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GROUP STUDY GUIDE

Do You Love God?

Use with the full teaching and a Bible. Watch or read first, complete the questions, then discuss and apply. For family or homeschool use, an adult may choose a shorter section and accept spoken answers.

The summary is a reading aid. Test the teaching's explanations against the cited passages. Keep the answer key and facilitator notes separate when distributing learner pages.

Open the teaching

Teaching summary

This teaching examines the question, "Do you love God?" by asking how Scripture itself defines love for God. It begins with Yeshua's answer in Matthew 22:35-38 that the first and great commandment is to love the LORD with all the heart, soul, and mind. The lesson then asks whether people are answering that command according to a biblical definition of love or according to their own ideas. It warns that an emphasis on God's love and grace toward us can push the question of how we love him back into the background. Because he first loved us, his grace and love should produce a desire in us to love him in the way he has defined.

The teaching then looks for a practical definition of that love by examining seven passages written by the apostle John: John 14:15, John 14:21, John 14:23-24, John 15:10, 1 John 2:4-5, 1 John 5:3, and 2 John 1:6. Across these passages, Yeshua and John repeatedly connect love with keeping God's commandments, keeping his word, and walking according to his commandments. The lesson therefore concludes that biblical love for God is not left to philosophical or self-determined definitions. Obedience to his Word is what reveals love for him.

From there, the teaching contrasts obedience with verbal professions of love. It recalls Yeshua's rebuke of people who honor God with their lips while their hearts are far from him and uses a marriage illustration: a spouse could repeatedly say, publicly and privately, that he or she loves the other person, but those words would mean little if that spouse continually ignored the other's wishes and simply did whatever seemed right in his or her own eyes. In the same way, 1 John 2:4-5 is used to show that claiming to know God while refusing to keep his commandments is inconsistent with the truth. Loving words, good intentions, or self-chosen deeds are not presented as substitutes for obedience to God's Word.

The teaching also addresses the charge of legalism. It argues that confusion about the biblical meaning of love can lead people to portray obedience to YHWH's commands as the opposite of love. The lesson returns to 1 John 5:3, which connects love for God with keeping his commandments and describes them as not burdensome. Its contrast emphasizes grace as an expression of YHWH's love toward us and obedience as a response of love toward him and others. This is a teaching illustration, not an exhaustive definition of grace or a claim that we earn YHWH's love. His grace is the foundation for a changed life; the lesson warns against emphasizing being loved while neglecting the loving response that grace should produce.

Finally, the teaching connects obedience with pursuing God's own heart. It says that God's law expresses his character and heart and that following his will is going after his heart. Acts 13:22 is

used to describe David as a man after God's own heart who would do all his will, and Psalm 119 is presented as a chapter devoted to loving God through his law. The lesson closes by bringing the argument back to the greatest commandment: if loving God is the first and greatest commandment, and Scripture defines that love through keeping his commandments, then Ecclesiastes 12:13 provides the concluding charge to fear God and keep his commandments, described there as the whole duty of man.

Summary points

- The greatest commandment is to love YHWH with all the heart, soul, and mind.
- God's love and grace toward us should produce a desire to love him back.
- Scripture, rather than personal preference, provides the definition of how God is to be loved.
- The passages in John and 1-2 John repeatedly connect love for God with keeping his commandments and his word.
- Obedience to God's Word reveals love for him more clearly than loving words or good intentions alone.
- A profession of love is inconsistent when a person continually ignores or disobeys the one he claims to love.
- The teaching argues that portraying obedience to God's commands as legalism can obscure the biblical definition of love.
- The teaching presents grace as an expression of YHWH's love toward us and obedience as a loving response toward him and others.
- David's example and Psalm 119 connect doing God's will and loving his law with pursuing God's heart.
- The teaching concludes with the call to fear God and keep his commandments as the whole duty of man.

Fill in the blank

Use the teaching and the cited Bible passages. Equivalent wording is welcome when it expresses the same meaning.

