



## Daily Verse and Comment

### [Matthew 22:37-38](#)

(37) Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. (38) This is the first and great commandment.

*King James Version*

[Jesus](#) had just confounded the Sadducees' question concerning marriage in the resurrection, and their rivals, the Pharisees, were probably gloating at their discomfort. Now, it was the Pharisees' turn to try to ensnare Jesus. They sought to find the most challenging question that they themselves disputed over and proposed to make Him squirm by asking it of Him.

They selected a lawyer, that is, a scribe well-versed in the law of [Moses](#), to do the asking. The lawyer had heard Jesus reasoning with the Sadducees and putting them to silence, and the Pharisees probably believed that the lawyer was better equipped to confound Jesus with a truly difficult question. The lawyer's job was to probe His understanding of the law, an area in which they thought He was weak.

The problem with the Pharisees is that they never grasped the simplicity of the law, much less the spirit of it, but gnashed at it, picked at it, and dissected it with the intent of being thought righteous because of their intellect. In doing so, they missed what [God](#) intended in giving the law. To see it from God's point of view would require change, and indeed, that could be a frightening thing.

"Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, 'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?'" ([Matthew 22:35-36](#)). When one considers the Pharisees' penchant for nitpicking rather than acting

from the heart, we can see how endless discussions and arguments could occur over this question. As it had stumped them, they felt it would surely befuddle Him.

The Jews had divided the commandments into greater and lesser commandments. In addition, the Pharisees were polarized in different camps, divided in their opinions regarding washings and other purification rites, laws of sacrifice and offering, circumcision, etc. In short, they were focused on twigs, missing the entire forest.

So, to ask Jesus which was the greatest commandment, a question they could not agree upon, seemed to be the ultimate way of drawing Him into their endless arguments. More than that, they figured it would finally put Him down in the eyes of the people.

In His answer, Jesus does not hesitate a bit, cutting through all the chaff and endless arguing, and placed the correct answer before them: "Jesus said to him, "'You shall [love](#) the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'" This is the first and great commandment'" ([Matthew 22:37-38](#)).

In effect, He says we are to love our God with the entirety of our being, more than the pleasures [Satan](#) sets before us, more than the individual escapes we run to when we are tired or down, more than the pulls of this flesh, more than the opinions of our peer groups, employers, or neighbors, and more than our own intellect and opinions. Simply, we are to put God and His instructions first in our lives in every way.

Jesus states it so simply it must have been difficult for His twig-focused audience to comprehend. This commandment, out of [Deuteronomy 6:5](#), is the first, the greatest of all in dignity and excellence, and is the foundation of all other commandments. It all begins with God and our wholehearted devotion to Him.

— John O. Reid

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