 John 5:3). Since none of us does this perfectly we need a savior to make payment for our sins so we can receive his forgiveness. Then, we need his power to follow his example. As your pastor I am encouraged because I see your love for God being worked out in so many of your lives as you trust God in the face of illness and financial challenges, as you parent and make choices for your family, and as you serve your church family. Life isn’t easy, but be assured, over the course of your lifetime, you will see the positive fruit of these spiritual commitments and avoid a lot of unnecessary pain.

Jesus identified the second great command as loving one’s neighbor. What does neighbor-love look like? Again, here are **four practical expressions of neighbor-love**. **(1) Seek to meet their legitimate needs when it is within your power** (James 2:15-16; Luke 10:30-37). **(2) Be there when they need you** (Proverbs 17:17). When the chips are down, God’s people step up! My daughter and son-in-law saw this recently in South Africa when, after others had looted and burned grocery stores, hardware stores, clothing stores, it was the church that stepped into that chaos and cleaned up of the city. They had nothing to do with the destruction, but they led the rebuilding. **(3) Tell others what they need to hear, not what they want to hear** (Proverbs 27:6). An extreme example of this is an intervention where family and friends step in to lovingly confront one who is destroying his life through addiction. More often “the wounds of a friend” are expressed in less dramatic ways. It is easier to say nothing, but it is not loving. **(4) Love others with God’s kind of love**. First Corinthians 13:4-7 shows us how to love that difficult family member, that critical office mate, that prickly neighbor. We love others with the same selflessness and patience with which God loves us.

The Great Commission (Matthew 28:18-20). Jesus did **not** say, “Go make **converts**” but “go make **disciples**”! What’s the difference between a convert and a disciple? A convert is a person who has placed his trust in Jesus Christ as sin-bearer. They have been transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, and are born again as a free gift. But a disciple is a baptized believer, who is growing in his or her obedience to all Jesus commanded. Whereas eternal life is a free gift, following Christ as a disciple is costly (Matthew 16:24; Luke 14:33; John 13:35 & 15:8). Disciples aren’t perfect, but we are growing in our obedience to Jesus Christ. Sometimes it’s three steps forward and two steps back, but following Jesus is the direction of our lives in **six distinct areas**: **(1) Worship** We gather regularly with our church family to worship the God who created and redeemed us with his own blood (Psalm 2:11). **(2) Fellowship** We meet with other believers in small groups, to encourage and to be encouraged (Hebrews 10:24–25). **(3) Instruction** We commit to growing in our understanding and application of God’s Word (2 Peter 3:18). **(4) Ministry** We use our gifts to serve others in the context of our church family. **(5) Evangelism** We build redemptive relationships with non-Christian friends. **(6) Stewardship** We use our God-given resources to support our church’s kingdom ministry (1 Timothy 6:18). This is what disciples do; this is what extraordinary followers of Jesus look like. None of us do them perfectly—especially coming out a year of COVID—but my question to each of us is this: “Will you commit to becoming an extraordinary follower of Christ by growing in these six areas that we have talked about today?” I am not asking us to do anything other than what God asks for us to do.

"Five Question Bible Study" (see page below) *is a simple way to study any passage.*

We can use it to learn more about the nature of genuine compassion...

Monday—Read Exodus 33:18-19 & 34:6-7. When God revealed his "glorious goodness", what was it?

Tuesday—Read Psalm 78:36-39. What **does** God's compassion consider? What **doesn't** it consider?

Wednesday—Read Isaiah 30:15-22. Toward what kinds of people does God desire to show compassion?
What response should God's compassion elicit from us (v. 22)?

Thursday—Read Luke 15:25-32. Did the Father dispute the facts of v. 30? Did those facts change his response?

Friday—Read Colossians 3:14. Describe how this lifestyle reflects all you've learned about God's compassion.

Saturday—***In preparation for worshipping the risen Lord with your church family,***
study **Matthew 22:37-40.**

Bible Text: _____

Date: _____



What idea particularly strikes me from this text? [Note in which verse(s) it is found.]



What question does this text raise in my mind—and how would **this text** answer it?



What about Jesus Christ—his character and/or his redemption—relates to this text?



What action must I take as a result of this text? Be concrete and specific.



With whom will I share what I learned from this text? [and what was their response?]

"I commit to becoming an extraordinary follower of Jesus Christ by growing in the following six disciplines."

Worship: "I will gather regularly with my church family to worship the God who created and redeemed me with his own blood."

Fellowship: "I will meet with other believers in a small group to be encouraged as well as to encourage others."

Stewardship: "I will use my God-given resources to support kingdom ministry at TCC."

Instruction: "I commit to growing in my understanding and application of God's Word."

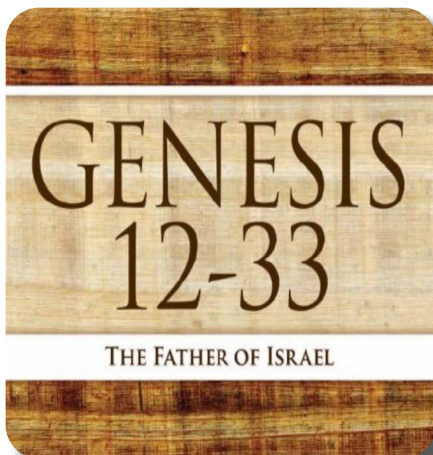
Ministry: "I will use my gifts to serve others in the context of TCC's ministry."

Evangelism: "I will build redemptive relationships with my non-Christian friends."

Signature

Date

PointMan



- Follow the life-lessons of the pagan moon-worshiper who went on to become the father of the Judeo-Christian faith!
- Ever wrestled with God? Find out who else did—and won!
- Learn how God can use flawed men to "bless the nations".
- Join other TCC men as we study God's unfolding promises to us.
- Beginning September 13.
- Four locations and times to choose from.
- **Interested?** Go to: **tcc.org/PointMan**

**COMING
SOON**