

## **Lesson 8**

# **Love God with All Your Heart**

### **Lesson Overview**

BIBLE LESSON: Matthew 19:16-22

MEMORY VERSE: And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27

CHALLENGE MEMORY VERSE: We love because He first loved us. I John 4:19

CATECHISM: The First Commandment: Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. What does this mean? We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

LESSON OBJECTIVES: The student will:

- believe God’s love is forever.
- understand that loving God is of greatest importance.
- trust God will forgive when I ask.

MATERIALS: Bibles, Catechism, Activity Sheets

LESSON OVERVIEW: The First Commandment is the most important of the Ten Commandments. The other nine commandments flow from the First Commandment, “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.” In this commandment, God is telling us to love Him more than we love anyone or anything else. The main character is a rich, young ruler who asked Jesus, “What good thing shall I do to obtain eternal life?” Jesus’ conversation with the young man begins with keeping the commandments. The young man believes he had done that. Jesus, who knows his heart, knows that the young man had another “god” in his life—his money. Jesus tells him to go and sell all he has but, sadly, the young man leaves because he is unwilling to love God first and best. It is important that students understand that it was not his wealth that was the sin but his love of his money which had become his god.

POSSIBLE QUESTIONS: Who came to see Jesus? What question did he ask Jesus? How did Jesus answer? The young man asks a second question, how did Jesus answer? What had the young man made an idol in his life? What did the young man now want to do? Do you sometimes love other people or things more than God? (We all do that sometimes.) Loving something more than we love God makes that thing an idol to us.

ACTIVITY 1: Crossword puzzle with a given word box.

ACTIVITY 2: Memory verse word insertion activity. Each heart contains part of the memory verse. In the additional options is link to a music video for learning this verse.

# TEACHER PREPARATION

## Prepare to Teach

Pray that God will lead you to accurately teach the lesson that loving God first in each of our lives is the key to godly living. Pray that the students will understand that it was not the money the young man had, but his heart attitude toward the money that was the sin.

## Prayer Preparation

- Thank the Lord for each of the children He has placed in your class this year, and ask Him to bless them.
- Pray that God will help you understand that the First Commandment is key to all the rest. Putting God first will lead you to obey and treasure the remaining commandments.

## Bible Background

Matthew 19:16-22

When Jesus was asked, “Which is the greatest commandment of the Law?” He answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37, Deuteronomy 6:5)

In the text for the lesson a rich young ruler comes to Jesus with some questions:

“What good thing shall I do that I may obtain eternal life?” (v 16) One thing we notice is that Jesus did not have “stock” answers that He used for everyone. Jesus was able to assess each person’s unique need because Jesus looked at the heart. For this man, Jesus zeroes in on the commandments. The man was a good man, a godly man, well instructed in the commandments and the Word of God. But he had missed the whole point of the law by using his keeping of it to try to justify himself in the sight of God. He still feels that there is something more he must do.

He believed he was faithful in keeping the commandments in a way that satisfied him and pleased God. But he knew something was missing because he did not have assurance of eternal life. The law cannot give that. It can only show us how far short we fall of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). At this point he is not even sure what he needs, but he knows that Jesus must have the answer.

His second question is “Which ones?” (vs 18-19). Does Jesus actually teach that people receive eternal life by keeping commandments? Yes, in the sense that if we could keep them perfectly, we would certainly have eternal life. But we can’t. We are by nature sinful and the law keeps showing us that truth.

The man was dividing up the law, looking for the parts he could handle. He was looking for a loophole. James 2:10 reminds us that “whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all”.

The man makes another common mistake, thinking that obedience is a matter of action only but, in reality, it is first an attitude of the heart. Jesus looked at this man’s heart. Jesus saw the trouble spot. Jesus quotes some of the commandments but he left out the one the man needed, ‘Thou shalt have no other gods before me’. The man replied that he had kept all those commandments but he was avoiding the issue of the heart, his problem of loving his possessions. God was not first in his life.

The man then asks another question, “What am I still lacking?” (v20-22) It is easy to say we obey the commandments until we are forced to face the truth inside us. What does Jesus do to this honest and pious man? He thrusts the sword of the Word into the man’s soul. Go sell...

Now his heart is bared before Jesus. The real object of his love is revealed and it is not God. It is possible to want eternal life without knowing God. It is even possible to *say* you love God without knowing God. But it is not possible to *not* love God and have eternal life, according to Jesus in John 17:3. It is one thing to *say*, “I really don’t love these things more than God.” It is quite another thing to be willing to part with them all to prove our love for God.

The law has exposed the man’s sin—he had other gods in his life. Jesus preached the truth to the young man. The young man could not accept it and he went away. We do not see confession of his sin at this time. But we know that God has promised when “we confess our sin He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (John 1:9).

