

The Most Important Words in the Bible

The Jewish sages tell us that there are 613 commandments. When Jesus was asked which He considered to be the most important, He responded with this direct quote from the book of Deuteronomy, “‘Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:28-30, quoting Deut. 6:4-5, NIV).

Friends, why does Jesus say this is the most important command in the entire Bible?

This is the great declaration of monotheism, expressing God’s complex unity as one: His mysterious triune nature, consisting of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Jesus first identified our unique God and, pointing to Him, then explained why mankind was created: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Deut. 6:5).

Jesus later prayed for us to collectively share spiritual oneness with God, “Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us ... I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity” (John 17:21; 23). His highest desire is that we would become one with each other and God. We were born to be together with God in a monogamous and loving eternal relationship.

My dear friend the late Wade E. Taylor used to say that God’s favorites were those who responded to His heart’s cry: “I love them that love me; and those that seek me early shall find me” (Prov. 8:17, KJV). Of course we know that God loves mankind, but He is drawn to those who respond to His affection. Our all-sufficient God desires our love above everything else.

Something deep within the heart of God calls to the deep places of love within us.

Like our Creator, we each express more love toward those who love us and, using the oneness of our triune God as the standard, we must lovingly become one in Christ. Jesus is revealing heaven's highest purpose for our time on earth. We must collectively come to know and love the one true God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength.

God responds to our love. If you've ever been in love, you know how important it is for your love to be returned. Once you share your feelings, you're vulnerable and you crave a favorable response. We received our unique human nature from God who created us in His image.

Jesus said the most important truth found within the Bible is God's unity tied with the commandment for us to love Him and become one with Him. Our God is one, and He's eternity's greatest lover. He's calling each of us to, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength." {eo}

Pitts and Mary Evans met at the University of South Carolina and have been married since 1981. They have three adult children, a daughter in-law, a son in-law and eight grandchildren. Pitts first attended Whole Word Fellowship with his parents in the late 1960s and early 1970s. He was later called to full-time ministry and currently serves as the senior pastor of WWF and the Northern Virginia House of Prayer. He is the voice of our weekday The Whole Word Podcast. Pastor Pitts also directs our international ministry, overseeing humanitarian efforts, combating human trafficking, ministering in pastor's conferences, Bible schools and seminaries in other nations. His primary calling is for recruiting and equipping the bride of Christ through Bible teaching and preaching. His new book, *The Wife of God*, is available from Amazon.

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