

Greatest Commandment Questions List

SECTION 1 – HOW TO LOVE

Lesson 1: What is love?

1. Write down a few of the key qualities that often define how people understand the concept of love today. When you are finished, we will take a closer look at how the Bible defines love in order to compare the two understandings.

How God defines love

2. What is your first reaction when you read that God dictates what it means to love?

3. What are some practical ways in which the biblical approach to loving others differs from the approach of the culture as you described it above?

Love is not a feeling

4. Take a moment to reflect on a time when you failed to love someone when you did not particularly like them. What factors led to that decision?

5. Next, think back on a time when you chose to love someone well when you did not like them. What factors led to that decision? How did those factors differ from the previous question?

When you don't like God

6. Think of a time when you did not like God very much. How did you respond in that moment? Looking back, would you change anything about that response?

Looking to Christ's example

7. As we finish for today, spend a few minutes praying and reflecting on ways that you can choose to love God and those he has brought into your life. Ask the Lord to point out anyone whom you need to love better. Then write down the thoughts the Holy Spirit brings to mind.

Lesson 2: Love is genuine

1. Can you think of a time when you have encountered that kind of love? If so, what are some of the most enduring impressions you remember? If you can't think of an instance where you experienced that kind of love, will you spend the next few moments instead asking God to help you receive it from him?

Love is time

2. When you think of Jesus in this moment, what impressions come to mind?

Love is sacrificial

3. Think back on the last time it cost you something to love another person. What led you to pay that cost? Did you expect gratitude and a similar act of love in return or was your focus primarily on blessing the other person?

Love is compassionate

4. When was the last time you experienced this type of compassion? When you think about the way that God loves you, where does such empathy rank on the list of qualities? Why do you think that's the case?

Christ's standard for love

5. So as we finish for today, take some time to ask God to show you any relationships in your life where you are falling short of the genuine love we see in Jesus. Ask him to point out ways you can love others without thinking of how that love might benefit you. Write down what he brings to mind.

6. Now ask those same questions about your love for him. In what ways is your love for God selfish rather than selfless? How can you show him the same kind of genuine love he has shown you? Write down what he brings to mind.

7. When you're done, turn those thoughts into a prayer, asking for God's help in showing the kind of genuine love toward other people and toward him that we see modeled in the life of Christ. Write down your prayer so that you can return to it as needed across the following lessons.

Lesson 3: Love is sacrificial

1. Take a moment to pray and ask God to help you make a list of the people for whom you genuinely believe you would be willing to die. Write down their names.

2. Now take some time to ask the Holy Spirit to help you understand the degree to which your daily interactions and devotion to those people exemplify that kind of love. Put another way, to what extent do you make the daily sacrifice of serving the people God brought to mind and meeting their needs ahead of your own? Has your willingness to make the ultimate sacrifice mitigated your commitment to making a daily sacrifice on their behalf?

Love is selfless

3. Read John 13:1–17. Next, close your eyes and picture yourself in the place of one of the disciples. See Jesus going down the line, getting closer to you with every passing minute. Now it's your turn. Feel the water pour over your feet. Feel the towel as the God of the universe works to remove the last vestiges of dirt and grime from between your toes. Now look into his eyes as he raises his gaze to meet yours before moving on to the next person.

4. As you reflect on this passage and what it would have been like to be among those whose feet were washed that day, what stands out most about Christ's love for you? What would it look like to love someone else with that same level of selfless devotion?

Lesson 4: Love is accountable

1. Take a few minutes to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to bring to mind times when other people have pointed out sin in your life. What was your initial reaction? What factors influenced the degree to which you were willing to accept their accountability?

2. Now ask yourself the same questions about times when that accountability has come from the Holy Spirit's conviction in your life. What, if anything, is different about your reaction when your shortcomings are pointed out by God rather than other people?

How do you define others?

3. When you think about holding others accountable for their sin, what emotions accompany that action? Do you get excited about the prospect of pointing out sin in the lives of others? Does that notion make you uncomfortable and wary? Or do you fall somewhere in between?

4. Take a few moments and ask the Spirit to help you understand your heart and mind on this matter. Why did you answer the previous question as you did? Is there an experience that comes to mind from the past that helps explain that answer? Do you feel like it's just how you're wired?

Do you receive accountability from God?

5. Take some time to pray and ask God to reveal any sin in your life that currently stands as an impediment to receiving his love and loving him well in return. Fight the urge to get defensive or explain away whatever issues he brings to mind. Instead, embrace the accountability, repent, and ask him to help you understand both how those sins became an issue and what you can do to avoid them going forward.

