



P.O. Box 66540  
Albuquerque, NM 87193  
505.890.6806  
E-mail: [irm@liferesource.org](mailto:irm@liferesource.org)  
Website: [www.liferesource.org](http://www.liferesource.org)

**Presentation Transcript**  
**Loving God With the Whole Being**  
**May 19, 2011**

This is the first of the series called *The Important Stuff* series. So the title is *Loving God With the Whole Being*.

Good afternoon everyone. Beautiful day here in Albuquerque, New Mexico. We have visitors with us today – Robin and Nancy are here. We’re happy to have them. We always like it when there are more people to sing. So they did good for us.

You’ve heard that expression, “majoring in the minors” and, then, the scripture that says that we must *contend* for the faith that was once delivered to the saints. Well, every so often, I like to go back to the fundamentals, because it is *so* easy to get dragged off track – off onto the twigs and that stuff that is not so important. So we’re coming up on the spring holy days and we learn from them that Christian life consists of staying with the basics of God.

So today we’re going to think about some important stuff – the *most* important stuff, in fact. Then, after today, in the series, everything else will be less important, because this is the *most* important thing. We’re going to talk about one aspect, specifically, of loving God. And that’s loving Him with our *whole being*.

In Matthew 22:37 and 38 – and I’m taking these two scriptures right out of a big discussion that has a lot to do with what’s really important – but I’m only going to focus on this part of it today and we’ll cover the rest of it in future presentations – but in Matthew 22, verse 37, it says:

**Mt. 22:37** – *He said to him* – and that’s Jesus to the lawyer – “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment.* So that sounds like it’s the most important thing, doesn’t it? This is the *first* and the *great* commandment – the *GREAT* commandment.

Notice, too...let’s go to Luke 10. There’s another rendition of what Jesus said, recorded by Luke. Jesus says:

**Lk. 10:26** – “What’s written in the law? How do you read it?” And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” And He said to him, “You have answered correctly. Do this and you will live.” Oh! So that kind of implies that if don’t do that, you won’t, right? This is important!

So the statement: “with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind” – what does that mean? Well, let’s take a look at those words.

The first word there – “all your heart” – that word is *cardia* in the Greek. It can mean *heart* – you know, the one that pumps in your chest – or it can mean *the seat of physical vitality* – you know, he has the heart of a lion, he can be courageous, or he can be strong – or it can mean *the innermost part of a person*. “Men look at the outward appearance, but God looks on the *cardia*. So the heart is the seat of mental, or spiritual, powers and capabilities, according to Louw & Nida. So love for God with our heart is deep, it’s committed, it’s through and through, it’s all the way down.

“With all your soul.” The word there is *psuche* in the Greek. And that means *the essence of life in terms of thinking, willing and feeling; the inner self, the mind, thought, the emotions, the heart, the being. It focuses on the total psychological being involved in struggling for the faith*. So the *psuche* is where we feel the love, and it’s also where we commit – where there’s an emotional commitment and a determination to love God with our soul.

Then it says to love God “with all our mind.” And that word – I’m going to have trouble pronouncing this in Greek – but it’s *dianoia* – probably emphasis on the wrong syllable on that, because I don’t think they emphasized it that way in Greek, but.... It means *that part of you that thinks* and it has to do with the *way you think*, and the *thought processes that you use in your readiness to learn* – they’re all a part of that word. So *psuche* is about your emotions and your morality and your determination and this is more about your *cognitive* processes – the thinking part of you. It’s interesting how we have these different parts of us, isn’t it?

Then in Luke 10, there was another word that Luke put in there. Matthew says, “heart, soul, mind,” and then Luke added this word – I’m not even going to begin to try this one (*ischus*) – but it means your *strength*. And this has to do with your *capabilities* – your natural talents, according to Louw & Nida. So this strength is where our capability is engaged to serve and to love God. So we spend our strength doing things for God with this part of us.

And there’s another word that I wanted to focus on there. And that word is *all* – *all* your heart, *all* your soul, *all* your mind and *all* your strength. It means *whole, complete, undivided, in tact*. So all our elements and all our abilities are focused – if we’re doing what Jesus tells us we should do – to love God without any distraction, without any impurity, and completely, totally. It’s *all* focused that way. So all our parts – all the parts of our being – are supposed to love God with all our power.

Okay, that's easy to explain, but it's hard to do, isn't it? Learning what it means is the easy part. But where does this kind of love come from? Well, we know that any time that God asks us to do something that is hard, He provides the Holy Spirit to help. It doesn't do all the work, but it does what we can't. So that's got to be a part of it. The Holy Spirit works with our minds to accomplish certain things. But what is it that it accomplishes? And how are we supposed to participate in that process?

