

Value 2 Cultivate Love of God
Matthew 22:34-40
February 8, 2026

1. Explain the image for our slides: The *Marriage Supper of the Lamb*. We must never forget the primary metaphor explaining the relationship between Jesus and His church is marriage.
2. Our Mission: “*We exist to glorify God by walking closely with Him, striving together to become more like Jesus every day.*”
 - a. Our Mission is BIBLICAL (Ephesians 4:1-16).
 - b. You should memorize it and Ephesians 4:1-16.
 - c. You should meditate on it.
 - i. Prayer
 - ii. Thinking...
 1. “I exist...”
 2. “... to glorify God...”
 3. “... by walking closely with Him...”
 4. “...striving together...”
 5. “... to become more like Jesus...”
 6. “... every day.”
 - d. You should practice it.
3. Our Values are the core practices that bring our Mission to life.
 - a. Follow Jesus—the starting point, the fundamental basics we must never lose sight of
 - b. Cultivate Love of God—the heart of it all.
 - c. Cultivate Love of Others
 - d. Make Disciples
 - e. Seek Unity
4. The Beauty of Our Mission and Values
 - a. They are the heart of Jesus’ work of redeeming each of us.
 - b. You can think of them as stages of spiritual growth toward the goal of becoming like Jesus.
 - c. You can think of them as the essential ingredients we mix together as we become more like Jesus.
 - d. You can think of them as tools in the hands of the Holy Spirit to form Jesus in you.
 - e. And you would be right on every one!
5. Read Matthew 22:34-40 and pray.
6. Exposition of Matthew 22:34-38
 - a. Context: This is the last question Jesus answered during the “grilling” He endured from the Jewish leaders.
 - b. Jesus was being tested yet again. This was not a question from a “seeker” who genuinely wanted to know. It came from a snob who was evaluating Jesus.

- c. Jesus answered the question because it was the most important of any that He was asked. "What is the greatest commandment in the Law?"
- d. Jesus quoted Deuteronomy 6:4-5

Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

- e. The declaration of mono-theism
 - i. We don't appreciate the significance of this declaration because the three great religions of the world are mono-theistic. Judaism was the first and is the foundation for both Islam and Christianity.
 - ii. Mono-theism was a profound change in humanity's perception of the universe because it opened the door to a relationship with the Holy God.
 - iii. There could not be a command to "love the Lord your God" unless He was unique.
- f. Why is this the greatest commandment? "On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."
 - i. The Law told the people how to thrive in their new land. It taught them what it looked like to fear the Lord.
 - ii. The Prophets' primary job was calling the Jews back to the fear of the Lord.
 - iii. The foundation for these two pillars of Jewish life was their love of a singular, holy God.
 - iv. A polytheist has a transactional association with his or her gods. Keep the gods happy so you can have a decent life. There is no love, no relationship because you have to placate multiple gods.
 - v. We, on the other hand, have one God. The entire basis of our association with this God is loving relationship.
 - 1. We obey this God because we love Him (the Law).
 - 2. We return to this God to restore our relationship with Him (the Prophets).
 - 3. The fear of the Lord (Deut. 6:2, 13, 24) is rooted in love.
 - 4. We are to love God with our entire being—our mind, our will, our emotions, our strength.
 - 5. We are able to love this holy God because He first loved us:
 - a. Deut. 7:9

The Lord did not set His love on you nor choose you because you were more in number than any of the peoples, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but because the Lord loved you and kept the oath which He swore to your forefathers, the Lord brought you out by a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt. Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments.

- b. 1 John 4:16-19

We have come to know and have believed the love which God has for us. God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God, and God abides in him. By this, love is

perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us.

7. Our 2nd Value is “Cultivate Love of God”. How do we do that?

a. The process of cultivation:

- i. The word “cultivate” was chosen because it reminds us we have a role to play. Love doesn’t just happen. It is nurtured, stoked, cultivated so it can grow and thrive, bearing fruit.
- ii. We build on the relationship we started with Jesus when we entered our apprenticeship to Him.
- iii. We choose to obey Him, even though we do not understand what He is asking of us or what He is doing.
- iv. At first, we trust Him because He loves us (Romans 5:8).
- v. As our knowledge of God grows, we discover a love for Him blooming in our hearts.
 1. Intellectual knowledge gleaned from prayerful contemplation of
 - a. The world around us and in us
 - b. The Bible
 - c. Our own lives
 2. Relational knowledge that comes from working alongside Him, the apprentice and his or her Master.
- b. Simple, but not easy. Simple, but not quick. Simple, but never ending.
 - i. Walk closely with Jesus. The consistent message of the Bible is that God loves revealing Himself to anyone who will seek.
 - ii. USE THE TOOLS GOD HAS PROVIDED! **SLIDE**
 - iii. Expect Him to answer. You are walking on holy ground. You are entering into a conversational relationship with the God of the universe.

From Knowing God

By J. I. Packer

Pages 18-19

How are we to do this? How can we turn our knowledge *about* God into knowledge *of* God? The rule for doing this is demanding, but simple. It is that we turn each truth that we learn *about* God into matter for meditation *before* God, leading to prayer and praise *to* God.

We have some idea, perhaps, what prayer is, but what is meditation? Well may we ask; for meditation is a lost art today, and Christian people suffer grievously from their ignorance of the practice. Meditation is the activity of calling to mind, and thinking over, and dwelling on, and applying to oneself, the various things that one knows about the works and ways and purposes and promises of God. It is an activity of holy thought, consciously performed in the presence of God, under the eye of God, by the help of God, as a means of communion with God. Its

purpose is to clear one's mental and spiritual vision of God, and to let His truth make its full and proper impact on one's mind and heart. It is a matter of talking to oneself about God and oneself; it is, indeed, often a matter of arguing with oneself, reasoning oneself out of moods of doubt and unbelief into a clear apprehension of God's power and grace. Its effect is ever to humble us, as we contemplate God's greatness and glory, and our own littleness and sinfulness, and to encourage and reassure us—'comfort' us, in the old, strong, Bible sense of the word—as we contemplate the unsearchable riches of divine mercy displayed in the Lord Jesus Christ.