

**LIFE'S MOST CRITICAL ISSUE: LOVING GOD AND OTHERS**

Matt. 22:36, 24:12, I Cor. 13:13

**Introduction:**

1. Living up to this critical issue is quite a challenge.
2. We can preach it, teach it, and strive to believe it, but it becomes quite a chore when we strive to live up to this high command.
3. When we're branded with the negative, painful effects of someone else's disobedience to these commandments thrust upon us, it becomes a hard command to obey.
4. Our life on earth and eternity is set positively or negatively on these verses.
5. We're told in Matt. 24:12 – ***And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.***

**I. (Matt. 22:34-36) THE CONTEXT OF THE CRITICAL ISSUE.**

1. (v. 34) The religionists had a purpose.
  - A. They wanted to ensnare and destroy Jesus.
  - B. The Pharisees already heard Jesus had put the Sadducees to silence.
2. (v. 35) The religionists had propaganda.
  - A. An interpreter and teacher of the law planned to put Jesus to the test.
  - B. The group previously met for the purpose of entangling Jesus.
3. (v. 36) The religionists made a proposal.
  - A. He challenged Jesus to sum up the scripture into one thing.
  - B. The Pharisees had already decided Jesus wouldn't be able to do it.
  - C. Little did they know He was the Creator and Author of the book.

{We've seen the context of the critical issue, but now . . .}

**II. (Matt. 22:37-39) THE COMMANDMENT ON THE CRITICAL ISSUE.**

1. (v. 37) Here's the vertical dimension of the critical issue.
  - A. This is our relationship with God.
  - B. This is the support, vertical beam between God and us on which all life here and hereafter is supported and revolves.
  - C. The key word in v. 37 is **ALL** meaning our whole being.
  - D. True love involves the WILL of our Mind as a desired, cherished craving that saturates our life.

2. (v. 39) Here's the horizontal dimension of the critical issue.
  - A. This is our relationship with all others.
  - B. Without the vertical support beam, all relationships with others are falling because there is not vertical support and love from God above flowing through us.
  - C. The horizontal cross-beam must have the love support, vertical beam, on which to attach.

{We've reviewed the context and command of the critical issue, now finally . . .}

**III. (Matt. 22:40) THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE CRITICAL ISSUE.**

1. Everything in the Bible hangs on this commandment, revealed in 2 parts.
2. No other relationship on earth nor in eternity can be right when our love for God and others is wrong.
3. It is the lack of love for God that causes our spiritual bondage.
4. The reason folks aren't saved is due to these verses because they still love sin in three dimensions more than they love Jesus.
  - A. You love yourself more than Jesus.
  - B. You love someone else more than Jesus.
  - C. You love something else more than Jesus.

**Conclusion:**

1. I Cor. 13:13 – ***And now abides faith, hope, love, these 3, but the greatest of these is love.***
2. Will you allow God's love to take first place in your heart today?