

November 2022



Bible Study | Faith in Action

WMU® | God's mission. Our passion.

©WMU, SBC 2022 WMU.COM

Prepare

- Bible
- Journal
- Pen/pencil

Get Started

This month, we're going to continue studying Matthew 22:34–40 and reflect on what Jesus declared to be the greatest commandment.

Study and Learn

Read Matthew 22:34–36.

In this passage, the Pharisees tried to trick Jesus. They wanted Him to declare one part of the law as more important than the other parts. The teachers of the law lived a life of legalism; they were trying to attain a relationship with God by keeping rules.

- Can anyone gain a right relationship with God by keeping rules? Why do we often fall into the trap of thinking we can?

Read Matthew 22:37–40.

Jesus' response to the teachers was not what they expected. Instead of choosing one part of the law as the most important, He pointed them to the commandment that summed up the entirety of the law. The teachers were so concerned with keeping the rules they did not realize the purpose of the rules. God's heart behind the whole law was to bring His people into a loving relationship with Him and loving relationships with others. Everything in it was given so people would know how to love Him and how to love others.

God's commandment for Christians is simple: to love Him with our whole being and to love others as ourselves. The Amplified Bible explains loving others as ourselves in verse 39 this way: "unselfishly seek the best or higher good for others" (AMP).

Read 1 John 4:7–21.

Loving God with all we are and unselfishly loving others are not things we are capable of doing through our own power. Our selfish nature keeps us from obeying this commandment. Thankfully, we don't have to do it on our own. Instead, we "know and rely on the love God has for us" (1 John 4:16). God's love for us transforms us, and His Spirit in us gives us the ability to keep this commandment. By recognizing and relying on His great love for us, we are empowered to truly love Him and others.

- Have you tried to keep this commandment using your power before? How is that similar to what the Pharisees did? What changes when we rely on God's power and love to help us keep this commandment to love Him and love others?

Apply

God deeply loves you. He values you, wants the best for you, and longs for you to be in a deep relationship with Him. He also wants you to love Him and to love others—after all, relationship with Him and others is what He created us for! When we are transformed by God’s love for us, we are able to love and enjoy Him and others.

- Do you know and rely on God’s love for you? What steps do you need to take to fully embrace and believe the love God has for you?
- Do you love God with everything you are? Are there parts of your life keeping you from loving Him with your whole heart, soul, mind, and strength? What needs to change?
- Are you loving others unselfishly? How can you seek the best for the people in your life?

Pray God would continue transforming your heart with His love. Pray His love would spur you on to love Him with everything you are and to love others unselfishly.

Commit to Memory

Verse: **1 John 4:16**

Challenge: **Matthew 22:34–40**

Scripture quotations marked (AMP) are taken from the Amplified® Bible, Copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Faith in Action | Nurtured, Not Abandoned

By Donna Maust

We as believers often emphasize evangelism. We celebrate salvation but then sometimes stop short. We often leave new believers with no way to feed themselves or grow. Evangelism is critical as we share the good news of Christ's grace and forgiveness. And we know the angels celebrate a lost soul coming home (Luke 15:10). However, our task doesn't end there. You cannot separate evangelism from discipleship. The greatest way we can show God's love to others is to share the message of salvation with them—and then help disciple them into a mature relationship with Him.

Do you know any nonbelievers? Maybe it's the person who cuts your hair, your veterinarian, or a neighbor. Think of people you see on a regular basis. Look for opportunities to talk with them about Christ. If someone mentions a personal problem, ask, "Can I pray with you about that?" and stop right there and pray with him or her. You may be surprised at the doors that open. Be sure you know how to explain the gospel in a way that is easily understood. Consider carrying tracts with you, not just to give away but also to read and explain to someone. All this is part of early discipleship. You are teaching people about God. When they make the decision to accept Christ as their Savior, the real discipleship begins.

You do need to encourage the new believer to get involved in a local church, but that is not discipleship. Discipleship is personal. Newborn Christians need to know how to pray, how to read the Bible and have a personal devotion time, what to do when they sin, what baptism means, and other basic teachings. Check with your church or search online for materials for new believers. Share books that have been meaningful to you. Make a weekly commitment to meet over coffee or at one of your homes. Listen, pray together, and share what God has taught you. God will use you to nurture His new child into a mature Christian who can disciple others.

After you finish the basics, study a book of the Bible together or work through a Bible study. Look for ways to make sure it happens. Even on weeks one or both of you are out of town or during busy seasons—check in with texts, phone calls, or video chats. Don't overly rely on these methods. Face-to-face is best. But if you can't meet one week, be creative.

Discipleship cannot occur without evangelism. When the evangelistic message is accepted and a person is born again into God's family, discipleship is essential. Whether you are discipling someone you led to the Lord or a believer who has not been discipled yet, don't leave spiritual children abandoned with no way to grow. Nurture them.