

INDICATORS OF DEEP-SEATED AFFECTIONS:
A Supplement for the Command to the Heart
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In this supplement to my expositional series on what it means to love God, I decided to put together positive and negative indicators to assist me in critically and reasonably reflecting upon the extent of my love for God. This way of re-examining my thoughts on the “*Greatest Command*” in Scripture comes out of a series of conversations with my friend Carson Smith on campus at Texas A&M University (spring 2009).

Recapping my expositional series on Mark 12:30 I raised the following question:

What does it mean to Love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and with all your strength (Mark 12:30)? In my study of this passage I discovered the following truths:

- a. The “*heart*” emphasizes your deep-seated affections, your inner desires; it is the control center of your human personality;
- b. The “*soul*,” while it is a rich concept with a variety of meaning, we can say at least it emphasizes your self-conscious thought life.
- c. The “*mind*” emphasizes your capacity to think, reason, understand, and make judgments.
- d. “*Strength*” emphasizes your bodily powers (physical & emotional capabilities).

Therefore, when you place your trust in Jesus Christ as Savior you are given a new mind, a new heart, and a new will. Thus, when you the child of God, exercises your mind toward God to know Him, your heart to love Him, and your will to obey Him, then you are in fellowship with God. In his classic and unforgettable work, *Designed to be Like Him*, J. Dwight Pentecost makes the following observation:

...if any area of your personality is not in harmony with Him, then you are not enjoying fellowship with God. And because fellowship with Him is the reason we were created and then re-created in His image [2 Cor. 5:17; 3:18; Romans 8:29; 1 Cor. 2:16; Col. 3:10], we cannot glorify God apart from that fellowship.

Now having summarized my previous studies on the matter, I now turn to our attention to the following list of indicators that I’ve put down to assist me in critically pondering my love for God from out of my whole heart. The bottom line is that *we pursue what we desire*. Whatever it is that occupies our hearts, dominates our mind, and wins our affections, we are willing to get up early, stay late, pay a lot of money, give up resources, energy, and time for it. I’ve heard it said we are largely identified with what we pursue.

To be sure, the following indicators should be viewed as “*road signs*.” Some of these road signs are related and some are more important than others. Nevertheless, each of these indicators is designed to provoke critical self-evaluation that may motivate us with resolved and determination, by His enablement and yieldedness, to love God all the more. While this supplement is specifically focused on what it means to love God from out of your whole heart, in future installments I will consider indicators of the soul, mind, and bodily powers.

I trust these will be helpful to you as you think about what it means to love God from out of your whole heart.

What are indicators or “*road signs*” that you are loving God from out of your whole heart?

You love God from out of your whole heart when...

1. You earnestly pursue God in your daily affairs; He is your top priority.
2. Your pursuit of God is authentic and personal; it is not fake or hypocritical.
3. Your thoughts throughout your day naturally drift toward Him whether at work, home, or in your leisure activities.
4. You can't help but talk about God; he dominates your conversation.
5. You are willing to drop your “day-planner” in order to spend more time with Him.
6. Unexpected opportunities to learn more about God is welcomed and earnestly pursued.
7. You set aside quality time with Him (e.g., learn you about special conferences, events, small groups, Bible studies, etc).
8. You proactively participate in biblical corporate worship (even with all the flaws of the local church).
9. You are willing to set your daily agenda around God rather than merely including God in your daily agenda
10. You are honest and transparent before Him.
11. You accept God for who He actually is. In other words, your affections for Him are not based upon what you perceive God to be, but what natural and special revelation declares the God of the Bible to be.
12. You love God the way He desires to be loved and not the way you want to love Him.
13. You strive to inflame & not smother your affections for Him.
14. You protect your relationship with Him at all costs.
15. You represent God's interests with intellectual and moral excellence.
16. You find your studies spent in intimately knowing Him (e.g., pursuing theology is a delight). Being naïve about the issues surrounding God is like spending time with someone you don't know.
17. Even if you find your biblical and theological subjects difficult to grasp, you work it through! In other words, willful ignorance of the important topics about God (by using some excuse such as they are difficult to grasp) is wrong-headed.
18. You encircle yourself with friends who share the same passion you do for Him.
19. You consistently offer God your very best.
20. You abhor hypocrisy and unfaithfulness.
21. You are very leery of anything that might attempt to win your affections.
22. You have *no* conflicting interests or loyalties (there are no “*idols*” in your life).

23. Your time is not divided; everything is pursued as an expression of worship. In other words, your worldview and lifestyle is a harmonistic and holistic expression of worship.
24. Your moment-by-moment decisions consciously made are those that seek to give God the most glory.
25. You are a hard, enduring follower of the Lord Jesus Christ. You don't give up even when climbing the "mountain" or overcoming an obstacle is very difficult. You don't allow yourself to become distracted.
26. I meditate deeply upon God's Word
27. Praying to God is not merely a duty, but a pleasure
28. My ambition in this life is to please God
29. I redirect my daily activities and resources to the end result of pleasing God
30. I proactively seek to mortify the flesh, to put to death the sinful appetites and tendencies in my life, in view of wanting to demonstrate my love to God.

You are not loving God from out of your deep-seated affections when...

1. You pursue someone or something else over and above God.
2. Your agenda is set around someone else such as "*me, myself, and I.*" Or perhaps, when you allow someone or something else other than God to set your *daily* agenda.
3. False idols occupy your mind, activities, and pursuits (e.g., love of money, power, or popularity).
4. You don't *consistently* spend *quality* time with God.
5. You don't actively participate in corporate worship
6. Your "social" relationships are not based upon a mutual love and pursuit of God.
7. You don't consistently think about God.
8. You don't diligently strive to earnestly pursue Him.
9. You don't consistently delight in worshipping God.
10. You don't experience "*illumination*" when you read God's Word.
11. You refuse to love God on His terms.
12. Other pursuits take precedence over your relationship with God (e.g., work, studies, relationships, etc).
13. You don't proactively participate in a God-honoring local church.
14. You are entertained by those things that are offensive to God. In other words, if I'm offended by those who would talk bad about someone I love, then surely if I have deep-seated affections for God, I would also find entertainment that dishonors God to not only be distasteful but abhorrent.
15. You choose to live independently of God even though you may think about Him.
16. Someone or something else has *won* your heart.
17. You are not known as committed follower of Jesus Christ by your colleagues and peers. Your reputation is defined in ways that don't point people to God.
18. You don't find yourself naturally taking the conversation toward God.
19. You are embarrassed to talk about Him and His ways.
20. You dismiss biblical and theological studies because they seem to be "too" tough to learn (a certain "*anti-intellectualism*" sets in which is expressed in your disposition).
21. You do not take opportunities to learn more about God and His ways.
22. You make decisions that reflect disloyalty to God.

23. You delight in thoughts and activities that are abhorrent to God. Or even looked at differently, you find confession of sin too difficult, too infrequent, too burdensome (largely due to pride and perhaps infrequency). In contrast, a person who pursues God will seek to confess sin immediately; it will be unrestrained, sincere confession.
24. God is only a part, not the sum-total of your life. You find yourself divided.
25. Your commitment to God lacks endurance; it may even be “*flighty*” and “*superficial*.”
26. You consistently give God your “*left-overs*” (whether it is time, energy, and other resources).
27. Meditating upon God’s Word or praying is merely a duty, an obligation, not a pleasure or a joy.
28. Your life is too busy to spend time with God.
29. You don’t share the same type of burdens of the O.T. prophets, Lord Jesus Christ and His apostles.
30. When you are indifferent to the things of God.