

Loving the Lord with all Our Strength

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- [0 : 0 0] All our strength. Do you remember the last time you did a certain task with everything that you have? You went all out.
- You gave every bit of your ability and potential to accomplish it. This phrase, this idea is common in sports.
- We hear coaches tell their players, I want you to give your all. I don't want 100%, I want 110%. I want you to give your ultimate potential.
- So I was thinking about this, and I have a vivid memory of high school football. It was the fourth quarter.
- We were ahead, and the other team was driving to score, and we just needed to stop him. I played safety. Now, if you don't know football, real basics are you have the big, huge guys on the line, right?
- [1 : 1 0] They're the first line of defense to stop the ball from crossing and moving on, right? Then you have your secondary guys. You have your linebackers and your outside DBs. They're stopped.
- They're the second line of defense. Safety is the last line of defense, okay? I'm at the very back. I'm the last. So if anything gets past the others, it's on me.
- And the ball should not get past me, okay? That's my basic responsibility. So fourth quarter, I am tired.
- I'm tired. I'm exhausted. And I'm just hoping, please don't throw it over the middle. Please don't throw it over the middle. I want to rest. And what happens?
- They throw it over the middle, right in front of me. And because my mindset is, please don't throw it over the middle, he catches it and goes by. Now, I have to really run.
- [2 : 1 2] Because now I have to go catch him. Because I got to face Artie later. And Artie's my best friend. Artie is our middle linebacker.
- Artie and I got to know each other on the basketball court in junior high, playing basketball. And playing basketball like football players, right? So it's, we don't call fouls.
- If you call foul, you're a sissy. So it's, so it got to fouling and it got to shoving and it got to pushing. And it became a fight between Artie and I. And he took a swing at me, so I ducked.
- But then when I came back up, his shoulder hit me and I went flying. See, Artie is about as wide as he is tall.
- He is a middle linebacker. And we were best friends after that. I was rolling, I came up laughing. I thought, I love this guy.
- [3 : 1 4] And I don't want to be on his bad side. So, so in this game, I got, you know, I'm like, oh, now Artie's going to be all over me. And he was.
- I chased him down and the first person I see is already coming up to me, big shoulders. Story, you don't want to win. You don't want to win. I'm like, yeah, I do.

You ain't, what are you doing? All right, enough said. You're holding back. You're not all in.

You're not giving it your all. All your strength. So we can relate that to athletes.

We think of that about athletes all the time. They're, especially if it's high, high level athletes like Olympians or professionals. They give all.

[4 : 12] All. and you can tell the really really talented ones when they're not given all because when they give all things change right they take over and why don't they do that all the time why don't we do that all the time huh loving god with all our heart with all our soul with all our mind and with all our strength whereas the other ones i think are dealing with the inner aspects of our being our heart right so our will and our our soul our feelings and affections our mind our thinking our processing our intentional plans now he's dealing with the physical element how about our effort how about our zeal how about our giving it our all so we've been learning about the marks of loving god and and how do we love god jesus could have said just love god with all that you got and some who read this text say that's all that jesus is saying when he says with all of your heart and with all of your soul and all of your mind and all of your strength he's just simply saying he's not making distinctions he's just simply saying love him with all you got i think jesus is more intentional than that especially since he adds a word that wasn't in the old testament the old testament that he's quoting from deuteronomy 6 5 says love the lord your god with all your heart with all your soul with all your strength we notice here jesus adds the word mind in each quotation when he's quoted in in matthew here in mark as well as in luke he adds the word mind why because he's distinguishing something that's why there's ands between the thing too love the lord god with all your mind with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength each aspect is important so we looked at loving god with all our heart we see that in scripture not absolutely not all the time but usually heart means our inner genuine will jesus contrasts the heart with the external motions right he talks about the pharisees who give honor to god with their lips but their heart is far from them they're just going through motions it's not real we can pretend so heart is that contrast to you know just going through is my will am i intentional am i really involved in this same with soul soul can overlap with heart in terms of what it means but often it is distinguished as that part of us that is the feeling the passion the the affections and so our our soul that part of us that in psalm 42 our soul can the the psalmist i believe is david in psalm 42 says my soul pants for god like a like a like the deer pants for the water my soul pants and my soul thirsts for god and then two verses later he says my soul is downcast literally depressed and in turmoil there's a complicated soul it's both panting for god and depressed what a what a what a complicated kind of well that's how we are aren't we we're like that that's my soul my deep affections and so i love the lord my god with my soul by taking all of those