When you ignore sin

6. So as we finish for today, take some time to reflect on that truth and write down any thoughts that come to mind. When you're done, turn those thoughts into a prayer, asking God to help you receive and give his love by addressing sin when you see it, either in your life or the lives of others. And, particularly with the latter, ask the Holy Spirit to guide you in knowing how to confront that sin with grace and love rather than judgment.

Lesson 5: Love in full

Love is genuine

1. Take a few minutes to look back over the questions we discussed in the lesson on what it means for our love to be genuine. Would you answer those questions any differently today than when you first considered them?

2. In your own words, write down what it means to love genuinely based on the example of Jesus. How closely does your love for others adhere to that definition?

Love is sacrificial

3. Take a few minutes to look back over the questions we discussed in the lesson on what it means for our love to be sacrificial. Would you answer those questions any differently today than when you first considered them? Has your understanding of what it means to love genuinely changed the way you understand what it means to love sacrificially?

4. In your own words, write down what it means to love sacrificially based on the example of Jesus. How closely does your love for others adhere to that definition?

Love is accountable

5. With those factors in mind, take a few minutes to look back over the questions we discussed in the lesson on what it means for our love to be accountable. Would you answer those questions any differently today than when you first considered them? Has your understanding of what it means to love both genuinely and sacrificially changed the way you understand what it means to love by calling others to repentance?

6. In your own words, write down what it means for love to be accountable based on the example of Jesus. How closely does your love for others adhere to that definition?

How the Trinity reveals how to love

7. In what ways does the biblical definition of love vary from what you've seen in the culture or experienced from other people?

8. In what ways has your understanding of what it means to love evolved from the start of these lessons?

SECTION 2 – HOW TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART

Lesson 6: Loving God with your heart

“If you love me”

1. When you think about the connection between love and obedience, what is your first reaction to the concept? Does such obedience seem like a natural way to love? Or does part of you resist the idea?

Who hardened Pharaoh’s heart?

2. Take a few moments to prayerfully reflect on a time when it felt like you were walking away from God. What choices led you down that path? Did you take it in big leaps or small steps?

Moses wasn’t a yes man until he was

3. Just as you previously took time to reflect on an example of when you said no to God, now think back to a time when you told him yes, even if it was difficult to do so. What factors led you to make that decision? What impact did that moment of obedience have on your relationship with the Lord?

Lesson 7: Affection vs. emotion

1. Take a moment to reflect on the difference between affections and emotions and the role both have played in your relationships. What are some of the primary differences you've seen in how you relate to other people and to God when each was the driving force? What were some of the pros and cons of each?

David's affections for God in Psalm 27

2. Take a few minutes to read Psalm 27. What stands out most about the way David speaks of the Lord across these verses? How would you describe his love for God?

David had a history of God's faithfulness

3. Take a few moments to pray and ask the Lord to bring to mind examples from your past where you experienced God's goodness. Such reflection is not intended to minimize the times when that goodness may have appeared lacking, as we will discuss later in this lesson. But all of us have encountered some measure of God's grace and love in this life, no matter how difficult the dark times have been. Before moving on to the next part of this lesson, take a moment to write down those good experiences and thank God for them.

David genuinely delighted in God's presence

4. How close are you to experiencing that kind of relationship with God?

Doubt drove David to God

5. Does your devotion to the Lord tend to vary when times are hard and you encounter the kinds of stress and pain that might make you feel as though he is distant, or do such times drive you closer to him?

David trusted God

6. Take a few moments to pray and ask God to help you evaluate your relationship with him based on the pattern established in Psalm 27.

7. Do recent events or the larger history of your relationship with the Lord have a greater impact on how you see him today? When you get ready to pray or open his word to read, are you more excited to start that conversation or for it to be over so you can go on to something else? How do difficult times impact your walk with the Lord? Do they pull you closer to him or drive you away?

Lesson 8: Loving God in times of hardship

“I believe; help my unbelief!”

1. Take a moment and think back to a time when you struggled to feel very loving toward the Lord. What event(s) created those feelings? How did you respond to them? Looking back on it now, what—if anything—would you do differently in your approach to God during those times?

God’s uncomfortable reply to Job

2. Take a few moments to reflect on God’s interactions with Job. If you’re being completely honest with yourself, how do you feel about it? Take the time to ask God why he answered that way and then give him space to respond and write down what, if anything, he shows you.

Choose to trust despite the pain

3. So, as we conclude for today, is there some pain in your life that’s making it difficult to love God with all your heart? It could be something recent or the residual hurt of a wound that scarred over long ago. Whatever the case may be, start by reminding yourself of who he is as your good, heavenly Father and the love that he has for you. Commit to loving him, even in the midst of the pain. Then take that pain to the Lord and ask him whatever questions come to mind, giving him the necessary space to respond.

