

## The Greatest Commandment

### Bible Portion: Mark 12:28-34

28 One of the teachers of the law came and heard them debating. Noticing that Jesus had given them a good answer, he asked him, "Of all the commandments, which is the most important?"

29 "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.[a] 30 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'[b] 31 The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'[c] There is no commandment greater than these."

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Business world classifies the leaders as 'Big Picture People' and the 'Details People' – We can classify ourselves, our colleagues, bosses or even family members in these two buckets generally. The world needs both - Whether you have good attention to detail or whether you can see the big picture easily and clearly is generally part of your personality. There is nothing right or wrong about it. Some jobs demand the details (e.g. Finance, teachers, Project Managers) where as some situations (e.g. strategic decisions) look for the big picture.

Today's passage is similar to the passage [Mark 10:17-31] - Jesus' Encounter with a Rich Man' - It is very clear who asked the question 'Rich Man' and the answer is also very clear "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God". The passage [Mark 12: 28 34] is usually referred as the 'Great Commandment – Love' and we tend to overlook who asked the question – "One of the teachers of the law".

As you can now imagine this is a profession which is closely related in dissecting the laws : "Details people" tend to overlook the 'big picture' - He might be debating situations with the students what is right/ what is wrong and also involved in real life trials. His intent is very clear– what should he tell his students / people? What is the overarching principles behind the laws; assuming the 10 commandments is used as the rule book. Based on the interactions, we can assume he is a good man and had caught up in real life situations where he was helpless, but to follow the rules / Law. (An example of such situation is given in John 8:1-11 - Throw the Stone to Woman)

Jesus answer is very clear in consolidating the 10 commandments into 2 – Love God and Love your neighbor as yourself. [It somehow coincides with the Pareto Principle (also known as 80-20 rule).

Law is very clear: Stealing bread for hunger is a crime. But in some cases Corporations get away with the same Law (lack of evidence etc.). This passage reminds us to look at 'Love' as the greatest commandments which should supersede any other law – it is not easy. It is easy to convince ourselves and others with the rule book saying "him or her betrayed me" or "Did not do what they were supposed to do", but hard to forget all that by saying I love him/her/ them as myself – Let's try to be like this teacher;

Jesus assures us by stating this:

**<sup>34</sup> He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God."**