

# The Greatest Commandment

## A Family Study from Today in the Word

This Family Study is a companion to the *Today in the Word* devotional *Understanding the Greatest Commandment* (February 2024). The whole family can learn from God's Word together. In each of the four lessons, you will:



### Read

Read a passage  
in the Bible



### Understand

Understand the biblical  
text in a deeper way



### Imagine

Imagine the lesson  
with hands-on activities

## About the Greatest Commandment

Jesus tells us in the Bible that we should love God with everything we have (Matthew 22:37–38). This means we should love Him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Loving God is the most important thing we do! We can show our love for God in many ways, such as praying, going to church, and loving other people.



This *Today in the Word* family study was written by Moody Bible Institute students Haylee Grindal, Annie Cornette, and Ashleigh Hildebrandt under the direction of Elizabeth Smith, Program Head and Associate Professor of Moody's Children and Family Ministry program. Please visit [moody.edu/academics/programs/children-family-ministry](https://moody.edu/academics/programs/children-family-ministry) for more information.

**TODAY** IN THE **WORD**

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# 10 Things to Know

## About God's Love

1

John 3:16 shows how God loves us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to take on Himself the punishment of sin for us.

2

Romans 5:8 says that even though we do bad things and sin, Jesus loved us enough to die for us.

3

1 John 4:19 teaches how we can love others because God first loved us!

4

John 13:34–35 tells that we should love others the same way God loves us.

5

Psalms 107:8–9 promises that God's love for us will **never** fail!

6

Romans 8:38–39 says **nothing** can separate us from the love of God!

7

Romans 5:5 teaches that God's love is given to us by the Holy Spirit.

8

Psalms 86:15 says that the love of God is abounding, meaning that there is a lot of it.

9

Psalms 63:3 celebrates the love of God, which is better than anything!

10

Isaiah 54:10 promises that God's love will **never** be shaken!

# What Is the Greatest Commandment?

## Memory Verse

*Jesus replied: "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind." This is the first and greatest commandment.*—Matthew 22:37–38



## Read Matthew 22:34–40

Have you ever wondered which commandment God gave us was the most important of all? Jesus said loving God with everything in you is the most important commandment. More than anything, God wants us to love Him. Sometimes loving God means doing things we do not want to do, like obeying our parents even though we don't feel like it or being kind to someone who isn't kind to us. Loving God means doing what is right, and, when we mess up, asking God for forgiveness.



## Understand

1. What is a commandment?
2. What did Jesus say was the greatest commandment?
3. What did Jesus say was the second greatest commandment?
4. What are some ways you can love God?
5. How can you love others?



## Imagine

Parents, with your child come up with fun motions to represent their heart, soul, mind, and strength (for example, heart: making a heart with your hands, soul: prayer hands, mind: pointing to your head, strength: flexing muscles).

Play a game where whenever you say "heart, soul, mind, or strength," your child has to make the matching motion. As they get used to the game, start speeding up and try to catch them off guard! If they make the wrong motion, you can have them do things such as hop up and down or stand on one leg to make it more interesting. You can even have them recite their memory verse with the motions they come up with. Have fun and be creative!



# How Can I Be Patient?

## Memory Verse

*Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.—Ephesians 4:2*



## Read Psalm 40:1-7

Being patient is hard. To be patient means to wait calmly for someone or for something to happen, like waiting for a fun event or to enjoy your favorite food. In Psalm 40:1–7 we read how David had to be patient while he waited for God to come rescue him from his enemies. Being patient is never easy, but Psalm 40:4 says we are blessed when we wait. As Christians, we are called to be patient with each other and to be humble and gentle. When you are patient, you show God’s love to those around you!



## Understand

1. Can you remember a time when you had to be patient?
2. Why is it important to be patient?
3. Why did David have to be patient?
4. As Christians, who are we supposed to be patient with? (Eph. 4:2)
5. How can you be patient and show God’s love this week?



## Imagine

Parents, this week, choose one night to make a meal or a dessert with your child. Allow them to help you make the food. But there is one rule: NO tasting until the dinner is complete. Bonus points if it is something you are baking, such as cookies or a pizza, and you can peek in the oven window.

Talk to your child about patience as you make the food together. Ask them: “How hard do you think patience is going to be?” or “What did you learn about patience while making the food?” Engage with your child and be patient with them, so they have an example to learn from! Then, celebrate and enjoy your delicious food (waiting sometimes makes the reward even better).



# What Happens When I Worry?

## Memory Verse

*Cast all your anxiety on him  
because he cares for you.—1 Peter 5:7*



## Read Luke 12:22-31

Sometimes we feel worried or anxious about something. You might be nervous about an upcoming test at school, a big storm rolling in, or making friends at a new school. No matter what it is, Jesus teaches that we don't have to worry! In Luke 12:22-31, Jesus says we shouldn't be anxious or worry because God cares about us! God takes care of the birds and the flowers, so we can know He will take care of us. No matter the situation we are in, we don't have to be anxious, but instead can trust God!