feelings and affections and stuff to the lord and i confess that to the lord we see that in the psalms i pour out my soul to the lord so i can love the lord my god even with when my affections are afflicted and and grieving i can still take that to the lord i can still love him by showing my faith in him by going to him and then of course there's times when my soul is just rejoicing my soul is just passionate and i can love him with my soul my feelings and my affections and then he says love god with all your mind and we saw last week that that is about the thinking through not just thoughts that just come but but rather an intentional deliberate thinking through a reasoning carefully planning deliberately loving god in our thinking so to pursue god in sense of understanding him more that's how i can love him with my mind i can love him with my mind by seeking to understand him to meditate on his wonders to read and and think about the scriptures what does that mean about god to put things together one of the things that stands out in this text between this scribe and jesus is the scribe is a thinker and he recognizes jesus as a thinker too because he saw how jesus has handled these other arguments with the sadducees and the pharisees and the herodians and how jesus has wisely carefully thought out how to answer them and then when he tests him what do you think lord is the teacher is the greatest commandment of all that's not just quoting some verse that takes some thought okay of all the 666 or however many commands there are in the old testament what's the greatest what's the most important and probably most pharisees and scribes would say well it's one of the ten so it must be the first one of the ten god gave that first and jesus has thought no it's deeper than that it's deeper than that see what's what's what's more rooted than simply not doing something you know not using his name in vain or or or or not having other gods before me that's just kind of a barrier what is a great command that that would encompass that and everything else and so he's tracking with jesus says oh love the lord you got and the guy's going yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah that's what i think too yes teacher he said right and then he even kind of adds he quotes jesus saying yes it is with all the heart and then he says and with all the understanding he uses actually a different word than mind but it's a synonym it doesn't mean the word mind means to think through the the word that the scribe used understanding is that word putting it together connecting the dots it's a word that jesus uses when he challenges his disciples several times when he says to them do you not yet connect the dots boys do you not yet understand have you not yet seen what i did when i fed the 5,000 i fed the 4,000 and you're asking where's the we didn't bring bread have you not yet connected some dots about who i am are you thinking yet that's important part of loving god and i think why jesus added this distinction of mind

is because he's not just teaching the jews who might understand heart has the idea of mind and thinking involved in it in the old testament but he's also teaching gentiles they might just read into them like we might they might read into the word heart some other idea we would our culture doesn't mean what the hebrew means in heart so he adds the word mind so they can grasp oh okay he means thinking carefully actually developing a theology theology theology is not a bad word we all have a theology by the way just how thought out is your theology no we can grow mine's growing all the time mine's and mine has changed over the years as i've had i've been taught certain things and then i read scripture i go wait a minute wait a minute i can't draw that line right there where they drew that line so i'm going to back off on that one a little bit i'm not going to be so hard and fast on that but where it's crystal clear i'm going to be cool who jesus is what the gospel is okay loving god with our thinking okay so now we come to loving god with all our strength the might the might of our love for god what does it mean to love god with all our strength i want to ask two questions like we have been doing first of all what does this word strength mean what is the distinction of it how does it look to to do something with our strength and then secondly we will ask the practical question then how does that apply to loving god how then do i love god with all my strength okay so first of all what's the distinction what does he mean by this word strength how is it defined first of all well in the greek the word refers to my the extent of my ability it really means ability or capability so my strength or more literally loving god with all my ability all my capability so when i say all my strength then it's i'm loving god to my utmost i'm giving all i got i'm loving him with more intensity more zeal however we want to put it diligence hebrew is a much more interesting word when it talks about strength love god with all our ma'od all our much muchness muchness we went over this in the men's group i think before summer and the guys are kind of latching on to that muchness muchness one of our guys went home and told his wife i love you with all my muchness he's like all right whatever muchness so abundance exceedingly it's the sense of a total commitment so so how is it described uh... and used in the scripture so we see it in genesis 1 31 god has in genesis 1 we have this description of god creating right god said let there be light and there was light and he saw that it was good and then the next day he separates and he adds the land and he you know begins to distinguish the seas and adds the life you know he builds all the containers of life and then he adds the life to those containers and then at the end when he's finished everything when he's

