

# The First and Great Commandment

Ryan Moody

April 2021

## Introduction

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. This is the first and great commandment.** And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. (Matthew 22:37-40)

And Jesus answered him, **The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first commandment.** And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:29-31)

The law of the Old Covenant given through Moses was primarily the Ten Commandments followed by many other commandments, statutes, and judgments. Christ's law under the New Covenant, also given through Moses, consists of only the first and second great commandments: "Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength," "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." He declared, "On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets," "There is none other commandment greater than these."

Fulfilling, keeping, and obeying "The first and great commandment" begins with having the right view of God and worshipping Him as the only true God. And we can only know Him as revealed to His people through Moses, then finally and fully through His Son Jesus Christ. God the Father and His Son are in total unity and agreement: "I and *my* Father are one" (Jhn 10:30); "the Father *is* in me, and I in him" (Jhn 10:38); "he that hath seen me hath seen the Father" (Jhn 14:9); "I *am* in the Father, and the Father in me" (Jhn 14:11); "as thou, Father, *art* in me, and I in thee" (Jhn 17:21). Therefore, we must listen to God's Son—obey His commandments and agree with His teaching.

## The LORD our God *is* one LORD

God had revealed to His people that He is "one Lord" or one Ruler, "**Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD**" (Deu 6:4). He isn't multiple Rulers or Persons in one God. He is, has always been, and always will be, one person. And although His only begotten Son was with Him at the time, "The same was in the beginning **with God**" (Jhn 1:2), He hadn't yet revealed the understanding of this to His people. His Son being with Him since the beginning, and being with mankind in the world for over 30 years, and being with Him now at His right hand, doesn't change the truth that "The LORD our God *is* one LORD." But once the Father sent His Son into the world, He now requires His people and all people to honor His Son as Himself. This doesn't make His Son a co-equal Ruler with Himself as taught in Trinitarianism, but simply His subordinate and intermediary Ruler on His behalf. And although His Son is certainly a person Himself, entirely distinct from His Father as a person and completely one with His Father in unity, His Son is not "The LORD our God."

The Son is a person and not co-equal with God. But the holy Breath of God, on the other hand, isn't even a person. God's people never thought of the holy Breath, the Greek *hagios pneuma* (Strong's 40 & 4151), as a conscious personal being but simply God's Breath. From its very first mention in Scripture, "And the Spirit [*ruah* 7307] of God moved upon the face of the waters" (Gen 1:2), it was God's Breath gusting across the surface of the waters as He blew from His mouth. It wasn't a person flying over the water like superman!

Jesus told a Samaritan woman "Ye worship ye know not what: **we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews**" (Jhn 4:22). Only the Jewish people knew God. Now, all other people must know the God of the Jews to be saved or have eternal life, "**And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent**" (Jhn 17:3). The only way to have eternal life is to know the God of the Jews "The LORD our God *is* one LORD," "the only true God," and His Son Jesus Christ whom He sent.

## The greatest commandment

Jesus quoted from Moses the greatest commandment ever given: "Hear, O Israel: **The LORD our God *is* one LORD: And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might**" (Deu 6:4-5); "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. This is the first and great commandment.**" (Mat 22:37-38); "And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, **Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: *this is the first commandment***" (Mar 12:29-30). Obviously the "first of all the commandments" isn't first chronologically because it was actually the last commandment given before Moses died. Rather, it's first in importance. It's the greatest of all commandments, even greater than all the Ten Commandments. What does it really matter, hypothetically, if we're keeping all of God's commandments but breaking this most important one of all? Therefore, break this one commandment and nothing else ultimately matters!

There are approximately 2 billion people in the world today that identify as Trinitarian—a little over half Roman Catholic and a little less than half Protestant. And the argument is sometimes made that *that* many people can't all be wrong about God. However, there are also approximately 2 billion people in the world today that identify as Muslim that are most definitely wrong about God. Therefore, that argument doesn't stand. In fact, that there's such a vast multitude of Trinitarians shouldn't be assuring but alarming. Jesus taught, "Enter ye in at the strait gate: for wide *is* the gate, and **broad *is* the way**, that leadeth to destruction, and **many there be** which go in thereat: Because strait *is* the gate, and **narrow *is* the way**, which leadeth unto life, and **few there be** that find it" (Mat 7:13-14). If 2 billion Muslims are among the "many" on the broad way, then how can 2 billion Trinitarians be the "few" on the narrow way?