## Understand

1. What does Jesus say we should think about when we are anxious?  
Hint: Jesus says we are more valuable than them (vv. 24, 27).
2. Why is there no reason for us to worry?
3. What does Jesus say we should do (or seek) instead of worrying? (v. 31)
4. Have you ever been anxious about something? What did you do?
5. When we feel worried, we can pray to God. What else can we do?



## Imagine

Parents, have your child draw the stem of a flower on a piece of paper. Slightly messy way: Spread washable paint on your child's hand and have them press it to the paper, on the top of the stem. Less messy way: Have them cut out flower petals and glue them on the stem.

While the paint or glue is drying, name a few ways we can trust God, rather than worry. Some examples: reading our Bible, praying before bed, etc. Once the paint is dry, write each way on one finger or "petal." Write 1 Peter 5:7 (our memory verse) on the top of the page. Display the picture in your home to remind your children that when they are anxious or worried, God cares for them!



# I Am Loved by God!

## Memory Verse

*God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God,  
and God in them.—1 John 4:16*



## Read 1 John 4:7-21

Who loves you? Your mom and dad? Your friends? While those people might love you a lot, God's love for us is so much greater! He loved you so much, He even sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to earth to live and die in your place (John 3:16)! Our memory verse today tells us God doesn't just love us, but God is love! If we believe with our heart and know Jesus is our Lord and Savior (Rom. 10:9-10), we have God's love in us! We should share His love with others. We love God by loving others!



## Understand

1. According to our memory verse, who is God?
2. What does it mean that God is love?
3. Does God still love us when we do something wrong?
4. Read John 3:16. How did God show His love for us?
5. How can we love God by loving others?

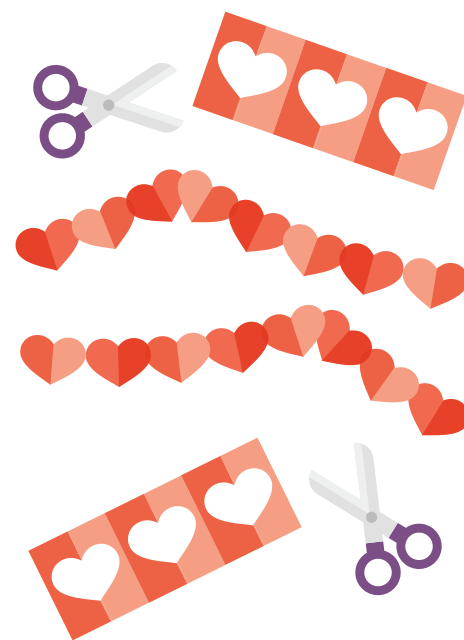


## Imagine

Parents, make a chain of hearts to teach your child about loving God. You will need paper, tape, scissors, and a crayon or marker.

Cut a sheet of paper in half, longways, and fold it into 8 equally sized folds, like an accordion. Help your child trace half a heart onto the folded paper with the folded edge marking the center of the heart (as shown in the illustration). Cut the folded paper, being sure NOT to cut along the folds, and unfold the paper to reveal the chain of hearts. If you made several, connect them together with tape. (See next page for step by step instructions.)

On each heart, have your child write one way they can show their love for God. This might be praying or reading their Bible, or things like helping to make dinner or being kind to a friend. Have them decorate the hearts and hang it somewhere in your home as a reminder to show God's love in every way!





# The Greatest Commandment

## Paper Heart Chain Instructions

1

Cut a strip of paper approximately 2 inches by 10 inches.

*(Or use the template provided on the next page.)*



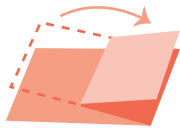
2

Fold it in half as shown.



3

Fold the top flap in half to the right.



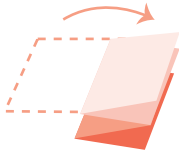
4

Turn it over, with the three folded section beneath as shown.



5

Fold the top flap in half to the right.



6

Fold the top flap in half again towards the fold.



7

Flip over and fold the top flap in half toward the fold.



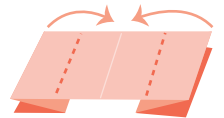
8

Open the center fold like a book, with the smaller folds underneath as shown.



9

Fold the sides of three layers in to meet the center fold.



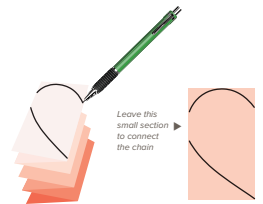
10

Fold the center fold back to complete the accordion folds.



11

Draw half of a heart, making sure to leave a small space on the left as shown.



12

Cut along the line you drew, and unfold your heart chain!





Jesus replied:  
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 heart and with all your soul and with  
 all your mind." This is the first and  
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*Matthew 22:37-38*

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