made everything it's not just good but it's good muchness he saw that it was very good exceedingly good it was good to the abundant degree ma'od good good good when the scriptures in genesis 12 describe abraham's wife sarah sarah and you know how abraham kind of lied about her she's my sister well technically true she was half sister so that you know pharaoh wouldn't take him and kill him and just take steal his wife for his harem.

Well, the king takes her for his harem anyway. Why? Because the scripture says, Sarah was beautiful ma'od. She was exceedingly beautiful.

[17:22] She was a looker. Doesn't say that very often. She was a beautiful woman.

Abraham knew she would be attracted, others would be attracted to her. When scripture describes how wicked Sodom was, why was God going to destroy Sodom?

Because Sodom was exceedingly wicked. It wasn't just wicked. It had got to the degree of exceeding.

And of course, we're given the picture of that. As soon as the two visitors, the men, come into the town, the men of the city are lusting after them, and we get to go, okay, this is exceedingly wicked.

In Exodus 1, when it describes the difference between when Joseph brought his family to Egypt, there were 70 of them, right?

[18:35] His brothers and all their family, there were 70. 400 years later, Exodus tells us, things have changed. And it's gone from 70 to a multitude that is ma'od, ma'od.

That is muchness, muchness. That is very exceedingly multiplied. In fact, it uses the word teeming. Swarming. It's kind of like the picture of a fish tank just swarming.

That's what the people of Israel were like. They're just all over the place. They were bigger than Egypt was already. There were so many people.

Remember, God had promised, I will bless you, I will multiply you, and ma'od. Oh, in the story of Ruth, you remember the story of Naomi?

She came back. She went away full. She came back empty. And when she came, she said, I am bitter ma'od. I am bitter exceedingly.

[19 : 50] I am very bitter. Extremely bitter. God uses this word in His charge to Joshua.

In Joshua 1.7, it says, Joshua, be strong and be courageous. Ma'od. Be strong and very courageous.

Very strong. Very courageous. Be careful to do all the law. Don't turn to the right nor turn to the left. Be very, very careful so that you may have success wherever you go.

If you follow my plan with exceeding strength, exceeding courage, you will succeed. And He goes on and He tells Joshua, meditate on this law day and night so that you will succeed.

Follow the blueprints to the utmost of your ability with all your strength, with all your muchness.

[21 : 03] Make every effort. Make every effort. So this idea of strength, all my strength, is about my effort, about my diligence. And please don't confuse this.

This is where it can get confusing for Christians. So if I'm supposed to give God all my strength, I'm supposed to give all my effort. Is that about me? Is that about earning my way?

Because it could sound like that. I can get that confused. I thought I'm supposed to depend on God. Here He's saying, give all your effort. Yes. And depend on God.

Yes. Together. Paul says, talks about his preaching of the gospel and his teaching men.

He says, I do this by laboring, toiling, striving, according to the power that works mightily within me.

[22 : 07] It's both. I am laboring, I'm toiling, I'm striving, I'm sweating, according to the power that works mightily within me. See the balance? It's not, I let go and let God, in that sense of, you know, God will move me whenever He wants to move me.

You know, take that thought too far. And it's not, okay, I have to do this part now. It's, I'm working with God. I'm laboring, so I'm taking the step of faith, and I'm also depending on Him to strengthen me as I go.

Get that? That's important. Because we're not saying I'm doing the work by my efforts. But my efforts are involved. Okay, I'm giving the best I can, but I'm doing it by faith.