After the death of the apostles, the true view of God was corrupted and eventually systematized into the Trinitarian view under the Roman Catholic Church. By torturing and executing millions of people and locking the Scriptures away from society, their false view of God was forced upon the world. And this is still the predominant "Christian" view today. The Protestant Reformation about 500 years ago did good in getting the Scriptures back into people's hands but didn't help much in any other way. It still kept the same false view of God that doesn't save.

Trinitarianism isn't monotheism but polytheism. It's three gods under the guise of only one God by calling those three gods something else—three persons. But simply calling it something else doesn't change what it truly is. Protestant Trinitarianism is simply a “Christianized” worship of false gods that's virtually indistinguishable from true Christianity because it does almost all the “Christian” things.

Suppose we: confess Jesus as Lord; repent of our sins; get baptized; go to church every week; sing praise and worship songs; live morally; pray every day; read our Bible every day; memorize verses; read Christian books; keep a journal; fast at times; listen to sermons; serve in ministry positions; tell others about Jesus; give our time and resources. Does any of that really matter if we're breaking the first and greatest commandment of all? It's the overarching deception of the devil for people to not knowingly be breaking the greatest commandment, then convince them they're on the narrow way because they're striving to keep all other lesser commandments. The devil doesn't care what god or gods we serve just so long as it's not the one true God. Whether Trinitarian, Muslim, Mormon, monotheist, polytheist, pantheist, agnostic, or atheist, a false view of God is breaking the greatest commandment of all and doesn't save.

## Worshipping God in breath

“Ye worship ye know not what: **we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.** But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall **worship the Father in spirit [breath] and in truth:** for the Father seeketh such to worship him. **God is a Spirit [Breath]:** and they that worship him must **worship him in spirit [breath] and in truth.**” (Jhn 4:22-24). When Jesus said “God is spirit [breath]” (NET, NIV), He wasn't speaking literally as though identifying what kind or type of being God is. He was simply using a figure of speech called a metaphor in which a term is applied to suggest a correspondence. An example from John is “God is love” (1Jo 4:8,16). Of course, God isn't literally love but because He completely embodies everything that love is, John spoke of Him that way metaphorically. That “God is spirit [breath]” is that God is so completely and exclusively the source of our breath that His Son spoke of Him as being our breath. Therefore, to worship Him in breath is to give Him back the breath He gave us—to serve Him with this life in whatever way pleases Him. Paul wrote to the Romans, “For God is my witness, **whom I serve with my spirit [breath]** in the gospel of his Son” (Rom 1:9). To “serve with my breath” is to serve Him with this life.

We breathe in and out about 23,000 times a day. That's over 8 million times a year. A 65-year old has already breathed over half a billion times! And every single one of those breaths is from God, “God is breath.” Our lives are so extremely fragile that God decides to even give us our next breath. Since He is our breath, we must worship Him with this breath we have now for Him to give us breath for eternity.

“The LORD *is* nigh unto them that are of a broken heart; and saveth such as be of **a contrite spirit [breath]**” (Psa 34:18); “The sacrifices of God *are* **a broken spirit [breath]:** a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise” (Psa 51:17); “Better *it is to be* of **an humble spirit [breath]** with the lowly, than to divide the spoil with the proud” (Pro 16:19); “A man's pride shall bring him low: but honour shall uphold **the humble in spirit [breath]**” (Pro 29:23); “I dwell in the high and holy *place*, with him also *that is* of **a contrite and humble spirit [breath]**, to revive **the spirit [breath] of the humble**, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isa 57:15); “but to this *man* will I look, *even to him that is* **poor and of a contrite spirit [breath]**, and trembleth at my word” (Isa 66:2).

Jesus taught, “Blessed *are* the poor in spirit [*breath*]: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Mat 5:3), “**Blessed be ye poor:** for yours is the kingdom of God” (Luk 6:20). Our breath is our life. To be “poor in breath” is to lose or forfeit the life we have now, including all that we could have and could be, for Jesus Christ’s sake—for the glory of His name: “He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that **loseth his life for my sake** shall find it” (Mat 10:39); “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will **lose his life for my sake** shall find it” (Mat 16:25); “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall **lose his life for my sake and the gospel’s**, the same shall save it” (Mar 8:35); “For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: but whosoever will **lose his life for my sake**, the same shall save it” (Luk 9:24); “Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall **lose his life** shall preserve it” (Luk 17:33); “He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that **hateth his life in this world** shall keep it unto life eternal” (Jhn 12:25).

As servants of the Lord Jesus Christ, our lives aren’t our own but belong to Him, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [*Breath*] *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and **ye are not your own?** For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God **in your body, and in your spirit [*breath*], which are God’s.**” (1Co 6:19-20). The apostle Paul said it well, “neither count I my life dear unto myself” (Act 20:24). To be “poor in breath” is to count ourselves bankrupt in this life, and only receive gain for ourselves after we die, “For to me to live *is* Christ, and to die *is* gain” (Phl 1:21).

