

Matthew: Think About the Christ

Discussion Guide for September 5 and 6, 2026

Summary

A lawyer asks Jesus which commandment is greatest, hoping to trap Him. Jesus answers with the Shema: love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. Then Jesus adds that loving your neighbor as yourself is also important. These two commands sum up the entire Law of Moses. Jesus then asks the Pharisees a question about the Messiah that they cannot answer. The passage challenges us to love God with our whole being and to recognize who Jesus really is.

Ice Breaker

Have you ever tried to catch someone with a "gotcha" question, or had someone try it on you? What was that like, and how did it compare to a genuine question asked in good faith?

Key Verses

1. Matthew 22:34-46
2. Deuteronomy 6:4-5 (the Shema)
3. Leviticus 19:18 (love your neighbor)
4. Psalm 110:1 (David calls the Messiah "Lord")
5. 2 Samuel 7:12-13 (God's promise to David)

Discussion Questions

1. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind: your passions, your identity, and your worldview. Of those three, which comes most naturally to you, and which is hardest to genuinely give to God?
2. Ruth Haley Barton is quoted as saying that when God has your soul, "your security isn't tied to your performance, your platform, or the world's applause." Where do you tend to root your identity: in your career, your achievements, other people's opinions, or something else?
3. Jesus taught that loving people is the direct evidence of loving God; you can't fully separate the two. Is there someone in your life right now who would be a concrete way to "love God by loving people" this week?
4. The religious leaders expected the Messiah to be a political or military conqueror, and that expectation kept them from recognizing Jesus even as He taught and performed

miracles in front of them. What expectations or assumptions might keep people (including us) from recognizing who Jesus truly is today?

5. The passage points to Jesus as both fully God and fully man, able to die a human death and conquer it with divine power. How does holding both truths together change the way you understand what Jesus did for you?

Life Application

This week, take five minutes each day to reflect on one of the three areas Jesus named: heart, soul, or mind. Ask: What holds my deepest passion? Where is my identity actually rooted? What is shaping how I see the world -- Scripture or the culture around me? Then identify one specific, tangible way to love someone else as an act of worship to God, and follow through on it before the week ends.

Key Takeaways

- 1.** Jesus summarizes the entirety of the Law as essentially two commands: love God completely, and love others as yourself. The second command flows directly out of the first command.
- 2.** Loving God isn't just a belief held in the mind; it involves our deepest passions (heart), our core identity (soul), and our whole way of seeing the world (mind).
- 3.** Jesus is both fully human and fully divine, a truth the religious leaders couldn't reconcile, but one that is essential to the gospel: only a Savior who is both could die in our place and conquer death for us.
- 4.** The real question every person must answer isn't a theological trap but a personal one: do you recognize who Jesus is?