Lesson 9: Loving God by learning to be content in him

1. Before we take a closer look at Paul's example, can you think of a time when you loved someone so utterly that being in their presence brought you a sense of peace? What was it about that person and your relationship with them that triggered those feelings?

Choose contentment

2. When you think about your relationship with the Lord, to what extent do your circumstances dictate how much time you spend with him? How consistent are you in your devotion to God? If you're honest with yourself, how consistent do you really want to be?

Have an active faith

3. When you think about the various aspects of what Paul writes in those verses, with which part do you find it most difficult to be consistent? Do you find it easier to turn to God when things are going well or when your circumstances take a more difficult turn? Is your walk with him more consistent in good times or bad?

Lesson 10: Loving your neighbor as yourself

A call to love despite the cost

1. Take a few moments to read Matthew 25:31–46. Write down any insights that come to mind regarding the kind of love Jesus asks us to show toward others in this passage.

2. Can you think of a time when you have felt a clear call from the Lord to love someone who was difficult to love? Did you follow God’s prompting? If so, what was the result?

Love is in the proof

3. Have you ever taken the time to ask those questions? Take a few moments now to do so and write down what insights come to mind.

A ready yes

4. So as we conclude for today, take some time to ask the Lord to give you an honest evaluation of the degree to which your love for him has extended to your love for others. Pray for examples of where you’ve done that well and also examples of where you’ve fallen short.

SECTION 3: HOW TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR SOUL

Lesson 11: Making God your king

1. Before we go further, take a few moments to reflect on how you see God. Which of his characteristics stands out most prominently in your mind? When you go to God in prayer, how do you prefer to think about him?

God is not a hobby

2. When you consider what it means for someone to be a king, what qualities come to mind? Is your general view of what that means positive or negative? In what ways might those preconceived notions impact the way in which you view God as king?

The problem with crowning a king

3. Can you think of a time when you warred against God in this way? What kind of collateral damage did it cause in your relationship with him and your relationships with other people? If you are currently fighting that battle, what is keeping you from surrendering to the Lord and placing your life in his hands?

The mistake we can't make

4. So, as we conclude for today, look back over the answers you gave to the previous questions. Ask God to forgive you for the ways in which you've attempted to make him something less than your king. Be as specific as memory will allow.

5. When you're done, ask the Holy Spirit to convict you of any ways you're currently attempting to keep his throne for yourself and of any attempts to do so in the future.

6. Lastly, turn those thoughts into a final prayer in which you surrender the role of king of your life back to God and write that prayer down in your journal.

Notes

Lesson 12: Prayer

1. Before we continue, take a few moments to reflect on your communication with God. When you pray, how closely does it resemble the kind of conversation you would have with your spouse or a best friend? How closely do you think it should? And when you pray, do you expect God to answer, or is it more something you do because you know you're supposed to?

When the door doesn't open

2. Before we return to God's word for guidance on those questions, take some time to really wrestle with the degree to which your experiences with prayer have seemed to measure up to what Jesus describes in this passage. Are there any lingering areas of hurt or disappointment from your past that might be impacting your prayers today?

How to have a more consistent prayer life

3. Take a few moments to look back over the answers you gave to the earlier questions in this lesson. In light of those answers, be honest with God and address any issues that he has brought to mind.

Lesson 13: Worship

1. When you think of worship, what comes to mind first? What are some examples of the ways people worship something other than God? Is there anything in your life besides the Lord that vies for your worship?

Worship is more than music

2. Before we continue, take some time to reflect and ask the Lord to help you understand in what ways you connect with him best. How can those forms of connection inform the way you approach worshipping him? Are there any ways in which your views of worship have been too narrow?

What true worship requires

3. With that basic truth in mind, take some time now to pray and ask God to reveal any areas of your life that you've deemed off-limits to him. To put it another way, is there any part of your life that could not be presented to God as a "living sacrifice?" If so, ask the Spirit to reveal the ways in which that sin is impeding your worship of the Lord.

4. When you're done, take those thoughts and turn them into a prayer. Make that prayer part of your worship to God today.

Lesson 14: Spiritual disciplines

1. Now, take a few moments to reflect on any preconceived notions or experiences you may have regarding the idea of spiritual disciplines. What thoughts first come to mind? Are they primarily positive, negative, or neutral? When you think about engaging in a spiritual discipline, how do you feel?

