

Our #1

most essential
highest
supreme
key
uppermost
greatest
central
principal
most important
most crucial
most basic
ultimate
maximum
absolute
main
utmost
chief
top
primary

obligation.

(Love-hate #1)

The GREATEST of human obligations

- ❖ It's **NOT** one of the Ten Commandments.
Though the Ten Commandments are an expression of it.
- ❖ It's summarized by the word "**LOVE**."
A **SPECIFIC** type of love that tends to be the **opposite** of what the WORLD promotes.

⇒ The obligation begins with: **Love** the LORD your God... Deuteronomy 6:5a (CSB) **But it doesn't stop there.**

Scripture gives us very specific instructions about what this "LOVE" is.

Love the LORD your God...
Deuteronomy 6:5a (CSB)

Our #1 most supreme important priority!

- ❖ This specific command is mentioned
 - 11 times in Deuteronomy and Joshua (and no where else in the Old Testament).
 - 3 times in the New Testament (only in Matthew, Mark and Luke).

YET IT ECLIPSES ALL OTHER COMMANDS!

THE FIRST OCCURRENCE OF THIS COMMAND:
(The defining statement, influencing *all other* expressions of it.)

Love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.
Deuteronomy 6:5 (CSB)

Moses gave this command
just before Israel would enter the land God gave them.

① **First, we are told WHO to love: The true God, the only God, the God of Israel, who's name is יהוה.** ①
(Often translated as "Yahweh," "Jehovah" or "LORD" <in capital letters>.)

Listen, Israel: The **LORD** our God, the **LORD** is one.
Deuteronomy 6:4 (CSB)

② **Then we are told HOW to express this love.** ②

Love the LORD your God **with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.**
Deuteronomy 6:5 (CSB)

- **Heart / soul:** It is to involve the totality of our being. (The focus is on the *internal* aspect of our being, because that controls the *external* aspect).
- **Strength:** Doing it with all our energy/effort/power/might.

Moses then goes on to show us how to express this command *externally* in how we live – which, in the Jewish context, included some symbolic expressions that are not required by non-Jews.

OTHER OLD TESTAMENT OCCURRENCES:

- Usually, once within each group of occurrences, we find:

"Love the LORD your God with all your **heart**, with all your **soul**."
(The phrase "with all your **strength**," found in Deuteronomy 6:5, is not repeated.)
- The other occurrences just mention the basic command:

"Love the LORD your God..."
(The statements about "**heart, soul, and strength**" are not repeated.)

Even though these phrases are not always repeated, the original statement set the stage for understanding what was meant every time the command was later mentioned.

WHAT ABOUT IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?

- Jesus quotes it once (mentioned in 2 gospels).

Mark's account, written to Gentiles, includes the complete command and the introduction (about who "God" is).

Jesus answered, ... "Listen, Israel! The Lord our God, the Lord is one. **Love** the Lord your God with all your **heart**, with all your **soul**, with all your **mind**, and with all your **strength**."
Mark 12:29-30 (CSB)

Matthew's account, written to Jews who already knew the command, gives us a shortened version of it.

He said to him, "**Love** the Lord your God with all your **heart**, with all your **soul**, and with all your **mind**."
Matthew 22:37 (CSB)

★ But in both accounts, Jesus adds the word "mind"! ★

- A religious leader also quotes it once.

This shows us that the Jews in Jesus' day knew what it was.

He answered, "**Love** the Lord your God with all your **heart**, with all your **soul**, with all your **strength**, and with all your **mind**," ...
Luke 10:27a (CSB)

JESUS' RESPONSE: "You've answered correctly," [Jesus] told him.
Luke 10:28a (CSB)

★ Note that the religious leader also added the word "mind"! ★
(And Jesus said it was correct!)

"Mind" is never mentioned in the Old Testament quotes of this command, and always in the New Testament quotes!
Did the religious leader – and even Jesus – make a mistake??
NO! The issue involved differences in language!

THE EFFECTS OF LANGUAGE CHANGE.

⇒ In Old Testament Hebrew:

- The **heart** was normally viewed as the place where thinking occurred – the place of intellectual activity, the activities of the "mind." (They did not use the word "brain" for this!)
- The **heart** could include emotional activity; but only as part of what occurred there.
- If they wanted to focus only on emotions (and not intellectual activity), they would use other words, such as: intestines!

YUCK!! THAT SOUNDS DISGUSTING!

THAT'S WHY ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS NORMALLY USE WORDS THAT SEEM MORE APPROPRIATE TO US!

VERSES THAT EMPHASIZE EMOTIONS (AND NOT MIND)...

(More common in the Old Testament.)

My beloved thrust his hand through the latch-opening; my **heart** began to pound for him.
Song of Songs 5:4 (NIV)

"Intestines"

KJV translates it as "my bowels were moved."
Modern translations: heart, feelings, etc.

(Sometimes occurs in the New Testament.)

If anyone has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no **pity** on them, how can the love of God be in that person?
1 John 3:17 (NIV)

"Intestines"

KJV translates it as "bowels of compassion."
Modern translations: heart, compassion, etc.

⇒ In New Testament Greek:

- Somewhat different concepts were introduced. Though the **heart** included things such as intelligence, moral choice, and sometimes emotions, there was also a separate word that emphasized thinking: the mind.
- Also, the Greek translation of these Old Testament verses uses the word "heart" in some passages, and "mind" in others!
- To ACCURATELY communicate the totality of the original Hebrew concept within the context of a society influenced by Greek thinking, the word "mind" (which was already in some verses in the O.T. Greek translation) was included.

| Original Hebrew, Deuteronomy 6:5 | O.T. Transl. in Greek, Deuteronomy 6:5 | N.T. Greek |
|--|--|---|
| Love God with your <u>heart</u> and soul... | Love God with your <u>mind</u> and soul... | Love God with your <u>heart</u> , soul, <u>mind</u> ... |
| ... and do it with all your strength/energy/power. | | |

★ TODAY: WE HAVE AN EVEN GREATER PROBLEM. ★

- The modern tendency is to use the concept of "heart" for conveying only "emotions"; and to relegate thinking to the "brain."
- Because of this, "loving with one's heart" tends to communicate *something that the Bible never intended!*

I LOVE YOU WITH ALL MY **HEART!**

=

I HAVE POSITIVE **EMOTIONAL FEELINGS** ABOUT YOU!

- In today's context, the New Testament quote – which includes the word "mind" – is most fitting for communicating what the original command intended.

WE MUST INCLUDE OUR EMOTIONS... BUT ALSO OUR INTELLECT!

