"Which Is the Great Commandment of the Law?"
Matthew 22:34-40

Introduction:
A. A great question: “Teacher, which is the great commandment of the law?”
   1. It is same as “Which is the first commandment of all?” (Mk. 12:28).
   2. It was given as a test (vs. 34-36) - Jesus passed the test (Mk. 12:32,33)
   3. It reflects the Pharisee practice of assigning relative importance to commands. (Matt. 23:16-23).
B. A great answer: “You shall love ...” (vs. 37,39).
   1. It was great or first, not because more important than all others, but because it included all others. (v.40).
   2. It put an end to such foolish testing. (v.46).

Discussion:
I. “The First and Great Commandment” (Vs. 37,38).
   A. Love that demands total commitment - all.
      1. To God’s kingdom. (Matt. 6:33).
      2. To God’s word. (Matt. 4:4; cf. Col 3:17).
      3. To God’s pleasure. (1 Thess. 4:1-8).
   B. Love that demands total sacrifice. (Luke 14:25-33).
   C. Love that demands total obedience.
      1. Obedience tied to original command. (Deut. 6:5-9,17).
      2. Obedience that is not a burden. (1 John 5:3).
II. “The Second..Like it” (V. 39).
   A. Love that demands self-examination.
      1. What we really think of ourselves?
      2. How much do we really love ourselves? How much self-respect?
   B. Love that demands honesty with ourselves.
      1. Would we talk about ourselves the way we do our neighbor? Be honest.
      2. Are we as charitable and forgiving with neighbors as ourselves? Be honest! (cf. Rom. 2:1).
      3. Would we be as insensitive to own feelings as we are of others’?
   C. Love that means an active goodwill toward your neighbor.
      1. It is doing anything that leads to his edification. (Rom. 15:1-3).
      2. It is setting a good example for him to follow.
      3. It is acting with consideration for another’s weakness. (Rom. 14:13-15).
      4. It is rebuke and discipline when needed.
         a. Original command preceeded by command to rebuke. (Lev. 19:17,18).
         b. Discipline is proof of love. (Heb. 12:6).
         c. One cannot have good will toward one without using every right means to recover him from sin.

Conclusion:
A. Someone has said that “love is the badge of Christianity”.
   1. It is indeed the highest form of love.
   2. It love with responsibility.
B. Some have tried to make love more important than other commands.
   1. Many Protestant Parents said, “It does not matter what you believe or do in religion as long as you love God.
   2. Many protestant children say: “It does not matter what you do morally as long as there is love.
C. Do you love God? Really? Enough to obey him?