Vertical disciplines

2. Before we move on to the horizontal disciplines, take a few moments to reflect on the vertical disciplines we just discussed. Which of those three comes most naturally to you? Is there one that always seems to represent a struggle? Ask God to help you understand why that's the case and write down what he shows you.

Horizontal disciplines

3. Before we conclude for today, take some time to ask God once again to point out which of these disciplines comes most naturally to you and which needs the most work. What factors make it difficult to put in the work when we know there is an aspect of our relationship with God that is deficient?

Lesson 15: Loving your neighbor

1. To that end, begin by looking back over your notes from the previous four lessons. What stands out most to you about what was discussed? Is there one aspect of what it means to love God with your soul that proves particularly challenging? Is there an area that comes most naturally?

Recognize your relational realities

2. Is there someone in your life whom you struggle to see accurately? If so, what is it about them that tends to obscure who they truly are? How does the picture of them that you prefer to keep in your mind impact the way that you love them? Lastly, what would it look like to love the real person rather than the version you have created?

Assess yourself with grace

3. So, as we conclude for today, ask the Holy Spirit to show you any ways in which you have accepted a false understanding of who God has created you to be. Is there an area of your life where you have accepted sin as inevitable or even justified it as an unavoidable byproduct of who you see yourself to be? Conversely, are you so aware of your faults that it has made it difficult to accept the gifts, talents, and sense of worth that the Lord has bestowed on you? In either case, how have those misconceptions impacted your relationships with other people?

SECTION 4: HOW TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR MIND

Lesson 16: Why you should trust the Bible

1. If someone were to ask you why you trust the Bible, what would you tell them? (If you don't trust the Bible, our hope is that this lesson will help you get there.)

Is today's Bible accurate?

2. Does that background impact the way you see God's word? If so, how?

Is the Bible still relevant?

3. We opened this lesson by asking how you would respond if someone were to ask you why you trust the Bible. Has your answer changed? If so, how?

4. If you do believe that the Bible is God's word, does the way you live on a daily basis show evidence of that belief?

Lesson 17: How to read the Bible

1. When you open your Bible to read, what do you expect to happen? Do you approach Scripture with a clear goal in mind? Is your study born more from an obligatory awareness that you should spend time reading the Bible or the genuine desire to do so? When was the last time you were reading and felt like God really spoke to you through his word?

3 commitments before reading the Bible

2. With which of these three steps do you tend to have the greatest difficulty? What steps can you take today to ensure that these commitments translate into action rather than empty words?

3 assumptions when studying the Bible

3. How comfortable do you feel with the idea of being your own priest before God? Is it liberating, intimidating, or a bit of both?

Essential questions for Bible study

4. To close, take a few moments to pray and be honest with God about any hesitations, fears, or doubts you may have about reading the Bible. Then ask for his help, choose a passage, and jump in. As we talked about in the last lesson, the best way to learn how to read the Bible is by reading the Bible. Set aside some time to start today.

Lesson 18: How to apply Scripture to cultural issues

1. Before we begin, are there any issues where you struggle to understand what the Bible teaches? When a question arises without a clear, biblical answer, what do you do?

What is your motivation?

2. Are there any issues with which you find yourself wanting to agree with the culture rather than the Bible? When that tension arises, what do you do? What should you do?

Who is your community?

3. Do you have people in your life who are more committed to God's truth than the world's? In which parts of your life do you struggle most to make that choice?

Who's right?

4. As we conclude, go back over your answers to the first questions in this lesson. Are there any topics where you struggle to know what the Bible teaches? If so, ask God to help you discern the degree to which that struggle is the result of a lack of information or a disconnect between what we want to believe and what Scripture shows to be true.

Lesson 19: How to share God's truth with others

1. When you think about standing for biblical truth when that truth goes against cultural norms, what thoughts come to mind? Does it make you nervous, combative, anticipatory, or something else entirely?

2. Are there any issues or questions where you feel confident in speaking up for the Bible's perspective? Are there any where you feel ill-equipped to do so? Depending on how you answered those questions, what difference does it make in your approach?

Richard Niebuhr's 5 ways to live as a Christian

3. Of the five models described above, which do you find most personally appealing? Which do you think fits best with the calling of Scripture?

The biblical way to approach culture

4. Pick an issue that you feel comfortable defending from a biblical perspective. Now, using the Christ-transforming-culture model, how would you approach sharing God's truth in that area with those who think differently? Which factors would you emphasize and which would you leave to later conversations?

Lesson 20: Be salt and light

1. Before we continue, take a few minutes to look back over your notes from the previous lessons in this section. What, if anything, stands out to you most? When you first encountered those ideas, did you have a desire to share them with anyone else? Why do you think that was the case?