Well, I have my own ideas about this and I'm going to lay them out there. If you like them, good. If you don't, then you can tell me where I'm off. But if you'll go with me to Hebrews 11:6, it says:

**Heb. 11:6** – *Without faith, it is impossible to please Him. For whoever would draw near to God... Now, if you're drawing near to God, why would you do that? Because you love Him, right? I mean, this is what this is about. ...whoever would draw near to God, must believe that He is – that He exists – and that He rewards those who seek Him.*

Can you remember the first time that you understood that God was interested in you? Can you remember that? I can. God is a master of communication. And the way He is going to talk to me would be completely different than the way He would talk to you, because I'm different from you. But He knows just what to do and just what to say to get our attention and to say something that means something to us. That's a very hard thing to do for us, isn't it? I sit in my office and I try to reflect back to people what I'm getting, and about half the time they look at me like, "Ehh??" So then they tell me. So I win anyway, but it's just hard to do that. But God doesn't have that problem. He's a master at communicating with us.

He knew that I grew up in a home where my parents were very loving, but they were also older. And that meant that they had gone through the Great Depression, so they were very much aware of income and outgo. They had that scarcity mentality that so many people went through the Depression with – that they learned during that time. We had financial problems all through my childhood. Money was always hard to come by for us. Because of these things, I grew up with a scarcity mentality, too. And it's still a fight to this day sometimes. That's a little bit of background so you can understand why God talked to me the way He did.

When I was in high school, I began to study the Bible. And it just seemed as plain as day to me that mainstream Christianity – at least the mainstream Christianity that I knew about – had gone way off track from the biblical church that I saw in the New Testament. And I was very interested in seeking God's church and doing things His way. So I had learned about tithing and how that was a promise that God made to us. Since I never had a lot, it was really important to me to see the blessings come in – right? – and to pay my tithes. I was trying to save money to go to a school – a church college – so I could learn more about God, but I didn't have enough money. So I needed to get a good job. I did get a good job – God gave me that job and it was just a miracle that it happened – but somehow that wasn't enough talking to me, so He did something else.

I had to find a way to get to work. I decided the cheapest thing I could get was a motor scooter, which was all the rage back in 1964 anyway. Honda had just come out with a thing called the Honda 50. Everybody had those – everybody but me, because we didn't have any money in our house. I was looking for one – a used one – to buy. And I asked my boss at work – there was a "For Sale" bulletin board at the research institute – it wasn't a company – and he asked me, "What are you looking for?" And I said, "Cheap transportation. I need a scooter to get back and forth to work." He said, "Well, Hugh – down the hall here – has a motor scooter that he's been trying to sell forever." Hugh was an engineer. I knew who he was. He had flaming red hair, as I recall.

So I went down the hall and I walked into his office, and I said, "My boss says that you have a motor scooter to sell." He said, "Well, I've got a Harley 74 to sell." I said, "Oh, well..." And I started to turn to walk away. I said, "I can't afford that." He said, "Why don't you come look at it?" And I said, "Well, I would like to look at it, but I don't have the money to pay for a Harley 74." He said, "Well, just come down. Where do you live?" I told him. He said, "Well, I live such and such." He was about fifteen miles from my house.

So I got my friend, Gardner, who had a motorcycle and knew how to drive them, to go with me. And I went down to look at his motorcycle. All the way down I didn't really know why I was doing this, because I knew I couldn't afford to buy the thing. As we turned the corner to go to his house, I saw this huge ham tower over his house. He was, obviously, a big time, amateur radio operator. So we drove up and there was this sky-blue, 1951 Harley 74 parked in his driveway – had the streamers hanging from the handle bars, had footpads and a foot clutch, had a shifter on the tank, and it had big leather saddle bags with rhinestones and fringe on them, three sets of pegs so that you could put three people on it. The word "hog" really fit, right? I thought, "Man! That's a nice-looking bike!" And Gardner was just drooling all over the place, you know.

So I went and knocked on the door and Hugh came out. He said, "Take it for a ride." So we did and we came back. I said, "Well, thanks a lot for letting me see your bike." And he said, "Don't you want it?" I said, "I don't know what it's worth, but I'm sure I couldn't afford it." He said, "You know, a guy came here this afternoon and offered me \$200 worth of ham radio equipment for this bike, but I knew that you really wanted it. Fifty bucks and it's yours." So I drove it home.

And that's when I understood that Somebody was interested in me. I mean, it was a frivolous gift – is what it was. It wasn't a motor scooter that had 20,000 miles on it and was ready to fall apart. It was an older motor cycle, but it lasted me as long as I needed it. I sold it to a Hell's Angel for \$300. If I had that now...you know, you live and you learn. So this isn't just an exercise in religion anymore. There really *is* Somebody up there that is interested in me – knows what I like – taking care of me. And He's given me a lot over the years, but not in such an obvious way. There was the time we almost lost the house and there was a miracle, but I've told that story so many times.... Everybody has stories like that that are in the Church of God – part of His family.

