

# Week Two: Love God with All Your Soul

**Sunday, April 8, 2018**

by: Rev. Roger Lenander

This is what the Lord says:  
Stand at the crossroads and look;  
ask for the ancient paths,  
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,  
and you will find rest for your souls. – Jeremiah 6:16

How do you love the Lord with all your soul? This is a huge question. We need to know the answer to this because it is one of the four things Jesus said we need to do to love God completely.

We love the Lord with all our soul by living a life of faithfulness to all that the Lord has required of us. While loving the Lord with all our heart has to do with affection, loving the Lord with all our soul has to do with devotion.

The soul is the part of us that defines who we are. The essence of the biblical definition of the soul means life, personality, the inner self and our identity. It's where we make our decisions and choices that ultimately decide our lifestyle and behavior. Think of the soul as the "core you."

To love the Lord with all your soul means to love Him in the way we live, in the choices we make, and in the behavior and lifestyle we adopt. To love the Lord with all your soul is to submit the visible and invisible self to the way of the Lord. It is living in faithfulness to God's way and purpose trusting in God's faithfulness.

*Lord, create in me a new heart and renew a right Spirit within me. Amen.*

**Monday, April 9, 2018**

by: Misty Coyle

*"He answered: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind..."*

Luke 10:27

How do you love the Lord with all your soul? We love the Lord with all our soul by living a life of faithfulness to all that the Lord has required of us. While loving the Lord with all our heart has to do with affection, loving the Lord with all our soul has to do with devotion.

The soul, defined as life/personality in the bible, is the part of us that defines who we are. Our identity. Think of the soul as the "core you." To love the Lord with all your soul means to love Him in the way we live, in the choices we make, and in the behavior and lifestyle we adopt.

What I think are some ways to love God with all our soul:

- **Love the Lord with all your soul by making godly choices.**  
Choices flow from what we treasure most.
- **Love the Lord with all your soul by pursuing obedience to His Word.**  
*"If you love me, you will obey what I command"* John 14:15

Love is a verb. When we do our best to keep his commandments, when we live by every Word that we are tangibly expressing our love for the Lord. Sometimes we are not going to feel like loving God, but we do it out of love for God.

- **Love the Lord with all your soul by pursuing a life of humility in attitudes and speech.**

*“Meekness is power and privilege under control. It speaks of restraint in the use of power except to promote love. Meekness is not to be confused with weakness which is the absence of strength.”*

Mike Bickle

This meekness is expressed most by what we say and how we say it. Wrong speech will ultimately affect our spiritual lives and work against our love for the Lord.

*“For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.”* Matthew 12:34

*“The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit.”*

Proverbs 18:21

When Jesus is the treasure in our hearts, our affections are captured. When our affections are captured, then choices may become harder or may become easier; but the choices will be god-centered, making a lifestyle of humility and godliness apparent. This is loving God with all your soul.

*Heavenly Father, let your spirit work in me. Cast me not away from your presence but stay in my heart so that I may live as you command and as Jesus showed. Let my words and actions be yours. Amen!*

**Tuesday, April 10, 2018**

by: Juel Pierce

And Mary said,

“My soul magnifies the Lord,  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed,  
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
and holy is his name.  
His mercy is for those who fear him  
from generation to generation.  
He has shown strength with his arm;  
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.  
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever.” (Luke 1:46-55)

When we think of loving God with all our soul, our hearts and minds turn to the stories of what God has done for us, God’s people. Not only me, but also the whole people of God, including the whole Church and the whole people of Israel. God has filled us with good things, and since we are often too

full to receive the good things of God, God empties us of pride, our thoughts of self-sufficiency, and has turned our hearts and minds to the mercy that he has shown to us. We remember, from our reading of Scripture and from our life experience, that when we think we have it all together all by ourselves, our souls shrivel in us. Loving God with all our soul means letting God empty us of all that stands in the way of our receiving God's mercy.

Loving God with all our soul is not something that we can do on our own, by determining that we are going to love God. It is remembering and letting God love us, so that our souls reflect not our own determination or righteousness, but God's love for us and for all the lowly.

*O God, let our souls reflect your love for us, that we may love you with all our soul! Amen.*

## Wednesday, April 11, 2018

by: Jim Pierce

*One of the scribes came near . . . and asked [Jesus], 'Which commandment is the first of all? Jesus answered, The first is, 'Hear O Israel: the Lord 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 mind, and with all your strength.**' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these.'* (Mark 12: 28—30, NRSV, emphasis added)

My study Bible's footnote for Matthew's quoting of this text explains that heart "is the center of a person's willing, choosing, doing," but is unhelpfully silent on what soul might mean. The footnote for Deuteronomy 6:4, the verse Jesus quotes, is silent on both. No help there. It seems that the cumulative effect, the putting together of heart, soul mind and strength is really the point.

What of pop culture—phrases like "soul-mate," "soulful eyes," "soul singer," "soul food?" Each phrase evokes a particular feeling, or image, or sound or taste, but none helps me figure out what Jesus is talking about here. Is soul that little bit of me that somehow escapes to live on at death despite scripture's clear proclamation that when we die we die? That doesn't work either.

Perhaps this helps. In the second creation story, the one in Genesis 2, we read that after God formed the first human from the dust of the earth, God breathed into the human's nostrils the breath of life. That's the moment the human became a living being. (Genesis 2:7) Soul, the very breath of God which is life itself, not our possession but God's gift, given for this time we breathe it in, returned to God when we last breathe it out. The very breath of God that one day, in the resurrection, will be breathed into us again giving us new life.