I'm doing it dependently. Okay. And I'm doing it not because, because I have to. I'm not doing it because I have to measure up in some way.

I'm not doing it so I can pat myself on the back and say, see, I did it. I'm doing it because I love God. I love Him. He deserves everything I can give Him.

[23 : 22] I'll never be able to give Him enough. But that doesn't mean I don't try. I want to try to give Him my best. And in order to do that, I can't rely on myself to do it.

I'm doing it okay. I'm stepping out. I might wear out before I'm done, Lord, so kick in, please. All right. Kick the turbo in.

And you've got to cool that turbo down after a while. In the Old Testament, we have a really great example of someone who loved God with all their heart, soul, and strength.

His name was Josiah. This summer on sabbatical, that's where I was reading in my devotions.

I was reading from 1 Samuel all the way through 2 Chronicles. So you're reading about all the kings. You're reading about Saul, and then David, and then Solomon, and then the division of the kingdom, and then all these other kings who, some were good, most were not.

[24 : 29] Every once in a while, there's an evil king who did only what was evil in God's sight, setting up all the false worship and all that. And then after an evil one, all of a sudden there'd come a good one.

It's like, how'd that happen? He didn't learn it from his daddy. All of a sudden there came a king who did what was right in God's sight. And he did this right, did this right, did this right, but he didn't do this.

And then you get to Josiah. And Josiah is described as one who did what was right in the eyes of the Lord, and there was no but.

There was no but he didn't do this, because he did everything he could do. Let me read the summary of him. Well, actually, you know, this is toward the very end of the kingdom of Judah.

Israel's already been carried off, right, to Assyria, the northern ten tribes. So you just have the southern kingdom now, and they're narrowing down to their last kings.

[25 : 31] And Josiah is the 15th king after Solomon, and there's only going to be three more after him, and then Babylon's going to come and carry him away, right? So it's in serious decline.

It's about time they're going to reap what they sow. So right during Josiah's time, the high priest finds this book.

He finds this book, dusts it off. What's this book? Torah. It's the book of the law. He reads it to Josiah.

Josiah hears this word of God for the first time. He tears his robes. And then he makes all the people of Israel come and hear the reading of the book.

And then he says, okay, we're doing things different now. We're going to get rid of all the bad, and we're going to start following this book. This is what Josiah does.

[26 : 30] He gets rid of all the idols. He gets rid of even the male prostitutes who were working in the temple. That's how bad it got. And you know it's gotten bad because they've forgotten the book of the law.

It's sitting on some back shelf somewhere gathering dust. What's the book? Oh, you found a book. Oh, I wonder what the stories are. Oh, it's about Israel and God.

Oh, we haven't been doing any of that. Oh, and God said if you don't do any of that, oh, let's start doing some of that, I think. It might be a good idea, right?

So summary of Josiah in 2 Kings 23. The king commanded all the people, keep the Passover to the Lord your God as it is written in the book of the covenant.

And then the writer makes this comment, for no such Passover had been kept since the days of the judges who judged Israel, or during all the days of the kings of Israel or the kings of Judah.

[27 : 34] But in the 18th year of King Josiah, this Passover was kept to the Lord in Jerusalem. Moreover, in other words, that's not all Josiah did.

Moreover, Josiah put away the mediums and the necromancers and the household gods and the idols and all the abominations that were seen in the land of Judah and in Jerusalem.

Why did he do that? That he might establish the words of the law that were written in the book that Hilkiah the priest found in the house of the Lord. Now watch this summary statement about Josiah.

Before him, there was no king like him. By the way, that includes David. That's an amazing statement. There was no king like him. Who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his strength.

According to all the law. Not just pick and choose. All the law of Moses. Nor did any like him arise after him.

[28 : 45] In Josiah, we have an extraordinary example of what it means to love God. And I think it's not just that he wills in his heart to do it. It's not just that he feels in his soul to do it.

But that he does it with total commitment. He doesn't do it halfway. Well, that's enough. Yeah, we'll get all those idols and that's good enough.

