

## THE DECISION TO LOVE

*Jesus replied, “You must love the LORD your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important: Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Genesis 12:1-4 NLT)*

**INTRODUCTION:** Jesus summarizes the entire Law in two commandments, highlighting the importance of love as the basis of our faith and Christian life. So today we will make the decision to love! That decision to love God and others will transform and heal our hearts and will be reflected in our actions.v

### 1. Love God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind.

- Loving God with all our heart means that our affections and desires are aligned with God. It implies a deep and sincere love that puts God above everything else in our lives.
- Loving God with all our soul means that our entire being is dedicated to Him. It implies a passion and spiritual fervor that seeks to be in constant communion with God.
- Loving God with all our mind involves using our intellectual abilities to know and understand God better. This includes studying His word, reflecting on His truth, and allowing our minds to be renewed by the Holy Spirit. *“Don’t copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God’s will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.” (Rom. 12:2)*
- We demonstrate our love for God by obeying His commandments in every

area of our lives. But Samuel replied, “What is more pleasing to the Lord :your burnt offerings and sacrifices or your obedience to his voice? Listen! Obedience is better than sacrifice, and submission is better than offering the fat of rams.(1 Sam. 15:22)

- Loving God also means trusting in His plan and purpose for our lives.
- ### 2. Loving our neighbor
- “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” (John 15:12 NIV)*
- Loving our neighbors means showing compassion and empathy toward others. We can do this by supporting and helping people in their moments of need or difficulty.
  - True love for our neighbor is manifested in the willingness to forgive and seek reconciliation.
  - Loving our neighbors is demonstrated through acts of selfless service.
- ### 3. Love yourself.
- Loving yourself means accepting and caring for yourself in a healthy way.
  - Recognizing and accepting our identity in Christ is essential to loving ourselves. Meditate on the scriptures that speak about who you are in Christ.
  - Loving yourself also means finding a healthy balance between giving to others and receiving. Allow yourself to receive love and help from others

when you need it without feeling bad for doing so.

**4. Benefits of making the decision to love.**

- Loving God with all your heart, soul, and mind brings you closer to Him, allowing you to experience His presence and direction more clearly. This deep connection gives you purpose and guidance in life.
- Loving God and others can heal emotional wounds and relieve burdens from the heart. Love has the power to transform pain and suffering into peace and joy.
- Love strengthens interpersonal relationships, creating deeper and more meaningful bonds. Relationships based on true love are more resistant to conflict and challenges.

**INTERACTIVE QUESTIONS:**

- How can you show your love for God in your daily life?
- What steps can you take to show more compassion and empathy towards others?
- What areas of your life do you need to work on to love yourself more?

**PRACTICAL APPLICATION:**

- **Establish a daily devotional routine:** Spend time each day

praying and reading the Bible to strengthen your relationship with God.

- **Practice acts of service:** Find opportunities to help others in your community or church, demonstrating the love of Christ.
- **Take care of yourself:** Develop healthy habits that promote your physical, emotional and spiritual well-being, remembering that you are valuable in the eyes of God.

**CONCLUSION:**

Make the decision today to love in all areas of your life, allowing God's love to flow through you to others and to yourself. Making that decision will heal and transform our lives. Ask God to fill you with His love and enable you to love as He does.

**SALVATION PRAYER:** *Lord Jesus, I recognize that I have sinned and that you died for me. Today I repent and ask for forgiveness. I give you my life and my heart so that you may be my personal Lord and Savior, amen.*