“For we are the circumcision, which **worship God in the spirit [*breath*], and rejoice in Christ Jesus**, and have no confidence in the flesh. (Phl 3:3), “That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, **being made conformable unto his death;** If by any means I might **attain unto the resurrection of the dead**” (Phl 3:10-11). To “worship God in the breath” is to “rejoice in Christ Jesus” and be “made conformable unto his death.” It’s to give our lives for others as He gave His life for us. Paul wrote earlier, “**Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:** Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of **a servant**, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, **he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross**” (Phl 2:5-8). He not only was “obedient unto death,” but “even the death of the cross.” He didn’t just die but died a terribly painful and shameful death as a common criminal. And in His dying words He committed back to His Father the breath He had been given, “And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, **Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit [*breath*];** and having said thus, he gave up the ghost [*exhaled*]” (Luk 23:46). He used the breath His Father gave to do the will of His Father unto His dying breath, then placed Himself at His Father’s mercy to breathe life back into Him.

This is what Paul meant by “being made conformable unto his death.” It’s to have the same mindset as Christ, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,” serving others in humility even to the point of possibly dying a disgraceful death as He did. We “worship God in the breath” when we use our breath for the purpose it was given. This is the only means of attaining eternal life, “If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” We must “rejoice in Christ Jesus” by obeying Him and being conformed to His life and death as our Exemplar.

## Worshipping God in truth

Jesus Christ also said that the true worshippers must worship God in truth, “worship the Father in spirit [*breath*] and **in truth** ... worship *him* in spirit [*breath*] and **in truth**” (Jhn 4:23,24). The truth is what Jesus Christ taught: “grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (Jhn 1:17); “And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall

make you free" (Jhn 8:32); "And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" (Jhn 8:46); "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Jhn 14:6); "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (Jhn 18:37); "the truth is in Jesus" (Eph 4:21). The teaching and preaching of Jesus Christ is the truth. It's the required starting point and basis for knowing the true God, ourselves, and everything else. None of us are the arbiters of the truth and neither is any religion or system of theology. Jesus Christ is the arbiter of the truth and what He said is the final word.

The correct view of God is what Jesus Christ taught about Him. Nobody but the Son of God has seen God, "**No man hath seen God at any time**; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, **he hath declared him**" (Jhn 1:18), "**Not that any man hath seen the Father**, save he which is of God, **he hath seen the Father**" (Jhn 6:46). Since He is the only one that has seen God, then what He declared about Him is the truth and final word. Furthermore, who knows the Father better than His only begotten Son?

Speaking to His Father, Jesus called Him the only true God, "And this is life eternal, that they might know thee **the only true God, and Jesus Christ**, whom thou hast sent" (Jhn 17:3). He identified and categorized His Father as the only true God while excluding Himself from the only true God. Anyone teaching something different is wrong.

Jesus called His Father "my God" twice before He died, once after His resurrection, and four times after having been seated at the Father's right hand, "**My God, my God**, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mat 27:46; Mar 15:34), "I ascend unto my Father, and your Father; and **to my God**, and your God" (Jhn 20:17), "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of **my God**, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of **my God**, and the name of the city of **my God**, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from **my God**: and *I will write upon him* my new name" (Rev 3:12). According to Jesus Himself, His Father is God and His Father is His God.

Jesus affirmed what Moses wrote about God, "Hear, O Israel; **The Lord [kyrios]** our God is **one Lord [kyrios]**" (Mar 12:29). The Greek *kyrios* appears about 750 times in the New Testament and is a lord, master, or ruler. Since Jesus taught that "The Ruler" is "one Ruler," then God is not three co-equal Rulers as taught in Trinitarianism, but one Ruler.

## Loving God with all our heart

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart." Loving God with all our heart begins with having a pure heart as Jesus taught, "Blessed **are the pure in heart**: for they shall see God" (Mat 5:8). A pure heart consists first and foremost with having pure thoughts and desires, "But I say unto you, That whosoever **looketh on a woman to lust after her** hath committed adultery with her already **in his heart**" (Mat 5:28), "**For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts**, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Mat 15:19). And it also consists of having pure motives for the good things we do, "Take heed that ye do not your alms **before men, to be seen of them**" (Mat 6:1), "that they may be **seen of men**" (Mat 6:5), "that they may **appear unto men** to fast" (Mat 6:16).