Perhaps to love God with all my soul is to recognize with each breath in that God is my life source, that only God sustains me in life. To love God with all my soul is to remember with each breath out that apart from God I am but the dust of the earth. To love God with all my soul then is to turn each breath I take into a prayer of thanksgiving to God without whom I am nothing at all.

*Gracious God, sustaining breath of life, help me this day to offer each breath I breathe a prayer of thanksgiving to you for the gift of life itself, and breathing, help me place my life in your hands. Amen*

## Thursday, April 12, 2018

by: Phil Hornbostel

And Mary sang, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me

blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever.”--Luke 1: 46-55.

In this famous song of the young pregnant Virgin Mary, she describes her raw emotions upon learning that she bears the Messiah, coming to save their people. And in doing so, she shares the connection which she has for God, the connection that we all carry, and which we call “the soul”. Mary’s soul “magnifies” the Lord, and in so doing, Mary feels warmer, closer, more loved by God. And in this simple hymn, she loves God with all her soul.

The soul is the basis of our spirituality, our connection with the divine, the reason that we feel that special closeness to God every time we dip our finger in the baptismal font, and then approach the altar to receive the body and blood of Jesus Christ. And it is in those moments when, if we are truly loving God with all our soul, that all those life distractions are ignored, and we meet our Lord at the altar, along with all those kneeling or standing with us, as well as all those with whom we have shared communion throughout our own lives, as well as the long train of believers who are part of the one holy and catholic church on earth.

Loving God with all our soul is a more quiet time, a more internal time, a time when we can meditate on all that connects us with God, and feel the peace that passes all understanding. And in the power of the Spirit, we can give thanks to God for the gift of our soul, and the connection that will never be broken, and that ties us together as one great family for all eternity.

*Jesus, in this Easter season, I give you thanks for my soul and the connection to the Spirit, which you have won for me. I pray that in the times of sharing baptism and communion, that I can always feel your special presence at my side, giving me strength, and making me feel loved as part of your eternal communion of saints. Keep me ever at your side especially in the difficult times, and assure me of Your presence in my life, every day. Amen*

**Friday, April 13, 2018**

by: Jeff Langdon

**“Love the Lord your God with all your Heart, with all your Soul, with all your Mind and with all your Strength...” Mark 12:30**

The directions of much of this verse are pretty obvious to me...

- To love God with all my Heart, leads me to conclude that God wants all my love.. it refers to everything I am bound to, every affection I have, with everything I feel.
- To love God with all my Mind, leads me to conclude that God wants my every thought...every plan I make... every moment I process things.
- To love God with all my strength, leads me to conclude that God wants all my efforts, all of my energy, everything I give effort to.

But to love God with all my Soul? As noted above, I have already given the commitment of my emotions, my imagination and thoughts, and my decisions... So **what is loving God with all my soul ?**

From what I can conclude, God also wants by eternal commitment. My heart will stop beating, my mind will stop thinking, and my strength will fail. But if I love God eternally, this describes a bond (of God's making) that will connect us forever.

As husbands and wives, we often choose to be buried next to one another...why? We don't have any consciousness of being next to each other. Very literally, we are in a box, just feet from one another, with no shared conversation and no shared being. Why? It may be an expression of something our mind cannot explain and our heart can not express. It is perhaps a desire to be near someone regardless of our ability to think about it, or the heart to wish for it, or the strength to carry it out. It is to love with an essence of who we are... and it is not necessarily controllable.

I have control over my mind, my heart and my strength. I can choose to ruin my heart by wishing for all the wrong things, I can ruin my mind with drugs and all sorts of plots. I can ruin my strength by devoting myself to the wrong causes. But I do not have the ability to control my soul. I cannot see or feel my soul. I can not give my soul to someone who has no authority over it.

**C.S. Lewis says, "You do not have a soul. You are a soul."**

My soul is a thumbprint of who I am... It is owned by God. It is only God who can forgive the sinful nature of my heart, mind and feeble strength, by redeeming my soul through the death of Jesus. Jesus has this ability to die for me because He was human. Jesus also has the ability to redeem by soul because He is God. Our response is to respond to God's love for us. As we do so, the Holy Spirit then leads us in the ability to increase our love in heart, mind and strength. We will never love God perfectly, but we will do so with our eternal souls. That perfection awaits us because we have a God who first loves us.

*Dear God... use your Holy Spirit to increase my love for you not only in heart, mind and strength, but with my very soul. You have claimed me... help me live as redeemed, reflecting your love in all I do.*

AMEN

**Saturday, April 14, 2018**

by: Rev. Roger Lenander

Now I am about to go the way of all the earth. You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the Lord your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed.

Joshua 23:14

Joshua has lead a remarkable life. A leader in the wilderness journey, he succeeds Moses and leads the people into the land God had promised. He leads them into battle and uses his gifts for God's purpose. Now, in the closing of his earthly life he leaves a message that proclaims God's faithfulness is what sustains the heart and soul.

How wise is Joshua's advice. The Old Testament describes the soul as the breath of life from God. It is the seat of our emotions, our feelings. It is the human and divine linked for holy living in this earthly life. How precious is the love of God that we are freed to experience the full range of feelings and emotions in life. We are able to know love, kindness, compassion, mercy, generosity, sadness, and joy.

*Loving God, thank you for creating, filling and sustaining the Spirit of Jesus in us. May we each day follow the path of Jesus and commit our soul into your hands. Amen.*