“You’re here to be salt-seasoning”

2. Take a few moments to read Matthew 5:13–16. What stands out most to you about the way Jesus describes his followers in this passage?

Preparing for a personal conversation

3. Pray and ask God to bring to mind a friend or loved one who has embraced a cultural view on a subject that stands in opposition to the truth of God’s word. Now spend a few minutes thinking deeply about their perspective.

4. Ask the Lord for insights into why they believe as they do. Are they afraid to be labeled a bigot or to go against what the larger society believes? Do they genuinely think that they are correct? Are you certain they are not? If so, why?

SECTION 5 – HOW TO LOVE GOD WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH

Lesson 21: The power of meekness

1. When you hear the term meekness, what comes to mind? Is it a quality that you associate more with strength or weakness?

Choose to submit your strengths to God

2. So, as we close for today, take some time to pray and ask the Holy Spirit to show you which of the four steps seems most difficult to practice on a daily basis and why.

3. When you're done, ask the Lord to show you some practical steps you can take to help overcome those difficulties.

4. Lastly, ask God to help you live in such a way that you can experience the blessing and freedom of biblical meekness.

Lesson 22: Understanding your strengths

1. Before reading further, take our [free spiritual gift assessment](#). Once completed, write down your top 3 to 4 spiritual gifts.

When you discover your gifting

2. Understanding our spiritual gifts and then submitting them to the Lord's direction are integral parts of what it means to love God with all our strength. So, as we conclude for today, take some time to ask the Spirit to help you understand not only what your gifts are but why he chose to give them to you.

3. Then pray that the Lord would grant you the sense of peace and contentment we discussed in lesson 9 in regard to your gifting.

4. Lastly, ask God to make you attuned to any opportunities he brings your way to use your gifts for his glory. And know that this should not be a one-time conversation. Rather, it should continue throughout the day and throughout your week as God uses your experiences to help you better understand and submit your strengths to him.

Lesson 23: Understanding your weaknesses

1. Take a few moments to pray and ask God to show you any areas of your life where you are particularly vulnerable to sin. Are there any sins that, no matter how many times you stumble and repent, always seem to come back around? Is there a temptation that you've learned to give a wider berth than others seem to need?

When your weakness keeps you away from God

2. Look back again at the questions we asked to start this lesson. Are those sins and temptations keeping you from complete commitment to Christ? If so, how can you follow Christ's command to the rich young ruler?

Don't minimize your weaknesses; surrender them

3. So, as we conclude for today, think once again on the sins and temptations God brought to mind earlier in this lesson. Ask for his help in giving them over to him. Rigorously apply the guidelines we mentioned at the start to this area of your life and ask the Holy Spirit to convict you whenever you are tempted to compromise them.

Lesson 24: The power of personal testimony

1. When it comes to sharing your testimony, how comfortable are you with telling others about what God has done in your life? Do you think that's something you could do in about five to ten minutes? Have you given much thought to which parts of your story you might emphasize?

Always be prepared

2. Can you think of a time when you were given the chance to share the gospel with someone? How did you feel at that moment? Looking back on it, is there anything you'd do differently?

3 ways to be ready to share your story

3. With that in mind, take some time to pray and ask God to help you hone your testimony into a story he can use to help others know him better. Write down any key moments or thoughts he brings to mind.

4. Then, when you're done, commit to asking a friend or family member if you can share your testimony with them. Be sure to include God in that conversation as well as it could be he plans to use it as more than just an opportunity to practice. After all, it's surprising how often even the people closest to us don't fully grasp all that the Lord has done in our lives. Let's correct that today.

Lesson 25: How to love your neighbor with all your strength

1. Before we begin, take a few moments to look back over your responses to the previous questions in this section. Remind yourself of the ways God has gifted you and of the areas in which you are most in need of his help. Think back on how those factors have influenced the story of his impact on your life that he's equipped you to share with others.

Who is your neighbor

2. Take a few minutes to read Luke 10:25–37. Ask God to help you see the parable of the good Samaritan with fresh eyes. Then write down whatever aspects of the story stand out to you most.

3. When you think about this story, what lessons do you think Christ wanted us to learn from the Samaritan's actions regarding what it means to love our neighbor? How might those translate to our culture today?

Modeling God's love

4. So, as we finish this lesson and this series, take some time to ask God to show you any ways in which your love for him falls short of that standard. Is there a particular aspect of loving God that we have discussed—heart, soul, mind, or strength—that is particularly difficult to surrender to the Lord? Is there one that comes more naturally than the rest?
