

Luke 10:27

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself.

Analysis

And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. This verse records the lawyer's response to Jesus' question, quoting and combining two Old Testament commands: Deuteronomy 6:5 (the Shema) and Leviticus 19:18. This synthesis became Jesus' own summary of the entire Law (Matthew 22:37-40, Mark 12:28-31). The command to "love the Lord thy God" (agapēseis Kyrion ton Theon sou, ἀγαπήσεις Κύριον τὸν Θεόν σου) uses the future indicative form of agapaō (ἀγαπάω), which in Koine Greek often functions as imperative—a command, not mere prediction.

The fourfold description of totality—"with all thy heart, soul, strength, and mind" (ex holēs tēs kardias sou kai en holē tē psychē sou kai en holē tē ischyi sou kai en holē tē dianoia sou)—demands comprehensive devotion involving every dimension of human existence. "Heart" (kardia, καρδιά) represents the center of personality, will, and emotions. "Soul" (psychē, ψυχή) indicates life-force and self. "Strength" (ischys, ἰσχύς) means physical power, energy, and ability. "Mind" (dianoia, διάνοια) refers to understanding, intelligence, and rational faculty. Together, these four terms encompass total human being—affections, will, physical capacity, and intellect. No aspect of personhood is excluded from love's claim.

The second command, "love thy neighbour as thyself" (ton plēsion sou hōs seauton, τὸν πλησίον σου ὡς σεαυτόν), assumes proper self-love (not selfishness) as the

measure for love of others. The term plēsion (πλησίον, "neighbor") means one who is near, but Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) radically expands "neighbor" to include anyone in need, even traditional enemies. These two commands are inseparable—genuine love for God inevitably produces love for God's image-bearers (1 John 4:20-21).

Historical Context

The lawyer's quotation reflects standard Jewish theological understanding. The Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) was recited twice daily by observant Jews and inscribed on doorposts and phylacteries. It formed the theological foundation of Jewish monotheism and covenant loyalty. Leviticus 19:18's command to love one's neighbor was also well-known, though rabbinic debate focused on defining "neighbor"—some restricted it to fellow Jews, while others extended it to righteous Gentiles or proselytes.

Jesus' brilliance lay not in creating new commands but in recognizing these two as the comprehensive summary of all 613 commandments in the Torah. He stated that "on these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:40)—meaning every other command derives from and serves these two foundational principles. This interpretive framework transformed Jewish legal tradition from complex casuistry to love-centered ethics.

The early church embraced this love-command as central to Christian ethics. Paul writes that "love is the fulfilling of the law" (Romans 13:10) and that the entire law is "summed up in this word, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Galatians 5:14). James calls Leviticus 19:18 the "royal law" (James 2:8). John's epistles repeatedly emphasize that love for God and love for neighbor are inseparable (1 John 3:16-18, 4:7-21). Augustine later summarized Christian ethics as "Love God and do what you will," trusting that genuine love for God naturally produces righteous behavior.

Related Passages

1 John 4:8 — God is love

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

Genesis 1:1 — Creation of heavens and earth

Psalms 19:1 — Heavens declare God's glory

Study Questions

1. What does it mean to love God with 'all' your heart, soul, strength, and mind, leaving nothing in reserve?
2. How does the command to love God with your 'mind' challenge anti-intellectual tendencies in some expressions of Christianity?
3. What is the relationship between loving God supremely and loving your neighbor as yourself?
4. How does Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan (following this exchange) redefine who qualifies as 'neighbor'?
5. In what ways do these two commands provide a framework for evaluating all other ethical questions and decisions?

Interlinear Text

ὁ	δὲ	ἀποκριθεὶς	εἶπεν	Ἀγαπήσεις	κύριον	τὸν	θεόν		
G3588	And	he answering	said	Thou shalt love	the Lord	G3588	God		
	G1161	G611	G2036	G25	G2962		G2316		
σου	ἐξ	ὅλης	τῆς	καρδίας	σου	καὶ	ἐξ	ὅλης	τῆς
thy	with	all	G3588	heart	thy	and	with	all	G3588
G4675	G1537	G3650		G2588	G4675	G2532	G1537	G3650	
ψυχῆς	σου	καὶ	ἐξ	ὅλης	τῆς	ἰσχύος	σου	καὶ	ἐξ
soul	thy	and	with	all	G3588	strength	thy	and	with
G5590	G4675	G2532	G1537	G3650		G2479	G4675	G2532	G1537
ὅλης	τῆς	διανοίας	σου	καὶ	τὸν	πλησίον	σου	ὡς	
all	G3588	mind	thy	and	G3588	neighbour	thy	as	
G3650		G1271	G4675	G2532		G4139	G4675	G5613	
σεαυτόν									
thyself									
G4572									

Additional Cross-References

Deuteronomy 6:5 (Love): And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.

Romans 13:9 (Love): For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Deuteronomy 30:6 (Love): And the LORD thy God will circumcise thine heart, and the heart of thy seed, to love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, that thou mayest live.

Leviticus 19:18 (Love): Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.

James 2:8 (Love): If ye fulfil the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

Deuteronomy 10:12 (Love): And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul,

1 John 3:18 (Love): My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

Hebrews 8:10 (References God): For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

Matthew 19:19 (Love): Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Galatians 5:13 (Love): For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.