I think that to have a personal relationship with God – to love God with all our heart – it has to be *personal* and we have to know that He *is* and that He is a *rewarder* of those that seek Him. Now, how do we get there? Well, He does that, doesn't He? That's what He did to me. I didn't do that. He did it.

The second thing that I think about as really important is I think we need to *admire* – I'm trying to put this in terms that we would use with other people – just folks – to *admire* God. "Our God is an awesome God. He reigns from heaven above." That's what the song says, right? Or maybe, sometimes, not so much admiration as shock and awe!

Job said, "I had heard about You, but now my eye *sees* you! I know what You can do!" God allowed the devil to take everything away from him, and then it says – at the end of his life – after he learned who God was – God gave him so much more stuff that it didn't completely soothe over the loss of his children, but he had more kids that were the light of life, and gave him back all of his wealth plus stuff, and so he saw who God was. So there, again, "...now my eye sees...." So that really tells us that there is something deeply personal between him and God at this point. And it's based on *reality*, not on his perception of "me and God – two buddies." He used to think it was him and God. And then he found out, "No, God is *way* up there and I'm way down here. Now I see who you are."

Jim O'Brien told me a story once about one of the members in one of his congregations - years ago – who was being sued by somebody. And whoever it was that was suing him – I think it was a divorce situation, but I'm not sure – had a very mean-minded attorney, who was doing everything he could not only to win, but to punish this poor guy. Jim would hear about it and pray with the man. He was just heart-sick for this guy. He was outraged at the injustice and the cruelty that this attorney was exhibiting. So he prayed that God would look down on his friend and save him. And he tossed in there, "...and deal justly with that attorney." Three months later that guy was dead. He said, "I didn't realize what God was going to do, but I learned that when evil is done, we're often helpless, but God is not!" And He is a God that does get revenge. He's a God of justice. That's the shock and awe part, by the way.

So: to know who God is, and to know that He's personally interested in us, and to know that He's *way* more powerful than we are – way more powerful all of us who are alive and all of us who have ever lived put together are and were. So that kind of brings us to what we talked about in the beatitudes series – doesn't it? – about poverty of spirit. God is great, but I am not. Hebrew 2:6 says:

**Heb. 2:6** – *It has been testified somewhere, "What is man that you are mindful of him? Or the son of man that You care for him?"*

He's so great and yet He still cares about us individually. And why does He? I mean, it's almost incomprehensible. We're sure glad He does, though, because we really *need* God. And we need to *know* that we *need* God. How awesome is it that He cares about us? Because we would be in trouble if He didn't.

That's three things I think about. We have to know our relationship to God – He's great, we're not. Without Him, we would know nothing about anything. It's only through His revealing Himself to us – through the Bible and through the physical creation – that we know He exists and anything about Him. It's interesting to watch people go off track from the Bible and all the ideas they get about what God's like. They're always wrong! Always wrong. When you come back to the Bible is the *only* way you can know anything about God – and the creation, of course. So we have to know what He's like. We have to know how powerful He is. And we have to know that He cares about us individually – that He is and that He is a rewarder.

Then I think the thing that just naturally follows from that is *gratitude* – a thankfulness. I quoted this recently, but it just keeps coming back to me, and that's the story of Jesus' mother, Mary, when she was a young girl – how this angel came to her and told her she was going to have God's child. I kind of imagine that that was the first time God ever came and talked to her like that and said something to her. And it really is quite a story. She was disrespected, undoubtedly, by the townspeople for getting pregnant out of wedlock. And then that long and grueling trip to Bethlehem with Joseph while she was pregnant. And then the baby born in a place where animals were kept. And you know what's in a place where animals are kept, right? And then Herod came after the baby not long after that and having to flee to Egypt and then coming back. It's kind of an understatement to say that when that angel talked to her, she knew that her life was never going to be the same again. It was suddenly going to become really difficult and really dangerous. So, to sum it all up, here's what she said – Luke 1, verse 46:

**Lk. 1:46** – *My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked on the humble estate of His servant – apparently they were not well off – I'm talking about Mary and her growing up and the situation they were in – for behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is His name. So, it wasn't that she was great. It was that He was great. And His mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation. She was the one that said – after the angel said, “Well, you're going to get pregnant and you're going to have a baby” – “Well, how can that be since I've never been with a man?” And he said, “Well, you don't worry about that. We'll take care of it.” And she said, “As you have said, let it be done.” His mercy is for those who fear Him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with His arm. He has scattered the proud and the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate. He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He has sent away empty. He has helped His servant, Israel, in remembrance of His mercy, as He spoke to our fathers – to Abraham – and to his offspring forever.*

I don't know if it says this anywhere in the Bible – I kind of think it doesn't – but in the chapter headings that they put in these modern translations, they call this “Mary's Song.” What would your song be? What song of gratitude would you write about what God has done for you? If you really, seriously want to get closer to God, study on what God has done for you.

