

“GOD’S LOVE LANGUAGES”

MARK 12:28-34 (NIV)

***A Sermon BY
Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley***

JANUARY 5TH

11 AM





Date: January 5, 2025
Preacher: Rev. Dr. Howard-John Wesley
Sermon Title: *God's Love Languages*
Scripture: Mark 12:28-34 (NIV)

28 *One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"*

29 *"The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' [c] There is no commandment greater than these."*

32 *"Well said, teacher," the man replied. "You are right in saying that God is one and there is no other but him. 33 To love him with all your heart, with all your understanding and with all your strength, and to love your neighbor as yourself is more important than all burnt offerings and sacrifices."*

34 *When Jesus saw that he had answered wisely, he said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." And from then on no one dared ask him any more questions.*

SERMON SUMMARY

For the first Sunday of the New Year, Pastor Wesley launched a new sermon series entitled *"God's Love Languages,"* challenging us to learn and practice the primary love languages of God. He begins by referencing Gary Chapman's renowned book, *The Five Love Languages*, which identifies five core ways people give and receive love: words of affirmation, quality time, gifts, acts of service, and physical touch. While Chapman emphasizes that understanding your primary love language is vital, Pastor Wesley argues that mere awareness is not enough; it's about actively improving how we express love, especially in the context of our relationship with God.

Pastor Wesley prompts us to reflect on a crucial question: ***What are God's love languages?*** Using Mark 12, he explores how to align our love for God with the teachings of Jesus. The conversation in Mark 12 follows Jesus' Parable of the Wicked Tenants, where Jesus foreshadows his crucifixion. This parable enrages the Pharisees and priests, who attempt to trap Jesus in theological debates. Amidst this tension, a sincere teacher of the law, impressed by Jesus' wisdom, asks him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?" Jesus answers by reciting the Shema from Deuteronomy 6:4: "*Hear, O Israel: The Lord is our God, the Lord alone.*" The Shema, a foundational prayer of faith for devout Jews, serves as a reminder to express love for God continually.

Pastor Wesley identifies three ways we can begin to speak God's love languages:

1. Love the Lord in Totality

- a. Jesus commands us to love God with *all our heart, soul, mind, and strength*. This comprehensive love requires surrendering every aspect of who we are to God, without limitations or restrictions.
- b. Just as God gives God's all to us, God desires our full devotion in return.

2. Love the Lord with Priority

- a. God's first commandment in Exodus 20:3 is, "*You shall have no other gods before me.*" Loving God with priority means placing God above everything else in our lives.
- b. Our prayer habits, which include how often we pray, where we pray, and why we pray, reveal whether God holds a priority position in our lives.

3. Love the Lord Exclusively

- a. In Exodus 34:14, God identifies God's self as *El-Qanna*, meaning "the jealous one." God desires an exclusive relationship with us, where no one and nothing else compares to God.
- b. Loving God exclusively means giving God unparalleled devotion, ensuring God alone holds the central place in our lives.

As Pastor Wesley draws his sermon to a close, he reminds us that loving God in totality, with priority, and exclusively are the key ways to speak God's love languages. He encourages us that when we fully commit to God, God elevates our lives in return. With this divine "premiere status," we may face fewer battles, walk through fewer valleys, and experience unique blessings. This New Year, let us strive to speak God's love languages and deepen our relationship with God, remembering that our love for God is both a reflection of God's love for us and a testament to our faith.

KEY POINTS

1. Awareness of your primary love language doesn't automatically improve your relationships. True growth comes from learning to speak the love language of the person you're in a relationship with.
2. The primary question we need to ask ourselves going into a new year is, "*What are God's love languages?*"
3. In Mark 12, when asked about the greatest commandment, Jesus quotes the Shema from Deuteronomy 6:4: "*Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.*"
4. Speaking God's love language means fully surrendering yourself to God, declaring, "*All of me is in Your hands, Lord.*"
5. God doesn't want a little; God desires ALL of you.
6. Any area of your life you withhold from God becomes your greatest vulnerability and weakness.
7. The problem that the Israelites had that we have today is we see God as a resource, not as the one we're in a relationship with.
8. The clearest indicator if God is a priority in your life is your prayer life (how often you pray, when you pray, where you pray, and why you pray).
9. We speak God's love language when we treat God as if there is truly no one else like God.
10. One of God's names that we rarely embrace is *El-Qanna*, meaning "*the jealous one.*" This name reflects God's deep desire for an exclusive relationship with us.

GETTING TO KNOW YOU QUESTIONS

1. Gary Chapman's, "*The Five Love Languages*" lays out five unique ways we give and receive love: words of affirmation, quality time, receiving gifts, acts of service, and physical touch. If you had to pick just one, what is your primary love language? What love language do you find the most challenging to give and/or receive and why? (See "Additional Resources" below for the love languages quiz.)
2. In his sermon, Pastor Wesley highlights how Moses gave the Shema ([Deut. 6:4](#)) to the Israelites as they prepared to enter the Promised Land, marking the start of a new chapter in their lives. As you step into 2025, what declarations are you making about your life and the path ahead?

INTO THE BIBLE QUESTIONS

1. Read [Mark 12:30](#) and [Deuteronomy 6:4-5](#). Reflect on what it means to love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. Identify a biblical figure who demonstrated this kind of complete devotion to God. What lessons can you learn from their example to apply in your own life?

