

Message.

The absolute priority in life determines a person's behavior, and the foundational command of Jesus is to love God above all else. This supreme devotion acts as the catalyst for obedience and is assessed by examining one's heart, speech, and time priorities. True love for God is inseparable from sacrificial service to others; claiming to love God while remaining indifferent or unforgiving contradicts the core message of the Gospel. Because misplaced affections on temporal security or status lead to personal destruction, God commands this vertical love as a means of rescue. Ultimately, recognizing one's own spiritual helplessness fosters a deeper dependence on Christ, which in turn compels a believer to extend the same mercy and compassion to others.

Prayer.

Father God,

Your love is greater than everything! You deserve my utmost devotion. Guide me to reflect and act on the greatest commandment.

Amen.

Engage.

The Foundation (Matthew 22:34-40)

- Jesus identifies loving God with all our heart, soul, and mind as the "greatest" commandment. In your own words, why must this love be the foundation for everything else? What happens to our "good works" if this foundation is missing?
- How does our level of devotion to God directly impact our capacity to love people who are difficult to forgive or serve?

Examining Your Heart (Proverbs 4:23)

- What are some "rival loves" (like security, comfort, or approval) that currently try to crowd out God's place in your heart?
- Ask yourself, "How aware am I of the nearness of God throughout the week?" What is one practical way you can "keep" your heart focused on His presence during a busy workday or a stressful moment?

Examining Your Speech (Luke 6:45 & Deuteronomy 6:5-9)

- Luke 6:45 states that the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. If you recorded your conversations from the last 48 hours, what would they reveal about what you value most?
- Deuteronomy 6:5-9 encourages us to talk about God's word "when you sit at home and when you walk along the road." How can we move from just "talking about church" to actually speaking about the character and goodness of God in our daily lives?

Examining Your Priorities (Matthew 25:31-46)

- We all have the same amount of time, regardless of our resources. Looking at your weekly calendar, what does your "time management" say about your priority to love God through serving "the least of these"?
- In the Matthew 25 passage, the "sheep" were surprised by the King's praise—they weren't serving to earn a reward, but out of a natural overflow of love. How does the Gospel change your motivation for serving others?

Day 1: The Heart Examination**Scripture:** Matthew 22:37-38 & Proverbs 4:23**The Big Idea:** Whatever we love most is the "Main Thing" that drives our life.

- **The Object Lesson:** Get a clear glass of water and some food coloring. Explain that the water is like our life and the coloring is our "Main Thing." If we love "winning" most, it colors everything we do. If we love God most, His love colors how we treat everyone.
- **Discussion:**
 - Proverbs 4:23 says to "guard your heart." If your heart was a literal castle, what "enemies" (like grumbling, selfishness, or worry) are trying to sneak in and take God's spot as King?
 - How can we remember that God is with us even when we are at school or playing sports?
- **Activity:** Have your child draw a large heart. Inside, have them write or draw things they love. Place a cross or the word "God" in the center and discuss how loving Him first helps us enjoy all the other things even more.

Day 2: The Speech Examination**Scripture:** Luke 6:45 & Deuteronomy 6:5-9**The Big Idea:** Our words are like a "check engine light"—they show us what is happening in our hearts.

- **The Object Lesson:** Give your child a tube of toothpaste and ask them to squeeze a little bit out. Then, ask them to try to put it back in. Explain that our words are the same—once they come out, they show what was hidden inside the "tube" (our heart).
- **Discussion:**
 - Luke 6:45 says the mouth speaks what the heart is full of. If we are constantly complaining, what does that say about our heart?
 - Deuteronomy 6 says to talk about God's words when we sit, walk, and lie down. What is one cool thing God did or created today that we can talk about?
- **Activity:** "The Sweet Speech Challenge." For the rest of the day, try to catch each other speaking about God or saying something kind/thankful. For every "heart-overflowing" good comment, add a marble or a penny to a jar to celebrate.

Day 3: The Priority Examination**Scripture:** Matthew 25:35-40**The Big Idea:** We show we love God by how we spend our time helping others.

- **The Object Lesson:** Give everyone 24 LEGO bricks (representing the 24 hours in a day). Ask them to set aside bricks for sleep, school, activities, etc. Discuss how those hours can be used to show God's love to others. (*Note: Even sleep is important here because think about how hard it is to show God's love for others when we don't get enough rest.*) What about the leftover hours? Are there any additional ways you can use your time to show God's love to others?
- **Discussion:**
 - In Matthew 25, Jesus says that when we help someone who is hungry or lonely, it's like we are doing it for Him. Who is someone in your class or our neighborhood who looks "lonely" or "in need"?
 - We all have the same amount of time. How can we "give" some of our time to God today/this week?
- **Activity: The "Hidden Jesus" Mission.** Identify one person to serve today (a sibling, a neighbor, or a grandparent). Do something for them—like making a card, cleaning their room, or sharing a snack—and remember that by loving them, you are loving Jesus.