

### **Love God, love your neighbor ...**

This is the biggest, brightest “arrow.” But for some people this doesn’t seem beefy enough, too simple, too liberal, too easy. I’m not sure what the problem is because Jesus is very clear on this point in Matthew 22.36 when he was asked: “Which is the most important commandment in the Law?”

Let me give you a possibly different way of looking at his answer that may help you understand its significance. The Law is the writings of Moses, the first five books of the Old Testament. Take your Bible in your hands and separate the pages that contain the Law and hold them between your index finger and your thumb. All of those pages, all the writings and teachings contained on those pages Jesus squeezed down to one sentence: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

But it gets even better. Now take your Bible, and beginning with Isaiah through to the end of the Old Testament with Malachi, hold those pages between your fingers. Jesus continues to tell them that, yes, love God is the greatest and first command, but there is a second one like it. “Love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two hang all the Law and the Prophets.

Can you see what has happened? Jesus squeezed two sentences from all these pages of Scripture and said basically, “If you want to know what God is about then get this.” With the skill of a master craftsman, the carpenter from Nazareth presented the essence of God in two brief phrases. Love God, love your neighbor.