

The greatest commandment, as Jesus states in Matthew 22:37, is to “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” This is a great challenge to us all. When I talk to God, I would like to be able to say that I love Him with all of my heart. But it just doesn’t feel right. If I love God with all of my heart, then how can I love anyone else? I would really like to be able to say this, but when I think about how selfish I am I find it hard to do.

God presented this idea of “loving Him with all of our heart” in the Old Testament at the same time that he gave the ten commandments. How we are supposed to do it is never explained, however. Was it so obvious to them? And were they successful at it? I did a search for the phrase “all of my (or his or her or their) heart” in the NIV and I found several instances of people seeking, obeying, or turning to God with all of their heart. But there is no one who claims to have loved God with all of their heart. So is it even possible?

Perhaps I am not thinking about it in the right way. It is important to note that the second commandment is to love others as we do ourselves. Therefore it must be consistent to be able to love God with all of our hearts and love others as well. The word “all” then is something that we should think more about. God did not mean this to be used as an approximation.

We mentioned earlier that there was no specific mention of anyone obeying the greatest commandment. But we know that Christ must have, for he was sinless. And he loved us so deeply that he died on the cross for us! “Love with all our heart” then must mean to be completely filled with God-like love. We will love others better because of the depth of this love. This is sometimes hard for people who are close to us to see. We might say that the love of our family and friends (and enemies) is a subset of an all-encompassing true love. It is as though we were a sponge that has been soaked in love until everything that touches it becomes “damp” with that love.

If we can get some insight if we consider God as the personification of all Goodness. I believe that I can love Goodness with all of my heart; this means being Good and showing love to everyone. In the opposite sense it means that we cannot love evil at all, not even a little bit. As Amos says, we should love good and hate evil. This makes it much simpler. But it does mean that we must love our enemies as well as our friends.

Well, I still have a little bit of a problem saying that I love God with all of my heart. But I think I understand better now how it can be done. We must all learn to love Goodness with every fiber of our being. And they will know we are Christians by our love.