God knows our every imagination, thought, and motive: "And GOD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and **that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart** *was* only evil continually" (Gen 6:5); "for the LORD *seeth* not as man *seeth*; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but **the LORD looketh on the**

**heart**" (1Sa 16:7); "serve him with a **perfect heart** and with a willing mind: for the LORD **searcheth all hearts**, and understandeth all **the imaginations of the thoughts**" (1Ch 28:9); "For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of *them whose heart is perfect toward him*" (2Ch 16:9); "Shall not God search this out? for **he knoweth the secrets of the heart**" (Psa 44:21); "**The heart is deceitful above all things**, and desperately wicked: who can know it?" (Jer 17:9); "I am he which **searcheth the reins and hearts**" (Rev 2:23).

For if our heart condemn us, **God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things**. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence toward God. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because **we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight**. And this is his commandment, **That we should believe [trust] on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment**. (1John 3:20-23)

God is greater than our heart and knows what is in the heart because He created the heart. Loving God with all our heart means trusting in the name of His Son Jesus Christ and obeying His Son's commandments embodied in His one commandment of loving one another. And the love we have for one another must be from a pure heart with unselfish motives. When our heart is pure in God's sight "we have confidence toward God," and we can ask of Him in prayer and receive.

John wrote a little later, "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments" (1Jo 5:3). And Jesus said repeatedly, "If ye love me, keep my commandments ... He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me ... If a man love me, he will keep my words ... He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings" (Jhn 14:15,21,23,24). We can boast about loving Jesus with all our heart, but if we're not keeping His commandments, we don't. What we should do, rather, is simply let our actions do the talking—obey what Jesus commanded. This is what James meant by "What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man **say he hath faith [faithfulness], and have not works [actions]**? can faith [faithfulness] save him? (Jas 2:14). What does it profit or accomplish to only *say* we're being faithful to the Lord yet we're not being faithful to the Lord? Can our self-declared faithfulness save us?

Jeremiah prophesied of the New Covenant, "After those days, saith the LORD, **I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts**; and will be their God, and they shall be my people" (Jer 31:33). And the writer of Hebrews quoted him twice: "I will **put my laws** into their mind [*dianoia* 1271], and **write them in their hearts [kardia 2588]**" (Heb 8:10); "I will **put my laws** into their hearts [*kardia* 2588], and **in their minds [dianoia 1271] will I write them**" (Heb 10:16). The expression "write them" is figurative. It's because the Old Covenant law of Moses was literally written on stone tablets that Christ's law of the New Covenant is said figuratively to be "written" on our hearts and minds, "*Forasmuch as ye are* manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, **written not with ink, but with the Spirit [Breath] of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshy tables of the heart** ... But if the ministration of death, **written and engraven in stones**" (2Co 3:3,7). Nothing is literally written inside of us. It's simply that as commandments can be written on paper with ink or engraved on stone with a tool, Christ's commandments are said to be "written" on our hearts and minds, "Which shew the work [*action*] of the law **written in their hearts**" (Rom 2:15). Although it's figurative speech, "the Spirit [*Breath*] of the living God" inside is literal. We have the presence of the Lawgiver by God's Breath—not just His laws inside, but Himself inside! Therefore, the New Covenant consists of obeying what Christ commanded almost 2,000 years ago recorded in the Scriptures, and obeying what He is commanding today in our hearts and minds by the indwelling Breath.

It's also worth noting that since the writer of Hebrews interchanged "hearts [*kardia* 2588]" with "minds [*dianoia* 1271]" in his two quotations, "I will put my laws into their mind [*dianoia* 1271], and **write them in their hearts [*kardia* 2588]**" (Heb 8:10); "I will put my laws into their hearts [*kardia* 2588], and **in their minds [*dianoia* 1271] will I write them**" (Heb 10:16), he considered the location of Christ's laws inside to be equally important. The keeping of the great commandment, "And thou shalt love the Lord thy God **with all thy heart [*kardia* 2588]**, and with all thy soul, and **with all thy mind [*dianoia* 1271]**, and with all thy strength" (Mar 12:30), must include Christ's laws in both our heart and mind.

Having God's laws in our heart means that we obey willingly and sincerely, not grudgingly and hypocritically: "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, **To keep the commandments of the LORD**, and his statutes, which I command thee this day for thy good?" (Deu 10:12-13); "If ye be **willing and obedient**, ye shall eat the good of the land" (Isa 1:19); "But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have **obeyed from the heart** that form of doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom 6:17); "**For I delight in the law of God** after the inward man" (Rom 7:22); "**Let love be without dissimulation**. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." (Rom 12:9); "Now the end of the commandment is **charity out of a pure heart**, and of a good conscience, and of **faith [*faithfulness*] unfeigned**" (1Ti 1:5); "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit [*Breath*] unto **unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently**" (1Pe 1:22); "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but **in deed and in truth**" (1Jo 3:18); "For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and **his commandments are not grievous**" (1Jo 5:3).