We'll leave those high places. Just the Asherah pulls. I find those particularly offensive. And they are very offensive, by the way. We'll take those down. But we'll leave the, you know, the idols to whatever God my wife follows.

Right? That's not Josiah. Nope. Everything. Everything. And you read that chapter and it's like, he doesn't just tear them down. Then he smashes them to bits.

Then he burns them. Then he takes the ashes and he throws them in the river. Getting rid of this stuff. It's like he just went the extra mile.

[29 : 57] He did it all the way. He's extraordinary. Okay? He's extraordinary. It's like, where was he when we needed him way back?

Right? And for his sake, God said, okay, during your lifetime, you will die in peace. Because of your diligence, I will honor that. I recognize that. You will die in peace.

But I'm still bringing this kingdom to an end. But after you. You earned a little bit of time. Not earned, but you know what I mean.

I want to honor your diligence for me. So, how do I turn this on ourselves?

I don't want to turn this on ourselves and make it a guilt thing. Because we all fall short in this. I mean, okay, how many Josiahs do we have here? Right? Not me. I wish I was.

[30 : 53] How many Davids? Okay, I've got some more of those. How about Solomon? Yeah, I've got a lot of those. But use it as an evaluation. Do I?

Not just, do I always serve God like that? Of course I don't. But do I ever? Do I ever? And I think if we love God, there are times, yeah.

Yeah. I'm going to worship today with all my strength. I'm going to sing with all my heart today. And of course your voice gives out. But then you... But still, I'm going to do it.

I'm going to hum with all my heart today. Okay? So let's turn to the practical question. How can we love God with all our strength?

With all of our ability? With all of our muchness? How? Well, let me suggest three ways. First of all, begin by recognizing how weak we are.

[32 : 03] Okay, this isn't about... This isn't kind of the typical Christian movie that, you know, inspires us. Okay, now I'm going to really commit to God. And it lasts about three weeks, right?

I mean, I want to criticize the Christian movies. They're well-intended. It has been involved with promise keepers. It was a well-intended thing. And it struck us men as ones who, yeah, we want to keep the promise.

The problem is, we don't keep the promise. There's only one promise keeper. That's why there's no more promise keepers.

It comes and goes. And bless those guys, and I was involved with it. Bless those guys. They're intending right things. It's good. And those Christian movies intend well.

But it focuses on me doing something. Let me sign that thing, and now I'm committed. It lasts about how long? Because in our own efforts, they won't last.

[33 : 10] We want to, though. So how? First begin by recognizing our weakness. We will fall.

No matter how much our spirit is willing, our flesh is weak. It is simply a matter of fact.

I cannot give God 100%, 100% of the time. My body cannot do that. I will wear out. My intentions, my heart can be right.

My soul can be involved in this. My mind is thinking right. And I intend to do all of that. But I'll fall. And then I beat myself up.

Right? Oh, you're not a Christian. Well, you listen to the devil tell you that. You like Luther.

[34 : 16] Tell him back. You're right, I'm not perfect. I'm also forgiven. I'm also forgiven. And it's not about how many times a man falls.

It's about him getting back up. And then trusting a little more. Okay, I learned from that. I needed to fall. I needed a little humbling. Okay, yeah, I did that.

Gotcha. Not as strong as I thought I was. Not as committed as I thought I was. Who's our example, Peter? I will never. And he meant it.

You know he loved Jesus with every ounce of his being. And as long as the battle was just another guy with a sword, bring it on. Peter wasn't one ounce afraid of that.

But the little girl that sneaks up behind you and asks you a question you're not ready for, So begin by recognizing that.

[35 : 17] Deuteronomy 4.9 says, Keep your soul diligently. Keep your soul mo'ed. Keep your soul abundantly. Keep your soul with all your strength. Why?

Lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen unless they depart from your heart all the days of your life. See, there's a weakness.

And notice, all three words of our verse from Deuteronomy are here in this verse in Deuteronomy 4.9. Keep your soul, love God with your soul, diligently, that's the word for strength.