Is there anything we can actually give Him that He doesn't already have in appreciation? We're not supposed to accept gifts from our clients, but a client – a little boy – gave me this mug that he bought and he took one of these ceramic pens and wrote, "You're an awesome counselor" and "Happy Birthday" and blah, blah, blah – "To Mr. Jacobs." I just couldn't turn that down. Now, I have lots of cups. But there was something there that was really important to me that I didn't have from anybody else – at least, in that setting.

So I have this interesting experience in my work from time to time. Have you ever been thanked – really thanked? One time there was this little girl – she was about thirteen. She'd come to my office and she would cry and cry and cry. She probably spent six months where every time she came in my office, she cried. If there was ever a child that I wanted to help, it was this little girl. She seemed like she was just caught in a no-win situation in her life. There wasn't anything I could really do about it directly either. So I just listened and cared. After awhile – I think I saw her for about two years – she gradually began to find her way out of her hopeless situation and began to take action on her own behalf. And over the months, she, without telling anybody, weaned herself off her psychotropic medications that she'd been given, because she was supposedly bipolar, which is something you can never get over. Right? When she did that, all of her symptoms went away. She started losing weight. Her complexion cleared up and her hair got really glossy. She stopped wearing black and dropped the Emo thing that was going on. Over the last few months seeing her, she turned into this beautiful girl right in front of my eyes. On our last session, she came and she was completely without anything black on and had not drawn on herself or her clothes that day. She shed a few tears at the prospect of not coming back anymore, and she said, "I've been thinking about what to say to you. To say, 'Thank you,' just doesn't seem like it's enough. It doesn't really say how I feel. I can never thank you enough for what you have done for me. You changed my life." Now, the truth is that she did all the hard work. Really. But still, I felt so honored to be a part of her life that I didn't really need to be thanked. Just seeing her was thanks enough. But it did intensify the sense of accomplishment that I was already feeling when she said that. And it strikes me, as I think about it, our gratitude is always something that we can give God that He doesn't already have.

So there's all these psalms about thanksgiving – praising God and all of that. Why do you think that's in there? David knew that. Mary knew that. Hannah knew that. Daniel knew that. Moses knew that. Abraham knew that.

After people pass through their therapy and they come out on the other side feeling better, sometimes they say, "I know I'm finished, but I don't want to leave," because there's been a connection built there. And I always say, "Well, it's hard to say, 'Goodbye,' after all that we've been through together." Sometimes that starts some talking about the nature of our relationship and the feelings that are all bundled together, and they start feeling better. And they know that it's okay to go, and that their job with me is finished, and they're ready to go out and live their life. But there is a feeling of connection that develops – closeness. And I think that is what God is counting on with us. I think that's what He wants. I don't think He has that either. And that's something that we can give. We'll talk more about that in future parts of this series.

Do you remember Naomi and Ruth? Naomi's husband and her two sons died and she was left with only one daughter-in-law, named Ruth, who was not an Israelite, but from Midian. It's been said that, in the story of Ruth, that Naomi and Ruth are a type of Christ and the church. Ruth said to Naomi, when Naomi was set on returning to Bethlehem, "Do not urge me to leave you, or to return from following you. For where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God my God. And where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts me from you." So she wanted to stay with Naomi. She wanted to take care of Naomi. She wanted to take on Naomi's culture. She wanted to worship Naomi's God. Does that sound like a whole being kind of commitment? It does, doesn't it? Whole heart, whole soul, whole mind, all her strength – her whole being and her whole life.

That is the aim of the greatest commandment of God. That's what He wants from us. Do you think that if we do that toward Him, or even try, that we're not going to get the same back? It's easy for Him to be that way – hard for us to love God with all our being for all our life.

Christianity is not really about the rules that God has laid down. They're important. But they are only important to show us *how* to love Him, because that is the goal. The real commandment – the *greatest* commandment – which is the end goal of the rules is an *attitude* to love God with all our heart, soul, strength and mind. It's so easy for us to kid ourselves and think that we love God. But what evidence do we have to prove it? What can we show? Where do we spend our time? Where do we spend our money? Where do we direct our energy? Where do our affections lie? What do we think about the most? Well, we have three more presentations in this series on *Important Stuff* about this greatest commandment, and in those we will fill in more specifics about how to love God with our whole being.