Psalms 119 includes many statements about loving and delighting oneself in God's law: "With my whole heart have I sought thee" (v. 10); "Thy word have I hid in mine heart" (v. 11); "I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies" (v. 14); "I will delight myself in thy statutes" (v. 16); "Thy testimonies also *are* my delight" (v. 24); "I shall observe it with *my* whole heart" (v. 34); "Incline my heart unto thy testimonies" (v. 36); "And I will delight myself in thy commandments, which I have loved" (v. 47); "I will keep thy precepts with *my* whole heart" (v. 69); "thy law *is* my delight" (v. 77); "Unless thy law *had been* my delights" (v. 92); "O how love I thy law!" (v. 97); "thy law do I love" (v. 113); "I love thy testimonies" (v. 119); "Therefore I love thy commandments above gold" (v. 127); "Thy testimonies *are* wonderful" (v. 129); "I longed for thy commandments" (v. 131); "Thy word *is* very pure: therefore thy servant loveth it" (v. 140); "thy commandments *are* my delights" (v. 143); "Consider how I love thy precepts" (v. 159); "I rejoice at thy word" (v. 162); "thy law do I love" (v. 163); "thy law *is* my delight" (v. 174).

## Loving God with all our soul

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God ... with all thy soul [*psyche* 5590]." The Greek *psyche* appears around 100 times in the New Testament and is translated usually as "soul" or "life." It's literally the life of a breathing being. Paul used this word when quoting from the creation of man, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and **man became a living soul**" (Gen 2:7), "And so it is written, The first man Adam was **made a living soul [*psyche* 5590]**" (1Co 15:45).

The following is a listing of statements where *psyche* is used for the cessation of one's life: "to give his life [*psyche* 5590] a ransom for many" (Mat 20:28); "For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives [*psyche* 5590]" (Luk 9:56); "*Thou* fool, this night thy soul [*psyche* 5590] shall be required of thee" (Luk 12:20); "the

good shepherd giveth his life [*psyche* 5590] for the sheep ... I lay down my life [*psyche* 5590] for the sheep ... I lay down my life [*psyche* 5590]" (Jhn 10:11,15,17); "I will lay down my life [*psyche* 5590] for thy sake" (Jhn 13:37); "a man lay down his life [*psyche* 5590] for his friends" (Jhn 15:13); "Men that have hazarded their lives [*psyche* 5590]" (Act 15:26); "neither count I my life [*psyche* 5590] dear unto myself" (Act 20:24); "not only of the lading and ship, but also of our lives [*psyche* 5590]" (Act 27:10); "there shall be no loss of *any man's* life [*psyche* 5590] among you" (Act 27:22); "they seek my life [*psyche* 5590]" (Rom 11:3); "Who have for my life [*psyche* 5590] laid down their own necks" (Rom 16:4); "he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life [*psyche* 5590]" (Phl 2:30); "save a soul [*psyche* 5590] from death" (Jas 5:20); "he laid down his life [*psyche* 5590] for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives [*psyche* 5590] for the brethren" (1Jo 3:16); "And the third part of the creatures which were in the sea, and had life [*psyche* 5590], died" (Rev 8:9); "they loved not their lives [*psyche* 5590] unto the death" (Rev 12:11); "every living soul [*psyche* 5590] died in the sea" (Rev 16:3).

The great commandment of loving God with all our life means possibly losing our life for Christ's sake—glorifying Him through obeying His commandments and living by His teaching: "He that findeth his life [*psyche* 5590] shall lose it: and he that **loseth his life [*psyche* 5590] for my sake** shall find it" (Mat 10:39); "For whosoever will save his life [*psyche* 5590] shall lose it: and whosoever will **lose his life [*psyche* 5590] for my sake** shall find it" (Mat 16:25); "For whosoever will save his life [*psyche* 5590] shall lose it; but whosoever shall **lose his life [*psyche* 5590] for my sake** and the gospel's, the same shall save it" (Mar 8:35); "For whosoever will save his life [*psyche* 5590] shall lose it: but whosoever will **lose his life [*psyche* 5590] for my sake**, the same shall save it" (Luk 9:24); "Whosoever shall seek to save his life [*psyche* 5590] shall lose it; and whosoever shall **lose his life [*psyche* 5590]** shall preserve it" (Luk 17:33); "He that loveth his life [*psyche* 5590] shall lose it; and he that **hateth his life [*psyche* 5590]** in this world shall keep it unto life eternal" (Jhn 12:25).

