

October 12, 2026

Give God More Than Your Leftovers

October Series: Love Your Neighbor

Week Focus: Start Right Here

Scripture – Matthew 22:37 - *“Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’”*

Devotional Reflection

We often think about loving God in terms of the time we spend praying, reading Scripture, attending worship, or participating in church activities. These are meaningful expressions of our devotion, but Jesus calls us to something deeper. When He commands us to love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, He is describing a love that reaches into every part of our lives. God is not simply asking for a place on our schedules; He is calling us to recognize Him as Lord over everything. Loving God first is not about increasing religious activity while keeping the rest of our lives unchanged; it is about allowing our relationship with Him to shape how we live.

One of the challenges we face is that life can become so full that God gradually receives whatever remains. We make time for responsibilities, relationships, entertainment, work, and personal interests, but our attention to God can become something we fit in when everything else is finished. This does not always happen because we intentionally reject Him; sometimes we become distracted, overwhelmed, or comfortable with routines that leave little room for intentional devotion. Yet Jesus' words invite us to examine more than our schedules because they challenge us to examine our priorities. GOD ISN'T ASKING TO BE ADDED TO YOUR LIFE; HE IS CALLING YOU TO ORIENT YOUR LIFE AROUND HIM, allowing His Word to shape your decisions, His character to influence your responses, and His purposes to guide your priorities.

But we must understand something important: loving God with our whole being does not mean we will love Him perfectly every day. If perfection were the requirement for receiving His love, none of us could stand before Him. Scripture reminds us that we love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19), meaning our devotion is a response to the grace we have received through Jesus Christ rather than an attempt to earn God's acceptance. When we recognize areas where our love has become distracted or divided, we can come honestly before the Lord, confess where we have fallen short, and ask Him to continue transforming our hearts. Grace does not make wholehearted devotion unnecessary; it makes genuine transformation possible.

As we begin this week's journey, remember that loving God first will influence how we love the people around us. Our relationship with Him should not remain separated from our relationships at home, at work, at church, or in our communities. The more we allow His truth to shape our hearts, the more His character should become visible in our everyday interactions. Today, begin with a simple but meaningful prayer: “Lord, show me where I have been giving You my leftovers instead of allowing You to lead my life.” Surrender yourself to the Savior who is already at work in you, remembering that LOVE GOD FIRST does not mean everything else is unimportant, but that your love for Him should increasingly shape everything else.

FOCUS FOR TODAY

God isn't asking to be added to your life. He is calling you to orient your life around him.

Wholehearted devotion means allowing God to shape our priorities, decisions, and relationships—not merely giving Him whatever time remains.

PRACTICE — GIVE GOD YOUR FIRST ATTENTION

- Examine your priorities. Identify one area where your attention to God has become secondary.
 - Begin intentionally. Set aside a meaningful moment today for prayer and Scripture before the demands of life consume your attention.
 - Invite God's direction. Before making an important decision, ask whether your choice reflects His Word and character.
 - Connect devotion to relationships. Consider how loving God should influence the way you speak to or respond to someone today.
 - Respond with surrender, not guilt. If God reveals an area that needs to change, confess it and take one faithful step forward.
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PRAYER

Heavenly Father, thank You for loving me before I ever knew how to love You. Thank You for Your patience, Your mercy, and the grace You have shown me through Jesus Christ. Forgive me for the times I have allowed the responsibilities and distractions of life to receive my greatest attention while giving You whatever remains. Search my heart and reveal the places where my priorities have become disconnected from my devotion to You.

Lord, I do not want my love for You to be limited to religious activities or occasional moments of attention. Teach me to love You with my whole heart, soul, and mind. Shape my thoughts, guide my decisions, redirect my desires, and help me surrender every area of my life to Your leadership. Let my relationship with You become increasingly visible in the way I treat others. Continue the transforming work that only You can accomplish within me.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

REFLECTION QUESTION

If someone examined how you spent your time, made decisions, and treated people this past week, what would those things reveal about the place God holds in your life?