Keep your soul vigilant. My soul's really vulnerable. My soul is not something I can follow. My soul is that which is going to go for the easiest way out.

Because my soul wants to feel good. Okay? My soul wants to feel good. And I can't try, that's why Jesus says, hate your soul in this world. So that you can save it.

[36 : 18] Because your soul will lead you to the broad road. Keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen and lest they depart from your hearts.

There we have the third word. Heart, soul, and strength. So something has to govern my soul and my heart with my strength.

What is that? Tune in next week. Forget to. Yeah, that wasn't nice. Hint, maybe it's something Jesus added.

2 Peter 1.10 says, Be diligent, so use all your strength, go to the utmost, be diligent to make sure about God's calling and choosing you.

Why? Make sure you're really saved. Well, I know I'm saved because I prayed the prayer. Well, excuse me, but when does that assure you that you're saved?

[37 : 27] Something you did. So your faith isn't something you did. But the pastor said, if I pray the prayer, I'll be saved. Bless his heart. He meant well.

I grew up with that. I can testify. I was the most confused believer, unbeliever there was for years.

Make sure. Pray the prayer. Great. Keep praying it until you know God's answered. Okay? Keep praying it until you know He's answered.

Until you've seen evidence. How do you know you're saved? Is there fruit? Is there a change of heart? Not just have my sorry that I sinned.

Okay? Unbelievers are sorry. Have you changed? Do you have a desire? Are the commands of God burdensome? If they're burdensome, that's how I measured, all of a sudden there was a change in my heart, they were no longer burdensome.

[38 : 41] That didn't mean I liked them. But there was a change in my heart that I want to keep the command. Before that, I thought I was saved, but I hated His command. Make sure.

So, see, your soul is at stake, so wouldn't you want to give the most effort you could give to make sure your soul is saved. With all your strength, make sure you're saved.

Don't just assume. So, that's one. So, begin by recognizing how weak we are so we can't trust our strength. Secondly, learn to be strengthened.

I'm saying that intentionally. Learn to, not learn to be strong, but learn to be strengthened. That's passive. Learn to be strengthened.

Not learn to get strong, learn to be strengthened. Ephesians 6, when Paul starts talking about the armor, how are we going to do battle?

[39 : 48] Okay, better be strong in the battle, right? How does he say it first? He says, be strong, where? In the Lord, and in the strength of His might.

Be strengthened. Receive that strength. And keep receiving it. Keep depending on it. Active faith.

Not, oh, I prayed that prayer once, I'm good for the week. Okay, then Monday comes. I thought I was good. Well, you prayed that yesterday. This is a walking with the Lord relationship.

Psalms 119.4 says, God commands that we obey Him diligently. We obey Him with all our strength. In the very next verse, so the psalmist says, God commands that we obey Him diligently.

The very next verse is a cry of prayer. Oh, oh, that my ways may be found to be diligent in His ways. It's kind of like, here's God's demand.

[41 : 02] Here's the psalmist going, diligently? I know me. Oh, that my ways may be found to be established in doing His work.

Please help me, please help me, Lord. Right? It's a, I see that all the way through Psalm 119, by the way. He'll declare the great demand of God, and then it'll be this, please, please don't forsake me.

Please don't leave me. This distrust in myself. I can't trust myself. As well intended as I am, as genuinely as I do want to please Him and honor Him, I can't trust myself.

Because I know, I'll fall. So, begin by recognizing how we be strengthened. Learn to be strengthened. Learn to draw strength.

And we have to learn that because that's not natural to us. From day one, as we grow, as we grow physically, as we grow in school, as we grow and we go to work, everything else we do in this life, we have to earn.

[42 : 10] You've got to earn your grades. You've got to do your chores. It's not a bad thing. It's just we have to do those things. Right? I've got to do my work so I can't actually get paid.

Right? So, everything else, I'm conditioned and I'm naturally wanting to earn these things. And so, I'm naturally depending on my strength. I've got to get up.

I've got to show up. And I've got to do the work. And blah, blah, blah. Right? In following Christ, it's not that way. I have to learn to be dependent.