These next two passages render *psyche* as "heart" and "heartily" in context of serving the Lord: "Servants, be obedient to them that are *your* masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, **in singleness [haplotes 572] of your heart [kardia 2588]**, as unto Christ; **Not with eyeservice**, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, **doing the will of God from the heart [*psyche* 5590]**" (Eph 6:5-6); "Servants, obey in all things *your* masters according to the flesh; **not with eyeservice**, as menpleasers; but **in singleness [haplotes 572] of heart [kardia 2588]**, **fearing God**: And whatsoever ye do, **do it heartily [*psyche* 5590]**, **as to the Lord**, and not unto men" (Col 3:22-23).

The Greek noun *haplotes* means "singularity" or "exclusivity" in the sense of loyalty or faithfulness to a master. Its adjective form *haplous* is used only twice in the New Testament and both times by Jesus Christ Himself: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore **thine eye be single [haplous 573]**, thy whole body shall be full of light" (Mat 6:22); "The light of the body is the eye: therefore when **thine eye is single [haplous 573]**, thy whole body also is full of light; but when *thine eye* is evil, thy body also *is* full of darkness" (Luk 11:34). Our "whole body" depends completely upon light through our eyes to move and function. If we use the light we've been given to serve the Lord, we'll be given light for eternity. But if we use the light we've been given for evil, we'll be relegated to darkness forever. That "thine eye be single" is using our eyes in loyalty to our Lord.

This is the sense of what Paul meant by "**in singleness of your heart [kardia 2588]**, as unto Christ; **Not with eyeservice**, as menpleasers," "**not with eyeservice**, as menpleasers; but **in singleness of heart [kardia 2588]**, fearing God." Pleasing men "with eyeservice" is always doing good when being watched, but not always doing good when not being watched. Servants of the Lord, on the other hand, know that God is always watching. Loving "the Lord thy God ... with all thy soul [*psyche* 5590]," consists of "doing the will of God from the heart



[*psyche* 5590],” “heartily [*psyche* 5590], as to the Lord, and not unto men.” The sole purpose of our life must be in service to the Lord Jesus Christ.

## Loving God with all our mind

“And thou shalt love the Lord thy God ... with all thy mind [*dianoia* 1271].” As pointed out earlier in the section “Loving God with all our heart,” the writer of Hebrews quoted Jeremiah’s prophecy about Christ’s laws of the New Covenant: “After those days, saith the LORD, **I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts;** and will be their God, and they shall be my people” (Jer 31:33), “**I will put my laws into their mind [*dianoia* 1271], and write them in their hearts**” (Heb 8:10), “I will put my laws into their hearts, and **in their minds [*dianoia* 1271] will I write them**” (Heb 10:16). And since “hearts [*kardia* 2588]” and “minds [*dianoia* 1271]” are interchanged in his two quotations, he considered the location of Christ’s laws inside of equal importance.

Loving “the Lord thy God ... with all thy mind [*dianoia* 1271]” is composed essentially of striving to know the truth and understanding God’s message to us through the Scriptures. It’s not strictly or even primarily an academic endeavor. It’s not about employing a system of theology, hermeneutical techniques, and principles of interpretation, by the use of lexicons, commentaries, and “Christian” books. It begins with humility and fear of God’s word, “but to this *man* will I look, *even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit [*breath*], and trembleth at my word*” (Isa 66:2). It asks God in prayer for understanding, then objectively applies sound reason and logic to harmonize all of Scripture. It strives for the correct understanding of the Scriptures because if we’re not correctly understanding, then we don’t have God’s message to us.

In His ministry on earth, Jesus Christ said “**Who hath ears to hear, let him hear ... For whosoever hath,** to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance: but **whosoever hath not,** from him shall be taken away even that he hath” (Mat 13:9,12). And from His position at the right hand of God the Father, He said seven times “**He that hath an ear, let him hear** what the Spirit [*Breath*] saith unto the churches” (Rev 2:7,11,17,29, 3:6,13,22). God’s Breath in our hearts is our Lord Jesus Christ speaking to us. The most important words we can ever hear are the commandments and teaching of our Lord. But if we’re not hearing what’s most important, then for what purpose are our ears? Having “ears to hear” means using our ears for the greatest endeavor of all—hearing what Christ said and doing it, “Therefore whosoever **heareth** these sayings of mine, and **doeth them** ... And every one that **heareth** these sayings of mine, and **doeth them not**” (Mat 7:24,26).

