



THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS

WEEK 1 —

MATTHEW 22:37-40

When Jesus was asked what the most important commandment was, He emphatically responded: 'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment (Matthew 22:37-38). Of all the things the Lord commands of us, the most important thing is to love. Seems straightforward enough, doesn't it? But then, we live in a culture that defines love a million different ways, and don't forget we are called to love a spiritual being that we cannot physically touch, see, or (for the most part) audibly hear. How do we love someone who has no physical presence for us to engage with? And what does it truly mean to love someone?

Begin in a moment of prayer as a group, inviting God's Spirit to speak truth into this discussion and give understanding to each person who is present.

Discussion Questions—

Open the conversation with the following questions:

1. *What is the most important thing in your life today?*
 2. *How would someone who is observing your life be able to recognize that as the most important thing in your life?*
- *Based on what God tells us in His Word, how does He define love?* (Read any specific Scriptures that come to mind out loud).

Next, read Matthew 22:34-40 and Deuteronomy 6:4-9, then discuss the questions below (read out loud additional verses you can think of that bring clarity to these questions):

1. *How do you love God with all your heart?*
 2. *What does loving God with all your soul look like?*
 3. *How can you love God with all your mind in practical ways?*
- *Where does the power to love God come from?* (Read 1 John 4:19; Romans 5:5; 1 John 4:10).
 - *Do you know first-hand God's great love for you? Or, to put it another way, how aware are you of God's love for you on a typical day?*

Prayer—

As a group, pray and invite the Holy Spirit to show you, or show you again, the extent to which God loves you (Romans 5:5). Confess any doubts about God's love for you or shame you bear that makes you feel disqualified from God's love. Give the Holy Spirit authority to speak truth about His love for you.

Use the Personal Practice section on the back of this page to go deeper this week.*

Personal Practice—

Read and journal daily about the following Scriptures—

Day 1 – John 3:16-17 & 1 John 4:9-10

Day 2 – Romans 8:31-39

Day 3 – Psalm 108:1-5

Day 4 – Ephesians 3:14-21

Day 5 – Romans 5:3-11

Day 6 – 1 John 5:1-5

Reflection Questions—

1. Considering the Scriptures and discussion you had with your group this week, what is one way the Spirit is leading you to respond in faith and action?
2. As you consider your own time, passions, energy, and mental focus, is God at the center of those things? What would need to change for you to give God your affections, devotion, and commitments?
3. On a typical day, how aware are you of God's love for you? What would help you be more aware, and more consistently aware, of His love for you?
4. Think about a particularly difficult situation or relationship. How could it be different if you faced it confident of God's love for you?
5. How has God shown you His love in the past? Write down in detail a specific situation that comes to mind. Next take a moment to thank God for His goodness in your life.
6. How can you tangibly express your love to God today? Take the time and action to do it today.