God always loves. God is love (1 John 4:8b). God wants us to obey the First Commandment, to love Him best of all.

Like the rich, young ruler, we don’t always do that. The law, though, will show us our sin and the Holy Spirit will convict our hearts whenever we are loving something else more. When we are convicted of sin, we can ask God to forgive us and trust that God does just that (because He keeps His word). God works in our heart to help us want to love Him best.

## Learn the New Words

**young:** not old

**gods:** things that we worship or value more than anything else

**everlasting:** forever, never ending, eternal

**property:** land or things that a person owns

**idol:** something we love and trust more than God, a false god

**idolatry:** worshipping or trusting in an idol of the one true God

## BEGINNING YOUR CLASS HOUR

### Welcome and Opening Prayer

Open the class with prayer, praying for each child by name, if you like.

Praise God for His wonderful love and pray that we would learn to love God best of all.

**SHARING:** Encourage students to share about a favorite toy or activity.

### Read the Memory Verse

Remember the appendix of ways to teach memorization of the verse. Read it clearly, And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.” Luke 10:27. Be sure to read it together aloud. You can use the video and song to learn the memory verse. Remind the children you’ll repeat the verse again at the end. The second student activity in the lesson will help with the memory work.

## Review the Recent Lessons

Remember we have been learning about the First Commandment. Who were the men in our story last week? What was their decision when told not to tell about Jesus? What is childlike fear?

## TEACHING TODAY'S BIBLE LESSON

### Introduce the Lesson

You all shared favorite toys or activities. It's okay to enjoy toys and activities. But those things can't love us and take care of us. God does.

### Read the Lesson

Teacher reads the first two paragraphs. In this commandment, God is telling us to love Him more than we love anyone or anything else. The first commandment is the greatest commandment. Luther said of it, "We have had to explain it at great length, for it is the most important. As I said before, if the heart is right with God and we keep this commandment, all the rest will follow on their own." (Luther's Large Catechism, Conclusion to First Commandment) As we commit to putting God first in our life, the ability to follow the other commandments will flow from our love for God and He will help us live in simple obedience to Him.

Read the next three paragraphs. **Who came to see Jesus? What did he ask Jesus?** The word eternal may need to be explained. **What did Jesus tell him? Is this possible for anyone to do?**

Jesus understood the young ruler's heart. Read the next two paragraphs. **What did the young ruler do? What was his idol?** *God did not have first place in his life.*

Read the remaining paragraphs. We aren't any different than the young ruler. We don't always love God first and best but we have hope. We can pray to Jesus. Jesus died for our sins so when we tell Jesus that we are having a

hard time loving God first He will forgive us and help us love God as He wants us to. **How will others around us know that our love for God is the most important thing in our life?** This may be a hard question but may be worth asking. Possibly the students could take this question home to their parents for conversation.

### Read the Catechism: The First Commandment

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

What does this mean? We Should fear, love and trust in God above all things.

### Repeat the Memory Verse

And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."  
Luke 10:27

# APPLYING THE BIBLE LESSON

## Do the Activities Together

### Crossword Fun

#### Activity 1

Do the crossword puzzle using words from the word box.

**ACTIVITY CENTER**

**Activity 1**  
**CROSSWORD FUN**

Do the crossword puzzle using words from the word bank.

SELL  
LOVE  
GODS  
JESUS  
RULER  
CROSS  
IDOL  
BEST  
PRAY

**ACROSS**

- The rich young \_\_\_\_\_ did not love God above all else.
- \_\_\_\_\_ said, "Come and follow Me."
- Jesus told the rich, young ruler to \_\_\_\_\_ all that he owned.
- God wants us to love Him \_\_\_\_\_.

**DOWN**

- Thou shalt have no other \_\_\_\_\_ before Me.
- Jesus died on the \_\_\_\_\_ for our sins.
- An \_\_\_\_\_ is something we love and trust more than God.
- When we disobey God, we can \_\_\_\_\_ and ask Him to forgive us.
- Ask God to help you \_\_\_\_\_ Him more than anything else.

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## Love, Love, Love

### Activity 2

Write the missing word in each heart to help you review the memory verse. Can you write the answers without looking back in your lesson?

**Activity 2**  
**LOVE, LOVE, LOVE**

Write the missing word in each heart to help you review the memory verse. Can you write the answers without looking back in your lesson?

Now recite the verse without looking at your paper!

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# CLOSING YOUR CLASS HOUR

## Closing Prayer

Ask about prayer requests. Allow students to pray if they choose. Allow time for silent prayer. Encourage students to bow their heads and close their eyes.

## **Additional Teaching Options**

### **Hymns and Songs:**

- #1 music video to teach the memory verse  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vdMIxCdIY-c>
- #2 “All I Once Held Dear” chorus

### **Additional activities for a multi-age class:**