

INDICATORS OF A SOUL THAT LOVES GOD:
A Supplement for the Command to the Soul
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In this supplement to my expositional series on what it means to love God, I decided to put together positive and negative indicators to assist me in critically and reasonably reflecting upon the extent of my love for God. This way of re-examining my thoughts on the “*Greatest Command*” in Scripture comes out of a series of conversations with my friend Carson Smith on campus at Texas A&M University (spring 2009).

Recapping my expositional series on Mark 12:30 I raised the following question:

What does it mean to Love God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind, and with all your strength (Mark 12:30)? In my study of this passage I discovered the following truths:

- a. The “*heart*” emphasizes your deep-seated affections, your inner desires; it is the control center of your human personality;
- b. The “*soul*,” while it is a rich concept with a variety of meaning, we can say at least it emphasizes your self-conscious thought life.
- c. The “*mind*” emphasizes your capacity to think, reason, understand, and make judgments.
- d. “*Strength*” emphasizes your bodily powers (physical & emotional capabilities).

Therefore, when you place your trust in Jesus Christ as Savior you are given a new mind, a new heart, and a new will. Thus, when you the child of God, exercises your mind toward God to know Him, your heart to love Him, and your will to obey Him, then you are in fellowship with God. In his classic and unforgettable work, *Designed to be Like Him*, J. Dwight Pentecost makes the following observation:

...if any area of your personality is not in harmony with Him, then you are not enjoying fellowship with God. And because fellowship with Him is the reason we were created and then re-created in His image [2 Cor. 5:17; 3:18; Romans 8:29; 1 Cor. 2:16; Col. 3:10], we cannot glorify God apart from that fellowship.

Now having summarized my previous studies on the matter, I now turn to our attention to the following list of indicators that I’ve put down to assist me in critically pondering my love for God from out of my whole soul. The bottom line is that our actions, existential struggles, and what we tend to find ourselves attracted shed light upon our thought-life. Whatever it is that occupies our thoughts, dominates our mind, and wins our deep-seated affections, we are willing to get up early,

stay late, pay a lot of money, give up resources, energy, and time for it. I've heard it said we are largely identified with what we pursue. No doubt our thought-life plays a large role.

To be sure, the following indicators should be viewed as “*road signs*.” Some of these road signs are related and some are more important than others. Nevertheless, each of these indicators is designed to provoke critical self-evaluation that may motivate us with resolved and determination, by His enablement and yieldedness, to love God all the more. While this supplement is specifically focused on what it means to love God from out of your whole soul, in future installments I will consider indicators of the mind and bodily powers.

I trust these will be helpful to you as you think about what it means to love God from out of your whole soul.

What are indicators or “*road signs*” that you are loving God from out of your whole soul?

You love God from out of your whole soul when...

1. Throughout each day your thoughts consistently return to the Lord Jesus Christ.
2. You find yourself “*anticipating*” the time when you will be in God’s presence in the fullness of time (I Thess. 4:13-18; Rev. 20-22).
3. You “*abide*” in Christ in the moment-by-moment details of daily living (John 15).
4. You find yourself praying throughout your day.
5. You find yourself thinking *how* you might spend more time with Him.
6. You have long, fervent periods of prayer.
7. You are grieved in situations where blasphemy occurs.
8. You “*capture*” ungodly thoughts that enter into your mind.
9. You refuse to engage in activities that may degenerate your thought-life.
10. You safeguard your thought-life from carnal distractions and worldly temptations.
11. You refuse to engage in entertainment that will mar, scar, and numb your thought life.
12. You memorize Scripture out of love for Him (Rom. 12:1-2).
13. You purposefully choose to preoccupy your thought-life with the things of God.
14. You scrutinize (in a healthy sense) your thought-life in an effort to better reflect Christ-likeness.
15. You bear the fruit of the Spirit in your thought-life.
16. You focus on those things that are true and noble (Phil. 4:8).
17. You dwell upon the “*excellencies*” of the God of the Bible.
18. Your corporate and personal worship sincerely flows from your thought-life.
19. You reflect upon *why* you react to ideas, events, and attitudes, the way you do.
20. You are sorrowful for your sinful thoughts.
21. You consistently mortify your thought-life (Col. 3)
22. You discipline my thought-life to be Godwardly directed.
23. You relish in being in the Lord’s presence.
24. You strive to possess thoughts that are God-honoring.
25. You operate throughout the day with an eternal perspective.
26. You offer your thought-life to God as an expression of worship.
27. You bear your soul to God.
28. You are authentic (not deceptive) before God.

29. God's Word is the standard you use to measure your thoughts.
30. Your love for Him is your all-consuming thought, passion, and life.

You are not loving God from out of your deep-seated affections when...

1. You are struggling with anxiety.
2. You are not dwelling upon worldly temptations and earthly pleasures.
3. You don't meditate upon Scripture.
4. When your thought-life is easily controlled by another.
5. When you are deceptive.
6. When you are manipulative.
7. When you refuse to submit your soul to God
8. When you allow your surroundings to control your thought-life.
9. When you dwell on those things that are an anathema to God.
10. When your thoughts grieve the Holy Spirit.
11. When your conscience condemns your thought-life.
12. When your soul is numb to the things of God.
13. When your thought-life is controlled by the possibility and pursuit of pleasures.
14. When you are refuse to corporately worship God
15. When you do not pray.
16. When you flirt with ungodly thoughts.
17. When you deceive yourself into thinking something that is not true.
18. When you rationalize temptation.
19. When you are intoxicated by sin, unable to think clearly.
20. When you allow your past to dictate your spiritual life.