2. [Exodus 20:3](#) commands, “You shall have no other gods before me” emphasizing God’s desire for exclusive worship. Throughout Scripture, we see examples of groups who worshipped other gods, such as the Israelites with the golden calf in [Exodus 32](#). Where else in Scripture do we find instances of people turning to other gods, and what were the consequences of their actions? What lessons can we learn from these stories about the dangers of misplaced worship and the importance of keeping God as our ultimate priority?

LIFE APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. God wants us to show our love for God by surrendering to God all of our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. Are you surrendering one part of yourself more than another? Do you have an Achilles Heel – a part of you that is hard for you to surrender? How can you surrender more of that area?

2. Pastor Wesley challenges us with the question, “*How much of God do you want when there’s nothing from God that you need?*” Reflecting on this, how often do you approach God only out of need rather than desire? What does it mean to truly want God for who God is, not just for what God can provide? How might shifting from a transactional relationship with God to a transformational relationship rooted in love and connection transform your faith, especially in seasons of life that are better than others?

3. God wants to be the only one we worship and is worthy of that because of what God has done. God wants an exclusive relationship with us. What are some people, places, and things we love which we sometimes incorrectly prioritize over God? How can we make the adjustments to make God our central priority?

4. Pastor Wesley suggests that when we love God fully, God elevates our lives in return. How do you interpret the idea of having “premiere status” with God? How might this status affect the way you approach challenges and opportunities in your life?

5. How can recognizing God’s deep desire for an exclusive relationship with you (as reflected in the name *El-Qanna*) help you cultivate a deeper sense of purpose and fulfillment in your current season of life? How might fully embracing God’s love and prioritizing your relationship with God during this time influence how you show love to others and create meaningful connections in your community?

“CAN I PUSH IT?” QUESTIONS

1. In Mark 12, Jesus highlights the greatest commandment as loving God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving our neighbor as ourselves. In light of recent events, such as the terrorist attack in New Orleans, how can we live out this commandment in practical ways? How does our love for God compel us to confront hate, promote healing, and advocate for justice in a society fractured by violence and divisiveness?
2. Pastor Wesley highlights how devout Jews recite the Shema twice a day and physically bind it to their foreheads, embodying a profound and visible commitment to their faith. As Christians, we profess to love God with our all, but how often do our lives reflect a comparable devotion? Have we allowed our faith to become watered down (more about convenience and commitment, and more talk rather than action)? Could it be that our lack of consistent devotion is a reason why the world often questions the sincerity and impact of our witness to God's love?

ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS

1. Pastor Wesley reminds us that the greatest gift we can offer God is all of who we are. What is the greatest gift you've ever received, and what made it so meaningful to you?
2. In both relationships and faith, true growth requires learning to speak the love language of the one you're in a relationship with. How can applying this principle to your relationship with God transform the way you prioritize God within your family dynamics?
3. In [2 Samuel 24:24](#), David said, "I will not sacrifice to the Lord my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing." How does this principle apply to how you show your love for God? In what ways can you express your love for God through sacrifice, service, and acts of devotion this week?
3. In [Mark 12:28-34](#), Jesus calls us to love God with all that we have, holding nothing back. Similarly, in [Genesis 22](#), Abraham demonstrates complete surrender and trust in God by preparing to sacrifice his son Isaac. What parallels do you see between Jesus' teaching in Mark 12 and Abraham's actions in Genesis 22? How do both passages challenge us to give God our all, even when it requires personal sacrifice?

4. Pastor Wesley emphasizes loving God with priority and exclusivity. How do we balance this spiritual commitment with the demands of fighting for justice in a society that often prioritizes power, privilege, and self-interest? How can our faith serve as a foundation for dismantling oppressive systems while ensuring that our activism remains rooted in God's love and not personal or societal agendas?

INDIVIDUAL OR VILLAGE STUDY

SPIRIT WORK/ACTIVITY: *What is God's Love Language?*

“Love God in Totality”

God calls us to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength engaging every part of who we are. Reflect on the *5 Love Languages* as expressions of total love, and choose one or more to complete this week .

1. Words of Affirmation

Find three scriptures that give a blueprint on how to affirm God.

- Clues: Praising God in prayer, and singing worship songs.

Action Step:

Meditate on these scriptures this week.

2. Acts of Service

Find the scripture that states “Work with all your heart as unto the Lord.”

- Clues: Serving others, volunteering, or completing daily tasks with a heart of serving God.

Action Step:

Plan one act of service this week as a way to show love for God.

3. Quality Time

What scriptures discuss being still before the Lord? Name one to two examples.

- Clue: Quiet meditation.

Action Step:

Set aside 10 minutes today and spend time with God.

4. Gifts

Scripture: "Honor the Lord with your wealth, with the first fruits of all your crops."

What book of the Bible does this text come from?

- Clues: Time, or giving your talents.

Action Step:

Identify a "gift" (financial, time, or talent) you can offer to God this week.

5. Physical Touch

Find scriptures that can relate to experiencing the physical touch of God.

Clue: Kneeling in prayer, lifting hands in worship, or participating in communion

Action Step:

Incorporate a physical expression of love for God today.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Video. The Bible Project:

 Gospel of Mark Summary: A Complete Animated Overview

[5 Love Languages 5-min Quiz](#)

Register for SEEK 2025: [Registration Link](#)