



WHAT

Child

IS THIS?

(3) "Jesus as Man"

HIGHLIGHT: Matthew 22:34-40 NLT

H

Below are excerpts from the overall passage for use with the APPLICATION and RESPOND. It will be beneficial for the group to read the whole passage to understand the entire context.

Matthew 22:34-40 (NLT)

vv. 34-40

34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees with his reply, they met together to question him again. **35** One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question: **36** "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?"

37 Jesus replied, "'You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.' **38** This is the first and greatest commandment. **39** A second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' **40** The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

EXPLAIN

The purpose of this section is to deepen everyone's understanding of the Word.

E

vv.34 Desperate times make strange bedfellows. There was no love lost between the Pharisees and Sadducees. But they had a common problem—Jesus. Something must be done to get Jesus out of the picture. Today's text is a follow-up to the **Sadducees'** failure. Jesus had **silenced** them handily. So, the **Pharisees [met] together to question Him again.**

vv.35-36 The purpose of their meeting was not to gain information. That had already been going on. This was a set-up. They were **[trying] to trap ["test" (NIV and ESV)] Him.** Trapping/testing comes from a word that means to "test the durability of something by trying to pierce it"—to pierce so as to expose a weakness. In this case, an **expert in religious law asked [Jesus] a question,** the answer to which just might be the evidence needed to take Him down. **"Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?"** That had been a hot topic for years. Whatever Jesus' answer, it

should put Him at odds with enough people to remove Him once for all. We will go to extreme measures to eliminate anyone or anything that threatens our little kingdom of “self.” It is a heart issue: who really is on the throne of my heart?

vv.37-38 Jesus begins His answer with what is called *the Shema*. The service of the synagogue always began with this sentence: “The Lord is our God, the Lord alone. **You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.**” Devout Jews would put *the Shema* in small leather boxes and tie it to their head and wrists as they prayed. *The Shema* would be placed in a Mezuzah, which was affixed to the door of every Jewish house and the door of every room within it. This was the creed of the Jews: one God who deserves the devotion of our whole being: heart, soul, and mind. This was the **first and greatest** commandment (chief, principal, sense of dignity).

vv.39-40 Then Jesus adds a **second and equally** important commandment—one that is of the same kind, of like nature of the previous commandment—**Love your neighbor as yourself**. The **entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments**. If you go to Rock City you may walk across one of its Swing-A-Long bridges. One does not move; one swings. But the stability of both is dependent on how well the anchors hold each end of the bridge. That determines the safety of everything and everyone in the middle. The NIV translates v.40 “**all the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.**” Just like the swinging bridge hangs on those anchors at each end. A heart that loves God totally (because it has first been loved by God [1 John 4:19-21]) and loves people is a heart that will be used by God to change the world. Making disciples who make disciples.

APPLY

A

Be comfortable with some silence as people think back to the sermon or reread the text. Answer honestly. You don't have to answer every question.

1. What stuck out to you in what you heard in the sermon or read in the text?
2. What does it look like to love the Lord with **all** your heart, **all** your soul, and **all** your mind?
3. What does it look like to love your neighbor **as yourself**?
4. Jesus says all the “law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.” Why does he say this?
5. Why does Jesus include the second command as “equally important” as the first?

R

RESPOND

The purpose of this section is to take action with the truths you're learning. Answer honestly. Find someone who will hold you accountable to living out your response to Scripture.

1. What is preventing you from personally loving God with **all** of you?

What personal desires continue to draw you away from God?

Confess those to God and ask Him to change your heart to fully love and desire Him instead of your harmful desires.

2. It is interesting Scripture tells us to love others as ourselves, but it doesn't tell us how we go about loving ourselves. I believe this is because we need no help in understanding how to put ourselves, our desires, our wants, above others. This is a natural, built-in ability of us, sinful humans. How can you learn to love others as well as you love yourself? (See 1 John 4:7-21 & 1 Corinthians 13)