



Verse 28: And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?"



Reflect Personally:

1) Ask yourself, "How would I honestly respond to that question? What command do I prioritize the most?"



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1) Ask yourself, "How would I honestly respond to that question? What command do I prioritize the most?"

2) Ask yourself, "Have I elevated a command of God while downplaying other ones?" ...



Some ways to tell...

a) You are guided more by suspicion than love.

b) You care more about being right over being loving (God and neighbor)

c) You care more about winning than witnessing

d) You care more about cultural battles over kingdom faithfulness



Reflect Personally:

1) Ask yourself, "How would I honestly respond to that question? What command do I prioritize the most?"

2) Ask yourself, "Have I elevated a command of God at while downplaying other ones?"

3) Ask yourself, "What is shaping me? What is driving me? What has become ultimate in my heart?" ...



This is essentially the 3 R's - Reveal: "Search me, O God..."

*If we do not examine ourselves (rather, ask God to examine us), we will look more like the world than like Jesus.*

*And if we are not careful, we will end up prioritizing certain commands while dismissing others, and like the scribes, we will turn God's commands into a form of legalism.*



How do we follow Jesus in a divided, outraged, and hostile cultural environment we find ourselves in?

1. Reflect personally (vs 28)
2. Focus correctly (vs 29)

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Verse 29: Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.

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Focus Correctly:

1) A divided culture tempts us to obsess over the world's noise and gaze at the following:

Headlines  
Social media  
Outrage cycles  
Political anxieties  
Rinse and Repeat

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Focus Correctly:

2) Spiritual health begins by re-centering on the LORD.

*Gaze vs Glance (Psalm 27:4)*

What fills your vision will shape your soul.

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How do we follow Jesus in a divided, outraged, and hostile cultural environment we find ourselves in?

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Verse 29: Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: *The Lord* our God, *the Lord* is one.

- cf Deuteronomy 6:4: The Shema

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## The Lord is One!

Exodus 15:11, 13: “Who is like you, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in glorious deeds, doing wonders? ...You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.



*Deep worship neutralizes shallow outrage.*



*Worshiping Deeply will re-order your vision, emotions, and allegiance.*



How do we follow Jesus in a divided, outraged, and hostile cultural environment we find ourselves in?

1. Reflect personally (vs 28)
2. Focus correctly (vs 29)
3. Worship deeply (vs 29)
4. Love God fully (vs 30)



Verse 30: And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.

- cf Deuteronomy 6:5



Thoughts/Takeaways:

1) We are to love God with a whole heart. But a divided world will do everything to challenge this and bring about half-hearted discipleship:

- It will tempt us with divided loyalties
- It will bring about selective obedience
- It will lead to emotional heart disengagement



Thoughts/Takeaways:

2) But Jesus calls us to love God fully! This means...

- Our affections belong to Him.
- Our thoughts are shaped by Him.
- Our energy is directed toward Him.
- Our identity is rooted in Him.



Thoughts/Takeaways:

3) When God's love controls and shapes us, cultural hostility won't control and shape us.

*When God's love controls and shapes us, we can engage without panicking, disagree without dehumanizing, speak the truth in love and not with venom.*



How do we follow Jesus in a divided, outraged, and hostile cultural environment we find ourselves in?

1. Reflect personally (vs 28)
2. Focus correctly (vs 29)
3. Worship deeply (vs 29)
4. Love God fully (vs 30)
5. Love neighbor reflectively (vs 31)



Verse 31: The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these."

- cf Leviticus 19:18



What does it mean to love your neighbor as yourself?



Biblically, to love self means...

