

LOVING GOD

The Priority of the Christian Life

Are you familiar with the overarching goal of the Christian life? What is the Christian life really about? What is the big idea?

Use this study to grow your understanding of the primacy of worship, of God's glory and of knowing and loving Him. You will begin to relate all you do back to this main priority.

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Memory Verse
Mark 12:30

Question 1: What is the great priority and purpose of man?

Man's great priority and purpose is to love God with his entire being: heart, soul, mind and strength (Mk 12:29-30).

Question 2: Why is this man's great priority and purpose?

Loving with the entire being is worship: expressing the worth and value due to God (Ps 29:1-2). Man was created to express this glory (Is 43:7), as image-bearers (Gen 1:26-28), just as the entire created order is to reflect and magnify the worth of God (Ps 148-149; Revelation 4:11).

Question 3: Why should all creatures magnify God's worth?

God is Beauty (Job 40:9-10). The Triune God is the perfection of all excellence in Being, the quintessence of truth and goodness. This glory calls for the appropriate response of highest enjoyment and admiration (Ps 113:3, Jer 10:7).

Question 4: Why should God delight in this worship?

God delights in His own glory above all things, knowing that the magnification of His glory is the greater good of all (Ps 33:1; Ps 147:1).

Question 5: Why should man delight in this worship?

Nothing is more reasonable, and nothing is more profitable than for man to love what is most beautiful (Jo 15:11, 17:13, 24; Ps 73:25)

Question 6: What is meant by loving God with one's entire being?

To love God with the entire being is to love Him for Himself, not as a means to a higher love, but to delight in Him ultimately, reflect Him completely and magnify Him fully (Ps 73:25-26).

Question 7: Why should God not be loved as a means to another end?

God is the only God, the only One worthy of ultimate love (Ps 115:1) and not an instrument to some other love, for all things are from Him, and through Him, and to Him (Rom 11:36).

Question 8: May we love anything or anyone besides God?

Ultimate love for God demands that we love only that which God loves, for His sake (Matthew 10:37). Nothing or no one else should be loved as an end.

Question 9: What kind of love should we give to God?

Our love for God should correspond to His supremacy and His holy nature: ultimate love, with ordinate affection (Mal 1:6,11).

Question 10: What is ordinate affection?

Ordinate affection is holy desire for God that corresponds in intention and expressions with God's nature (Phil 1:9-10, Ps 97:10).

Question 11: What is the danger of loving God wrongly?

Our hearts may deceive us into loving a god in our own image, or rejoicing in our own feelings (Ps 50:21, Rev 2:1-5).

Question 12: Is this love a work of our own human effort?

No, God's own love for Himself is first imputed to us when we are saved (justification), and then progressively imparted to us (sanctification) (Jo 17:26, 14:23; Ro 5:5; 1 Jo. 4:19).

Question 13: How can we love God in an ordinate way?

We love Him rightly when we know Him truly. God must graciously reveal Himself to us (Mt. 11:25-27; 1 Jo 4:19), and then teach and enable our hearts to respond appropriately to Him. (Ps 34:11; Phil 1:9-11; Heb 5:14).

Question 14: How does God graciously reveal Himself?

God reveals Himself by revealing His presence to his people through the illumination of the Spirit (Eph 3:16-19).

Question 15: How is God's presence revealed in the new covenant?

Once Christ ascended, He sent His Spirit to indwell all who are born again. Those "in Christ" will now experience "Christ in you" by the presence and work of the Spirit (Jo 14:16-23; 6:56; 17:23, 26; Gal 2:20; Eph 1:3; Col 1:27).

Question 16: What are we to do in His presence to come to love Him ordinately?

Christ tells us to abide in Him. Abiding is experiential union where we behold God and love Him (Jo 15:4-5; Eph 3:16-19).

Progress assessment and planning for change



What are some inappropriate ways of worshipping God?

Treating worship as entertainment, offering music that is trite, common or untrue, using His name flippantly are some examples of inappropriate worship.

How do we learn to love God appropriately?

Write down a description of your love for God at present – keeping these points in mind..

All the disciplines of the Christian life – obedience, prayer, meditation, fellowship, service, giving, evangelising, and many others are aimed at knowing God, so as to love Him, and thereby magnify His value to others.

Name the disciplines where you know you could improve. Choose one of these and give details of how you will strive to grow this area of your Christian walk.



Share this with one another person.

Scripture memorisation

Go through Mark 12:30 together. Clarify the meaning and its application. Make every effort to memorise it together before leaving the session.



Helpful resources

Desiring God - John Piper

On Loving God - Bernard of Clairvaux

The Four Loves - C.S. Lewis

How to Worship Jesus Christ - Joseph Carrol

God's Passion for His Glory - Jonathan Edwards/ John Piper

The Pursuit of God - A.W. Tozer