

GROUP GUIDE – FORMED BY THE GOSPEL

SESSION 1:3 | LOVE THE LORD GOD

Key Scriptures

- Matthew 22:35–40
- Deuteronomy 6:4–9
- John 6:38
- John 14:31
- Matthew 26:39
- Genesis 1:26–27
- Romans 8:3–4
- Ezekiel 36:26–27

Big Idea

The greatest thing we can do with our life is love the Lord our God with our whole being—a love made possible because Jesus loved the Father perfectly for us and now forms that same love in us by His Spirit.

Ice Breakers (Choose one)

- When you hear "follow your heart," what do you think it means?
- What does culture say is the most important thing to do with your life?
- Where do you feel the strongest pull competing for your devotion?

Discussion Questions (As time allows)

1. Matthew 22:35–40 — Why do you think Jesus treats this as the defining command—not just one important command among many??
2. Matthew 22:37 — What does it look like to love God with heart, soul, and mind as an integrated whole rather than a compartmentalized faith?
3. Matthew 22:37 (supporting: Jeremiah 17:9) — How is “follow your heart” functionally different from “love the Lord your God”? What does each assume about the heart?
4. John 6:38; John 14:31 — How does Jesus demonstrate that love for God is expressed through obedience rather than feelings?
5. Deuteronomy 6:4–5 — Why does the Shema begin with God’s oneness, and how does that confront our divided loves?

6. Deuteronomy 6:6–9 — What do you notice about how God tells Israel to keep His commands close? What does this teach us about spiritual formation?
7. Genesis 1:26–27 — How does God’s relational unity help us understand why divided hearts distort love?
8. Romans 8:3–4 — Why is it essential that Jesus fulfilled the Great Commandment perfectly on our behalf?
9. Ezekiel 36:26–27 — What does it mean that Jesus fulfills this command for us and now begins fulfilling it in us by His Spirit?
10. Deuteronomy 6:6; Matthew 22:37 — Why can reminders fail to produce love? What’s the difference between God’s words around us and God’s words written on our hearts?

Application

This week, choose one concrete way to intentionally re-aim your heart toward God. This is about direction, not perfection. This could be:

Examples

- Desire: Letting God reshape what you want, not just what you do
- Attention: Reordering time, media, and focus toward God
- Obedience: Choosing faithfulness over comfort
- Identity: Releasing self-definition rooted in success or approval
- Formation: Practicing rhythms that aim the heart toward God

Key Takeaway

The Gospel does not tell us to follow our hearts – it forms our hearts. Because Jesus loved the Father perfectly for us, we are freed from trying to prove our love to God. And through His Spirit, Jesus now shapes our desires, priorities, and lives so that we can love the Lord our God with our whole being. Gospel-formed living is not driven by effort alone, but by a heart steadily being formed around God.