

LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD

Matthew 22:37 “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

Jim moved from his long-time home in St. Louis to Phoenix, AZ. For many reasons he was excited about the move, especially when he realized in his new home the winter temps rarely dipped below 40 degrees. Being a die-hard St. Louis Cardinal baseball fan, he found it difficult to change his allegiance to the Arizona Diamondbacks. As time passed, however, he became a fan of the Diamondbacks. That is, until his boss gave him two tickets to an upcoming Diamondback/St. Louis Cardinal game at Chase field. Jim finally figured out a way to demonstrate his divided loyalty to the two teams. He had a friend sew him a special jersey that was one-half Cardinal and one-half Diamondback.

Living in the world you live, the life you live, the associations you have with those who are your family and friends, it is quite natural to have divided loyalties in these realms, just as Jim had in the baseball realm. Jesus was asked by a lawyer which of the Ten Commandments was the greatest one. Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy 6:5, “You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.” Three times in this verse the word “all” is used as an adjective to express the quantity of love you are to have for God. This commandment does not permit divided loyalties when it comes to your relationship with The Lord God Almighty. God wants all of your heart, soul and mind and spirit.

There are many temptations that challenge your complete, total, non-divided love of God. The Scriptures provide a long list of these which includes money (Psalm 115:4), food (Philippians 3:19), and actual idols. (Revelation 9:20) Anyone and anything you put your faith and trust in and devote you heart, mind, and soul to becomes your god. If you on Sunday worship the Lord God Almighty, confess your undivided love of Him, pray to Him and then throughout the week by your thoughts and actions trust in and depend upon money, food, actual idols, etc., you have a divided loyalty. You have disobeyed what Jesus says is the greatest Commandment.

By God's grace, through your faith in Jesus, your confession of your sin of divided-loyalty is accepted by God and He grants you forgiveness for Jesus' sake. With this forgiveness your complete faith, trust and worship of God is restored. It is God's unconditional love that draws you back into this undivided relationship with Him.

Prayer: Lord God Almighty, forgive me my sins of divided loyalty to You, and, through Jesus restore me to love you with all my heart, soul and mind. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Renew me, O eternal Light, And let my heart and soul be bright,
Illumined with the light of grace That issues from Your holy face.

Remove the pow'r of sin from me And cleanse all my impurity
That I may have the strength and will Temptations of the flesh to still.

Create in me a new heart, Lord, That gladly I obey Your Word.
Let what You will be my desire, And with new life my soul inspire.

Grant that I only You may love And seek those things which are above
Till I behold You face to face, O Light eternal, through Your grace.
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