- You bear the image of God. You matter greatly to God! (Gen 1:27)
- You are fearfully and wonderfully made by God. (Psalm 139:14)
- Because you bear the image of God and are fearfully and wonderfully made, you tend and care for your body and needs. (1 Cor 6:19-20)



To love your neighbor as yourself is to *reflect this to others.*



- Like you, your neighbor is created in the image of God and matters greatly to God. (Gen 1:27)

- Like you, your neighbor is fearfully and wonderfully made by God. (Psalm 139:14)

- Because your neighbor bears the image of God and is fearfully and wonderfully made by God, you have concern and care for their body and needs as you do for your own. (Luke 10:25-37)



#### Thoughts/Takeaways:

1. To love God fully and to love your neighbor as yourself go hand in hand. They cannot be separated.

2. Christian love of neighbor does not require agreement. It requires recognition of the imago dei.

3. In a polarized world, loving your neighbor is not weakness. It is biblical obedience rooted in the powerful gospel.



How do we follow Jesus in a divided, outraged, and hostile cultural environment we find ourselves in?

1. Reflect personally (vs 28)

2. Focus correctly (vs 29)

3. Worship deeply (vs 29)

4. Love God fully (vs 30)

5. Love neighbor reflectively (vs 31)

6. Listen submissively (vs 32-34)



Verses 32-34: And the scribe said to him, "You are right, Teacher. You have truly said that he is one, and there is no other besides him. And to love him with all the heart and with all the understanding and with all the strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself, is much more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices." And when Jesus saw that he answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And after that no one dared to ask him any more questions.



#### 2 Thoughts on Listening Submissively:

1) In the midst of all the noise, listen to what Jesus says about the greatest command to love God and love neighbor as yourself. *Looking at the scribe's response, do you have a posture to understand more or argue more?*



2 Thoughts on Listening Submissively:

2) "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

Understanding truth is proximity.

Submitting to Jesus is entrance.



How do we follow Jesus in a divided, outraged, and hostile cultural environment we find ourselves in?

1. Reflect personally (vs 28)
2. Focus correctly (vs 29)
3. Worship deeply (vs 29)
4. Love God fully (vs 30)
5. Love neighbor reflectively (vs 31)
6. Listen submissively (vs 32-34)
7. Rejoice greatly (vs 28-34)



Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice.

- Philippians 4:4



In the gospel, we don't stand as condemned people but forgiven people.



Nothing is going to stop God's promises to make all things new!



Outrage says, "Everything is at stake right now!"

The gospel says, "The decisive victory has already been won!"



Therefore we can rejoice even now, not because the world is calm nor because we are calm, but because the King is risen, and He will return and make things new.  
Amen.



(Closing Reflection) How do we follow Jesus in a divided, outraged, and hostile cultural environment we find ourselves in?

1. Reflect personally
2. Focus correctly
3. Worship deeply
4. Love God fully
5. Love neighbor reflectively
6. Listen submissively
7. Rejoice greatly



Prayer of Corporate Confession:



Reader: Hear, O people of God: The Lord our God, the Lord is one! Holy and undivided Lord, there is none like you and we turn our gaze upon You.

All: In a world full of noise, conflict, and division, we confess that we have fixed our eyes on headlines instead of heaven, on outrage instead of Your sovereignty, on the world's chaos instead of Your kingship. Forgive us, O Lord.



Reader: You command us to love You with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength.

All: But we have loved You partially. We have given You convenience instead of devotion, leftovers instead of firstfruits, routine instead of affection. We confess our half-hearted love. Create in us undivided hearts, O Lord.



Reader: You command us to love our neighbor as ourselves.

All: We confess that we have withheld love. We have spoken quickly and listened poorly. We have harbored resentment. We have dismissed those made in Your image. Forgive us for failing to reflect Your mercy. Teach us to see others as You see them.



Reader: Lord Jesus, You said, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."

All: We don't want to be near Your kingdom, we yearn to belong to it fully! Draw us from agreement to surrender, from knowledge to obedience, from proximity to joyful and hope-filled participation.

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Reader: Gracious Savior, You have loved the Father perfectly. You have loved us sacrificially. You went to the cross and rose again to make all things new.

All: Because of Your finished work, we rejoice! No division can overturn Your reign. No hatred can cancel Your promises. No darkness can extinguish Your light.

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Reader: So refocus our gaze today. Deepen our worship. Soften our hearts. In the gospel, make us a people who love You wholly and love our neighbors faithfully in the midst of a divided world.

All: For Yours is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

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HOW JESUS CHANGES EVERYTHING