Because what God asked me to do, I can't do in my strength. I can't love Him with all my heart, with all my soul, and all my... That's impossible. All His commands are, ultimately, impossible.

They're not natural for us. So I have to learn that. And then finally, seek to overcome your sloth. Yeah, I said it. Preaching to me now.

[43 : 15] Seek to overcome your sloth. I think one of the things I pray for forgiveness for more than anything is slothfulness. Pray that you will grow in diligence.

You know, we emphasize grace. We emphasize God's forgiveness. Rightly. God is a forgiving God. God is a gracious God. He will always forgive me when I repent.

Always. Okay? And if I'm repenting, I'm not committing the unforgivable sin. Okay? So I can grow lax because of grace.

You know what does Paul say in Romans 6, right? Shall we sin all the more so that grace might increase? God's always going to forgive me. Of course He is. Yes, He is. That's the risk.

That's the risk of grace. But, as Paul goes on to say, come on now. We've got a new heart. Our new heart doesn't want to do that. But we can.

[44 : 27] Right? We can get lax. And so, when I pray daily about forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors, I'm thinking, okay, I haven't given my all.

Forgive my sloth. Forgive my sloth. Forgive me for holding back. Forgive me for just giving half and thinking that was enough. That's good enough. Is it really good enough service to God?

Of course not. Give all. Psalm 96 says, Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised. God is to be praised ma'od.

God is to be praised greatly. He is to be praised with abundance and exceeding. God is to be praised greatly. Why? Because God is great.

He deserves every ounce we have. He deserves everything. I don't. He does.

[45 : 33] So I don't think about that legalistically. But I think about that from a perspective of, I love God. I want to give Him what He deserves.

I'll never be able to fully do that. But I want to do my best. And the only way I can do that is by depending on His Holy Spirit to fill me and lead me. And as I get weary, to pull me back up.

Zechariah 9.9 talks about, Your King is coming to you mounted on a donkey. Remember, we saw that a few chapters ago. That was about a year ago. We got to chapter 11 of Mark.

No, sorry. So your King is coming to you on a donkey. So how should we respond? Rejoice ma'od. Rejoice greatly.

He's coming. He's coming. And that's what ticked off all the religious leaders because the people fulfilled that command when Jesus entered into Jerusalem on a donkey.

[46 : 42] They were, Woo-hoo! Right? They're like, How dare you? Jesus says, Hey, they didn't cry out.

The stones would have cried out. God's in your presence, buddy. Great. Shout loudly. Give Him all you got.

That's the idea. Give Him all that you're capable of. So to love God with all our strength. You know, when we're talking about worship, so I worship with all my strength.

I want to worship Him fervently. I want to lift my voice. I want to sing with all my heart and with all my soul and get loud sometimes. Right?

Because, you know, when there's freedom and... So, yeah, that's love for God with all my strength. But most of the rest of the time, my love for God with all my strength involves serving others.

[47 : 46] Because the way I really love God is by loving His children. In fact, that's the very test. If you don't love His children, you don't love God.

That's what John tells us in 1 John. You know you're saved. You know you love God if you love His children. Forgiven.

So love them fervently. Listen to how Peter puts it in 1 Peter 4. He says, The end of all things is at hand. Okay, so let's narrow things down then. Therefore, be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers.

Okay? Pray. Above all... Okay, whoa. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly. Oh. I just love one another.

Earnestly. The end of all things. So go for it. Since love covers a multitude of sins. Oh, that kind of love. Well, the love that I don't expose, but I cover.

[48 : 51] So in other words, I'm loving my brother who's offended me and I love him by... I forgive you, brother. I let it go. I'm not going to get hung up on that. And if I am hung up on it, we're going to sit down and we're going to have a talk, but I love him.

And my aim is to let that go. Love him fervently because love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another. Or... How? Without grumbling.

Ma'od. Ma'od. Ma'od. Wait a minute. Ma'od means... Oh. Mm-mm. As each of you has received a gift, use it to serve one another.

