

General Church Education



# The Two Great Commandments

Matthew 22:35-40

## Lesson 10

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 1: The Lord Is Our Creator

For ages 6-7 years

## THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS

MATTHEW 22:35-40

Today's story takes place in the time of the New Testament when the Lord was living in this world. Once again, people had forgotten the path to heaven. Selfish behavior had replaced loving obedience to the Lord and kindness to others. The wise words of Jesus were received with joy and amazement by people whose hearts were open to Him.

The Jewish leaders at that time were jealous of Jesus and afraid that He would take away their ability to dominate the uneducated people. They tried to publicly embarrass the Lord by asking Him trick questions. Our story today is an example of this. A lawyer asked which commandment was the most important one. He hoped to trap the Lord into contradicting Himself, but the Lord answered with the Two Great Commandments.

He followed by stating, "On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:40) This definitive statement about the importance of the entire Word silenced anyone who wanted to trap the Lord with questions. The truth is that until the Lord came on earth both of these commandments had lain forgotten in the Old Testament. "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength." (Deuteronomy 6:5) "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." (Leviticus 19:18)

### IDEAS FOR PARENTS & TEACHERS

- The Two Great Commandments are a summary of the Word.
- We can teach them to our children by establishing patterns of behavior that show respect to the Lord and the neighbor.

### FROM THE WRITINGS

Faith is not only a knowledge and acknowledgment of all things that the doctrine of faith comprises, but especially is it an obedience to all things that the doctrine of faith teaches. The primary point that it teaches, and that which people should obey, is love to the Lord, and love toward the neighbor, for if a person is not in this, he is not in faith. This the Lord teaches so plainly as to leave no doubt concerning it. In Matthew, the Lord calls the former of these the "first and great commandment" and says that "on these commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets." (Matt. 22:37-41) The "Law and the Prophets" are the universal doctrine of faith, and the whole Word. See *Arcana Coelestia* 36

# THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS

## IMPORTANT IDEAS

The Two Great Commandments remind us to love the Lord and the neighbor.

These two commandments teach us the way to heaven.

Our last story was about the Ten Commandments. They were written in the Old Testament. This part of the Word is called "The Law" because it tells about many of the Lord's rules, or laws, for life. The Lord gave these commandments because He loves us. He wants us to know how we should live our lives in order to be happy. If we treat the Lord and other people the way the commandments tell us to, we can be happy both in this world and in heaven. People around us can also feel the Lord's presence and be happy. It is wonderful to think about the joy if everyone showed love to the Lord and the neighbor. No one would be unkind or hurt another's feelings.

We have read about how people sometimes forgot to obey what the Lord told them to do. Adam and Eve forgot about doing what the Lord said when they were in the Garden of Eden. As a result, they were punished and had to leave the Garden. We have learned that the Lord gave His commandments for everyone to obey.



Once again, hundreds of years after Moses, people forgot to think about how they should follow the Lord and obey the commandments. They loved themselves more than the Lord or the neighbor. They thought that everyone would think that they were important if they pretended to love the Lord and their neighbor, when they were really only caring for themselves.

The Lord came into the world to remind people about heaven. He taught them about the life that leads to heaven, and about obedience and love. One day, while He was teaching in the temple, a man tried to trick the Lord into saying that it was all right to obey only one commandment. The Lord knew this man didn't want to obey the commandments. The man loved himself. He didn't want to have to love the Lord and the neighbor. This man asked the Lord, "Which is the great commandment in the Law?" The Law is the part of the Old Testament written by Moses. If the Lord answered that any one commandment was the most important, the man could say, "Then I will obey just that one commandment. I can forget about the others and still go to heaven. I can treat other people any way that I want to."

This is not a true way of thinking about the commandments. We need to obey all of the commandments that show us how to love the Lord and how to treat Him. We also need to obey all of the commandments that tell how to treat people around us. The Lord loves everyone and wants everyone to be happy. Do you think it would be possible to do things to make others unhappy and still love the Lord?

Let us read from the Word to see how the Lord answered the man. Read Matthew 22:35-40.