Basic

1. According to Yeshua, the first and great commandment is to love YHWH with all your heart, soul, and _____.

2. Yeshua said, "If you love Me, keep My _____."

3. The teaching says our _____ to God's Word reveals our love for him.

4. In the teaching's illustration, grace expresses YHWH's _____ for us.

5. Keeping God's commandments is presented as our love to him and to _____.

6. Ecclesiastes 12:13 concludes that we should fear God and keep his _____.

Challenging

1. To define biblical love, the teaching examines seven passages written by the apostle _____.

2. John 14:23-24 says that the Father and Yeshua will make their _____ with the person who loves Yeshua and keeps his word.

3. According to 1 John 2:4-5, a person who says, "I know him," but does not keep his commandments is a _____.

4. The teaching says the Adversary has taken advantage of biblical ignorance concerning the meaning of _____.

5. Acts 13:22 describes David as a man after God's own heart who would do all God's _____.

6. The teaching describes Psalm _____ as being completely dedicated to loving God through his law.

Group discussion

Discuss with respect, support answers from the passages, and allow time to think. Use the lines for brief notes or a notebook for longer responses.

1. Why does the teaching insist that the definition of loving God should come from Scripture rather than from a person's own understanding of love?

2. How do the passages from John and 1-2 John work together to support the teaching's conclusion that obedience reveals love for God?

3. What is the purpose of the marriage illustration, and what does it show about the difference between professing love and acting in consideration of the one who is loved?

4. What imbalance does the teaching warn about when grace is discussed without a loving response of obedience? How can we preserve both YHWH's gift of grace and the changed life it produces?

5. How do Acts 13:22 and Psalm 119 support the teaching's connection between doing God's will and going after God's own heart?

6. How does the conclusion from Ecclesiastes 12:13 fit with the teaching's earlier discussion of the first and greatest commandment?

Answer key

For the leader or parent. Answers follow the teaching; references help you check the wording and context. Accept equivalent wording where appropriate.

Basic

1. mind
Matthew 22:35-38

2. commandments (also: commands)
John 14:15

3. obedience
Teaching explanation following the John passages

4. love
Teaching contrast of grace and loving response

5. others
Teaching contrast of grace and loving response

6. commandments (also: commands)
Ecclesiastes 12:13

Challenging

1. John
Teaching introduction to seven passages

2. home (also: abode, dwelling)
John 14:23-24

3. liar
1 John 2:4-5

4. love
Teaching discussion of confusion and legalism

5. will
Acts 13:22

6. 119 (also: one hundred nineteen)
Teaching conclusion on loving YHWH and his law

Facilitator notes

These are suggested directions for discussion, not a required script or a test of identical wording. Invite participants to explain the passage and consider a faithful practical response.

1. The teaching asks whether our idea of love matches what YHWH has revealed. Scripture provides the standard for loving him, so sincere words, emotions, or personal preferences must be tested by his instructions rather than treated as sufficient on their own.

Matthew 22:35-38; John 14:15

2. Across the passages, love is connected with keeping Yeshua's commandments, remaining in his love, keeping his word, and walking according to the commandments. Their repeated pattern supports the teaching's conclusion that love for YHWH is expressed in obedient action.

John 14:15, 21, 23-24; 15:10; 1 John 2:4-5; 5:3; 2 John 1:6

3. The marriage illustration shows why repeated declarations of love become hollow when someone's actions consistently disregard the other person. Its limited point is that professions and conduct should agree; the teaching applies that principle to responding to YHWH's revealed word.

Teaching marriage illustration; 1 John 2:4-5

4. The warning concerns receiving love while neglecting to respond with love. YHWH's grace comes first and should produce grateful obedience. Keeping these together avoids both treating obedience as the price of salvation and treating grace as a reason to ignore his instructions.

Teaching grace discussion; Ephesians 2:8-10

5. Acts describes David as a man after YHWH's heart who would do his will. Psalm 119 repeatedly delights in YHWH's instruction. The teaching joins these themes to show that seeking his heart involves valuing and practicing what he reveals.

Acts 13:22; Psalm 119

6. The greatest commandment calls for wholehearted love for YHWH. Having connected that love with keeping his instructions, the teaching closes with Ecclesiastes' call to fear God and keep his commandments as a fitting expression of that wholehearted response.

Matthew 22:35-38; Ecclesiastes 12:13

Put it into practice

Choose one response to the passages you studied. What will you do, and when will you revisit it? Share only what you are comfortable sharing.