

What Are Our Core Values?

Developing a Life of Devotion and Service



Lesson 1

1. Please discuss the question: “What should our core values be as individual Christians and as a church?” List your ideas below.

The Great Commandment Matthew 22:36-40

36 “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law? 37 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment. 39 And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” (ESV)

Though our core values could be categorised in a number of ways, it seems that Jesus answers the question best when he was asked in **Matthew 22:36**, “*Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?*” This is the same as asking, “*What are our core values?*” “*What is the most important teaching for us to remember?*” Jesus singles out two commandments: love God and love others.

The first commandment is from **Deuteronomy 6:4-6** and is called the *shema*. This name comes from the first word in the sentence in Hebrew, which is “**Hear**.” The faithful Jew in the Old Testament would recite this passage at the beginning and end of each day and the recitation of the *shema* opened the synagogue services each Friday evening.

Read Deuteronomy 6:4-15 paying particular attention to verses 4-6. Then discuss these questions:

2. What is the meaning of Deut. 6:4? What implications does this verse have for us today? How do verses 14-15 support the teaching of verse 4?

שמע ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהוה אחד
Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one

3. How does one go about implementing the teaching of Deut. 6:5 (Matt. 22:37)? How do verses 6-8 complement this teaching?

4. What important lesson is found in Deut. 6:10-12? What does this have to do with our core values?

Core Value #1

Love the Lord God Completely

We can sum up the teaching of Deut. 6:4-6 and the teaching of Jesus in Matthew 22:36-40 by saying that our number one core value is to love God completely.

Furthermore, for the church to be a vibrant witness in the community, individual Christians must be people who have a vibrant personal relationship with the God of Creation. If we hope to influence our world for Christ, we must be a people who are committed to a deep, abiding, and growing love and appreciation of God.

1. Personal Worship

One of the ways that our relationship with God is evidenced is through personal worship. To most people, the word worship brings the idea of a formal setting in a church assembly. We think of singing and preaching and formality.



While worship can take place in a church assembly our primary times of worship are in our homes as we spend time with God individually and as families. Naturally, we pray at work and at school, and as we travel to and from work, but each of us need times of solitude with the Father.

5. Look again at Deuteronomy 6:6-9. Where did primary times of worship and personal devotion take place? What people were involved in this devotional life?

In the course of the following lessons we will attempt to lay a Biblical groundwork for a life of personal worship and then we will list practical guidelines to help us develop our own devotional lives.

Our personal and family worship and devotional life is going to consist of three main elements (**talking to God, listening to God, and serving God.**) We will look first at talking with God or prayer.

Consider the following Biblical characters and their times of personal worship as they spoke with God.

David – King David is described as a man after God's own heart (Acts 13:22) and in Hebrews 11:32 he is listed as a man of faith. We gain a glimpse into the heart of David through reading the Psalms. These psalms are songs or prayers to God and about God.

6. Read a Psalm or two. Choose virtually any Psalm of David. What do you see about the attitude of David towards God in the Psalm? How does he verbalise his relationship to God?

7. What words, phrases, or attitudes in the Psalms of David do you see reflecting the great commandment to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind? (List specific verses with the words, phrases, and attitudes)

The Apostle Paul – Paul was a man who completely changed his attitude about Jesus. He was once a persecutor of Christians yet he became one of the greatest servants of Jesus. When we read through the letters of Paul, we find that a large part of the content is prayer.



8. Read the following passages and describe what we learn about the content of Paul's prayers? What do we learn about his relationship to God? (1 Cor. 1:4-9; Eph. 1:15-23; Phil. 1:3-11; Col. 1:3-14)

9. What words, phrases, or attitudes in the prayers of the Apostle Paul reflect the great commandment to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind?

Jesus – His time in this world was characterised by his devotion to His Father. We know that Jesus prayed often, He spent time alone in prayer, and He must have prayed aloud since his disciples record even some of his private prayers. His prayer life impressed his disciples so much that in **Luke 11:1** the disciples requested of Jesus, *"Lord, teach us to pray."*

Jesus did not pray frequent and lengthy prayers because He had more time than other people. His ministry was busy and must have been exhausting.

10. Mark 1:21-34 describes one day in the life of Jesus. What did He do on that day? Describe the physical and emotional demands of that day. What did Jesus do the next morning? (Mark 1:35) What does this tell you about prayer?

Luke 6:40

A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. (ESV)

11. What other times of prayer can you remember from the life of Jesus? What do they tell you about His relationship with the Father?

12. What words, phrases, or attitudes in the prayers of Jesus reflect the great commandment to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind? (See Matt. 26:36-46)