If we have “ears to hear,” we “shall be given” and “shall have more abundance.” But if we don’t have “ears to hear,” then what we already have “shall be taken away.” It’s a progression in one direction or the other. If we’re hearing, understanding, and doing what Christ has already given, He will continue giving us more understanding while also requiring more from us: “He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much” (Luk 16:10); “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more” (Luk 12:48). But if we ever begin turning our ears away from what He has already given—disobeying what we’ve been commanded and rejecting what we’ve come to understand—He not only won’t give us any more but also will begin taking away from us what He already gave. Our hearts will start hardening toward Him and we’ll begin digressing in the other direction until we either repent and turn back, or else He decides to never accept our repentance again.

That Paul didn't consider attaining understanding of the truth from the Scriptures as strictly an academic endeavor but more importantly a matter of prayer, he prayed regularly for the Christians at Ephesus to understand, "Cease not to give thanks for you, making mention of you **in my prayers**; That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him: **The eyes of your understanding [*dianoia* 1271] being enlightened**" (Eph 1:16-18). That last statement refers to the spiritual state of mankind from the first sin, "For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then **your eyes shall be opened**, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil ... And **the eyes of them both were opened**" (Gen 3:5,7). God didn't create Adam and Eve blind from understanding the truth—the eyes of their understanding were already open. The serpent deceived the woman into believing she was presently "blind" but would be able to "see" by heeding him. Thus, that "the eyes of them both were opened" meant that they started "seeing" and living by a distorted reality imposed by the devil, and became "blind" from knowing actual reality and truth. Paul brought out this idea later in his letter, "**Having the understanding [*dianoia* 1271] darkened**, being alienated from the life of God through the **ignorance** that is in them, because of **the blindness of their heart [*kardia* 2588]**" (Eph 4:18).

To "love the Lord thy God ... with all thy mind [*dianoia* 1271]," is to no longer be in the spiritual state of "Having the understanding [*dianoia* 1271] darkened" but that "The eyes of your understanding [*dianoia* 1271] being enlightened." We must come to the truth through understanding the Scriptures so that we'll live in reality, not by the skewed reality of this world's system ruled by the devil, "Wherein in time past ye walked according to **the course of this world**, according to **the prince of the power of the air**, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience" (Eph 2:2).

Arriving at the truth and living by reality starts with the teaching of Jesus Christ, "But ye have not so **learned Christ**; If so be that ye have **heard him**, and have been **taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus**" (Eph 4:20-21). The Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ is the arbiter of the truth: "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (Jhn 1:17); "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (Jhn 8:32); "And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?" (Jhn 8:46); "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (Jhn 14:6); "Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice" (Jhn 18:37).

To "love the Lord thy God ... with all thy mind [*dianoia* 1271]," is to know Him as the only true God by the understanding His Son gave: "**the true worshippers** shall worship the Father in spirit [*breath*] and **in truth**" (Jhn 4:23); "**And this is life eternal**, that they might know **thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ**, whom thou hast sent" (Jhn 17:3); "And we know that **the Son of God is come**, and hath **given us an understanding [*dianoia* 1271]**, that we may **know him that is true**, and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. **This is the true God, and eternal life**" (1Jo 5:20).

## Loving God with all our strength

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God ... with all thy strength." Our strength essentially is what we're capable of doing in our own being and with our available resources. Our being includes: physical strength and faculties; mental fortitude and reasoning; personality and talents; past experience; maturity level. Our available resources include: money and possessions; expendable time outside work and family; character and reputation; station in life; sphere of influence; social connections.

Of course some have physical or mental disabilities making them unable to do some things that others can. Others, on the other hand, might have the physical and mental abilities but are deprived of available resources to do as much as they would like. Loving God “with all thy strength” means giving our lives to Him wherever we’re at and however we can. In consistency with the principle “For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required” (Luk 12:48), of those with less, less is required, but of those with more, more is required.

In the context of marriage, divorce, and remarriage, Paul taught the church at Corinth to serve God faithfully in whatever status they’re currently in, “But as God hath distributed to every man, **as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk. And so ordain I in all churches** ... Let every man abide in the same calling **wherein he was called** ... Brethren, let every man, **wherein he is called**, therein abide with God” (1Co 7:17,20,24). This principle also applied to the issue of circumcision: “Is any man **called being circumcised?** let him not become uncircumcised. Is any **called in uncircumcision?** let him not be circumcised. Circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing, **but the keeping of the commandments of God.**” (1Co 7:18-19); “For in Christ Jesus **neither circumcision** availeth any thing, **nor uncircumcision**, but a new creature. And as many as **walk according to this rule**, peace *be* on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God.” (Gal 6:15-16); “As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, **so walk ye in him** ... And you, being dead in your sins and **the uncircumcision of your flesh** ... **Let no man therefore judge you** in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*” (Col 2:6,13,16). Loving God with all our strength is done whether single, married, divorced, widowed, or remarried, and whether circumcised or uncircumcised. It’s not about our state of being or station in life but about “keeping of the commandments of God.”