These two commandments were so important that the Lord said the entire Old Testament, or "the Law and Prophets" teaches about them.





## DISCUSSION

- In our last lesson we learned about how the Lord gave Moses the Ten Commandments to give to the Children of Israel. Can you remember some of these commandments? (*You might want to review the commandments.*)
- Do you remember the wrong idea that the man in today's story had? (*He thought that he could obey just one commandment and not have to bother obeying all of them.*)
- The Lord gave the Two Great Commandments in answer to this man's wrong idea. They are strong reminders that it is important to pay attention to the Ten Commandments and all of the other places in the Lord's Word that teach about how to live a good life.
- Who do the Two Great Commandments tell us that we are to love? (*We should love the Lord and we should love our neighbor.*) We can remember from our last lesson that the Ten Commandments also tell about love to the Lord and love to the neighbor.
- Why do you think the Lord said, "You shall love the Lord *with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind?*" (*Answers might include the idea that "all" means every part of us.*)
- Do you remember our story about the trees in the Garden of Eden, that only one tree could be in the middle of the garden? Today's story reminds us that it is important to put the Lord in the center of our heart, soul and mind. We show that we want to love the Lord with all our heart, soul and mind when we are loving, kind and helpful to our family, friends and other people around us. These are the people that the Lord calls our "neighbors" in the Word.



# THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS | Activities

## Recitation

- Learn the recitation.

And God spoke all these words, saying, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

You shall have no other gods before me.

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Honor your father and your mother.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's."

Exodus 20:1-7 (parts)

When the recitation has been learned, give children the recitation picture on the last page of this lesson, and a sticker, e.g. a star, to decorate it.



## Songs

- The Two Great Commandments  
Listen at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-the-two-great-commandments/>
- All That the Lord Has Spoken  
Listen at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-all-that-the-lord-has-spoken-2/>

## Video

- The Tree That's Me (song)  
Watch at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-the-tree-thats-me-song/>

## Projects

- My Good Deeds Book
- Good Deeds I Can Do Activity picture

## My Good Deeds Book

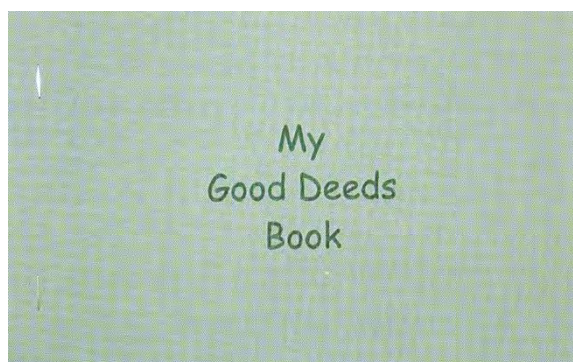
Reflect on how the Ten Commandments can be part of daily life by making a book about good deeds.

### Supplies needed

- 2 half sheets of stiff colored paper to use as covers
- 10 half sheets of white paper to use as pages
- crayons, colored pencils or markers
- pencil
- stapler

### Directions

1. Using crayons, colored pencils or markers, write, "My Good Deeds Book" on the front cover of your book. Add your name as well if you want.
2. Assemble your book by putting the white pages between the colored cover pages. Staple the book on the left side to hold it together.
3. Write a number from 1-10 at the bottom of each white page. There are 10 pages—one for each of the commandments.
4. Using crayons, colored pencils or markers, draw a picture on each page showing something you have done that day to obey one of the commandments or to help another person. You might be surprised how easy it is to remember the Lord and His commandments if you take time to think about it each day. Be sure to thank the Lord for helping you understand the life that leads to heaven and for helping you try to live it each day.



## Good Deeds I Can Do Activity Chart

Choose one of the following ways to use the following *Good Deeds I Can Do Activity Chart*.

1. Put an X through chores you have done at home.
2. Display the chart. Set chore goals for the day or week. Put an X through each chore as you complete it. Celebrate the chores you have completed at the end of the day or week.
3. Use the chart on a daily or ongoing basis to help with chores at home. Highlight chores to be done each day or week. Put an X through them as the chores are completed. Start with a fresh copy of the chart each day or week.