One another. He's talking about church relationships. He's talking about His children to serve one another. Show hospitality to one another. Love one another. Yes, love the world.

Yes. That will flow out. Priority number one. Love one another. Because then they're going to see that. And they're going to say, look at how they lay their lives down for each other.

[49 : 57] Look at how they cover up each other's sins in a good way. They bear with one another. They let it go. And then they don't even grumble when they have each other over.

Use your gift to serve one another as good stewards of God's varied grace. So if your gift is speaking, whoever speaks, as one who speaks the oracles of God.

And if your gift is a serving gift, whoever serves, as one who serves, watch this, who serves by the strength that God supplies. Love others with all your strength by serving with the strength that God supplies.

There's that balance again. And why do I want to do it by the strength that God supplies? In order that in everything, God may be glorified. God gets the glory.

I'm serving in such a way that it's not about me. It's about God. How'd you do that? I prayed, man. I prayed and I was depending and I was tired, but God, and praise God, I'm glad I could help you.

[51 : 17] But that was God. And people are going, oh, oh, that was God. If you love God, it will show in how you love His people.

Serve Him by relying on His strength. This is how God is glorified. He's glorified and honored by how we serve and who we serve. He's glorified by how we serve by not doing it in our strength, but depending on His so that He gets the glory.

And He's honored that we serve one another. That's what He's watching. So, can I meddle just for a moment?

Please take this with just honest self-evaluation before God. How much do you love God? Don't answer. What, are you talking about this moment?

Right? Yesterday or today? How much do you love God? How does that show in your heart, in your soul, in your mind?

[52 : 32] Do you seek to give Him all your ability, your best efforts, your utmost diligence? And please, please, please, I'm not saying this to go, oh, I'm burdened now.

I'm saying this to go, I just want you to look at this before the Lord. Let Him tell you what to do. Okay? He might just pick on one little thing for you. He might just say, I want you to work on this.

Okay? No, don't take it all. I just want you to try this. Because your heart's sincere, I want you to do this. Okay? You with me? Because here we all fail.

Even when our spirit is willing, our flesh is weak, we do get tired. We do get weary in well-doing. If we've been serving God faithfully, there's a point where we get weary.

Maybe we haven't been encouraged. Maybe we feel unnoticed. That's very human to get discouraged and down. So, we all fail.

[53 : 46] Pray that you may overcome temptation. When Jesus said, you know, they're in Gethsemane and He's asking the guys to pray with Him, Peter, James, and John, and remember, they're falling asleep.

You know, Jesus goes away and they find Him. And He says to them, okay guys, I get it. Spirit's willing, I know you want to, but your flesh is weak. Here's what I'm asking you to do.

Pray that you do not enter temptation. Don't guilt yourself that you fell asleep. Pray that you don't enter temptation.

This is a moment that prayer really matters. So pray that God will awaken you so that you can pray. By the way, don't pray laying down at night right before you go to sleep.

If you're like me, don't do that. It's the only time I can fall asleep fast. I try to... Anyway. It's the flesh. Pray that you can overcome that temptation and be strengthened in God's strength.

[54 : 54] God's strength. We serve a God who is awesome and great and excellent and mighty and gracious who has forgiven us, who has saved us.

And He's not just removed all our sins, but He's given us an identity of righteousness from Jesus. He's given us His own Holy Spirit to dwell within us. He's given us a family.

He's given us gifts, meaning, hope, a future. As Paul says in Ephesians, He's given us every spiritual blessing in heaven. So let us love Him truly.

Let's love Him with our heart, with our soul, with our mind, and our strength. Let's do those because we love Him. Let's pray. Father, we thank You for Your Word.

We thank You for Jesus' teaching that stretches us, that makes us think. And Father, we want to receive this Word as You intended. We don't want to receive it as something that weighs us down.

[56 : 05] We don't want to receive it as something that discourages us. We want to receive it as something that convicts us, yes, that draws us to You, that awakens us, that helps us to love You better.

That's how we want to receive it. And so, Father, fill our hearts, revive our souls, renew our minds, and strengthen us.

We pray in Christ's name. Amen.