Even marital status itself affects how much is required of us, “But I would have you without carefulness. He that is unmarried careth for the things that belong to the Lord, **how he may please the Lord**: But he that is married careth for the things that are of the world, **how he may please his wife**” (1Co 7:32-33). The unmarried have more time, freedom, and flexibility to devote to the work of the Lord than the married. It’s for this reason that Paul was able to dedicate himself entirely to ministry, not having a wife and children to consider. The married, however, must first care for their own family before others. Although some can do more as unmarried while others can do less as married, both statuses are loving God “with all thy strength.”

Having then **gifts differing according to the grace [favor] that is given to us**, whether prophecy, *let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith [faithfulness]*; Or ministry, *let us wait on our ministering*: or he that teacheth, on teaching; Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, *let him do it* with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness. (Romans 12:6-8)

Our strength also consists of ministering to others in the way we’ve been gifted while not limiting our service to only this one area. Some are gifted teachers “he that teacheth,” others are gifted encouragers, “he that exhorteth,” and others are gifted leaders, “he that ruleth.” For example: I’m gifted at studying and teaching but not much at leading. And although I focus primarily on serving God with all my strength in the gift of teaching, I’m also required to lead when the need arises simply because I’m able.

When it comes to loving God “with all thy strength” in the area of giving, God only requires what is within our power, “**For to their power**, I bear record, yea, and **beyond their power they were willing** of themselves” (2Co 8:3). Although it’s certainly noble to be willing to give even what’s beyond our power, we certainly shouldn’t put our own family in jeopardy. However, if we see our brother in desperate need and have the resources to

help but don't, "**But whoso hath this world's good**, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" (1Jo 3:17), how can we be loving God with all our strength?

## Conclusion

The first and great commandment begins with worshipping the true God revealed through His only begotten Son Jesus Christ coming into the world. His Son knows Him because He was begotten by Him, was with Him, was sent by Him, and returned to Him. Therefore, anyone teaching a different view of God than what His Son taught is wrong—end of discussion!

The overarching deception of the devil in Trinitarianism is for people to worship false gods—three false gods disguised as three persons in one God—then build upon it the religious systems of Catholicism and Protestantism called "Christianity." In fact, what's built in some cases can even be almost indistinguishable from true Christianity. But it isn't *what's* built that ultimately matters, but *upon what* it's built that does:

Therefore whosoever **heareth** these sayings of mine, and **doeth them**, I will liken him unto a wise man, which **built his house upon a rock**: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and **it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock**. And every one that **heareth** these sayings of mine, and **doeth them not**, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which **built his house upon the sand**: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and **it fell: and great was the fall of it**.  
(Matthew 7:24-27)

The Son of God Himself illustrated this concept best by His contrast of these two people. The wise man built his house upon rock while the foolish man built his house upon sand. The houses themselves can be quite comparable and even virtually identical. The distinguishing difference isn't the houses but their foundations. And the same is true in our walk with God—our lives must be "built upon" hearing and obeying God's Son. Once we've heard what the Son taught about God, we must be unashamed of Him and His words.

Trinitarian "Christianity" can look very appealing, "And when the woman **saw that the tree was good for food**, and that it **was pleasant to the eyes**, and a tree to be desired to make *one* wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat" (Gen 3:6). But in reality it's a forbidden fruit that's rotten at its core. It's breaking the first and great commandment. And if we're breaking what's first and greatest, what else ultimately matters?

"And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with **all thy heart**, and with **all thy soul**, and with **all thy mind**, and with **all thy strength**" (Mar 12:30). Loving God in all four of these ways isn't accomplished by consciously thinking all the time about doing them. If we'll just consciously focus on pleasing God above all else, these things will be the natural outflow. But it's needful to have the correct understanding of these things and to remind ourselves of them often. We live in an evil world ruled by spirits that are constantly tempting, deceiving, and trying to draw us away from serving and pleasing God. If we neglect to remind ourselves of these truths regularly, we'll start letting them slip and put ourselves in danger of slipping away from God. We must keep our focus daily on loving God by keeping the first and great commandment.