

# SERIES OVERVIEW



The “GOAT” series is grounded in the book of Matthew and helps teenagers see how Jesus is the GOAT (Greatest of All Time) and challenges them to live out three of his greatest teachings. Drawing from popular current debates over who or what is the GOAT, students will encounter the authority of Jesus and some of his GREAT teachings. Throughout the series, there are opportunities to cast vision for your youth ministry as well as give students practical ways to put the Greatest Commandments, servant leadership, and the Great Commission into practice.

### Week 1: The GREATEST Commandment(s)

Jesus shows he’s the GOAT as he sums up all of scripture in the two Greatest Commandments we can live out in as a church and as individuals.

### Week 2: The Path to GREATNESS

Greatness requires elite skills, strength, confidence, and dominance - and there must be clear evidence that someone is superior to everyone else in that given category. With that idea in your mind, let’s look at Jesus and see how the actual GOAT defines greatness.

### Week 3: The GREAT Commission

Jesus commissions us to reach this world, and he walks in walk in co-mission with us.

## Coleader Teaching Format

### CAPTURE

#### Why should students pay attention to and care about your message?

Goal: To captivate students’ interest and encourage them to actively engage and learn.

*“The tongue of the wise makes knowledge appealing...” Proverbs 15:2*

### SCRIPTURE

#### What does God’s Word say?

Goal: To foster a deeper understanding of Scripture among students.

*“All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.” 2 Timothy 3:16*

### INSIGHTS

#### What might this Scripture mean?

Goal: To present key insights in a way that resonates with teenagers.

*“The teaching of your word gives light; so even the simple can understand.” Psalm 119:130*

### ACTION

#### How could we live this out?

Goal: To assist teenagers in implementing God’s Word into their daily actions.

*“But don’t just listen to God’s word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.” James 2:17*

### DISCUSS

#### What can we learn from one another?

Goal: To foster meaningful discussions and encourage active participation among students.

*“As iron sharpens iron, so a friend sharpens a friend.” Proverbs 18:15*

Each teaching comes with two teaching options: (1) an outline, and (2) full manuscript that is flavored with illustrations, humor, photos, videos, object-lessons, and/or stories. All scriptures are NLT unless otherwise noted. Feel free to customize to your own translation preference with blank slides and Word doc.

# Teaching Guide

## Week 1 GOAT: The Greatest Commandments



### Big Idea

Jesus is the GOAT (greatest of all time) for giving us the two Greatest Commandments we can live out.

### Scripture

Matthew 22:18-40; Exodus 20:1-17

[Teacher note: please refer to Coleader Teaching Format document for a better understanding of the five teaching sections used. Also, our prayer is that you will feel tremendous freedom to adapt this content to best fit your unique context. No one knows your students better than you, so make this content your own.]

### CAPTURE ► (Why should students pay attention to and care about your message?)

*[Show slide]*

Who here enjoys a good debate? Who doesn't?

It's common for a debate to break out when naming someone or something the Greatest of All Time (GOAT) in a specific category. The categories are essentially endless. Who is the GOAT superhero? Who is the GOAT president of all time? Who is the GOAT inventor? Who is the GOAT racecar driver? I imagine there's a GOAT ballerina. The debate I hear a lot revolves around basketball and whether the GOAT is Michael Jordon or LeBron James. On and on we can go. The GOAT debate I'm most passionate about revolves around the best chicken sandwich. Is it Popeyes or Chick-fil-A?

*[Show slide]*

I want to take a quick poll.

Who says Popeyes?

Who says Chick-fil-A?

Who says someone else?

Who doesn't care?

Who is vegan? Can you even use the word GOAT as a vegan? Okay, never mind.

For me, it's not even a debate. It's Popeyes, hands down. Do not argue with me on this.

Now, although I know I am 100% right, and there is really no debate to be had, I know that those of you who say Chick-fil-A is the GOAT will probably say YOU'RE 100% right and that I'M 100% wrong. And when two people disagree so strongly, there's often no room for debate. And that's why it's almost impossible to change someone's mind in this kind of argument.

Even though I'm sure I'm right, I will at least admit there is room for debate. In fact, it's tough to find a "no contest" GOAT debate. Today, we are beginning a three-week series to examine three statements about greatness from the greatest person in human history, Jesus. In my mind, and I hope in yours as well, there is no debate about it. He, and He alone, is the actual GOAT.

### SCRIPTURE ► What does God's Word say?

The statement we're looking at today occurred during a debate between Jesus and some of His listeners. In the book of Matthew, we read that buzz had started to spread about Jesus. Speaking in sports terms, Jesus was on a "winning streak" of miracles, healings, gaining followers, and teaching mind-blowing truths. Almost everywhere He went, people were murmuring that He might be the Messiah – meaning that He was the one, the only one, sent by God to restore Israel and save the world. To be clear, that's not just a big deal. That's GOAT talk.

Just like any moment when someone is establishing elite status, it is inevitable that haters would rise up. Here in Matthew Chapter 22, we see that Jesus' haters indeed rose against Him. These haters were religious leaders of the time and were called Pharisees and Sadducees. Jesus and His ministry threatened them, so they tried to trick Jesus and snap His winning streak by beating him in debate, but Jesus saw the trap coming from a mile away:

*[Show slide]*

18 But Jesus knew their evil motives. "You hypocrites!" he said. "Why are you trying to trap me?"  
(Matthew 22:18 – NLT)

And not only did He catch them off guard, His answers were even better than they could have expected.

*[Show slide]*

22 His reply amazed them, and they went away. (Matthew 22:22 – NLT)

As the Pharisees pulled back to regroup, the Sadducees took their turn. I'm not going to dive into too many of the details, but I want to point to how the crowd responded to Jesus' answer.

*[Show slide]*

33 When the crowds heard him, they were astounded at his teaching. (Matthew 22:33 - NLT)

As I read this, I get this mental picture of the crowd responding like the student section at a high school basketball game right after their big man blocks a shot and launches the opposing team's ball into the stands.

*[Show slide]*

Jaws dropped. Hands on heads or over mouths. Shouts and screams. All because Jesus wholly owned the Sadducees and only further established His GOAT-ness.

Not ready to give up, even though they should have, the Pharisees decided to take another shot at Jesus, and this is the passage I want to dive into together:

*[Show slide]*

34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees with his reply, they met together to question him again. 35 One of them, an expert in religious law, tried to trap him with this question: 36 "Teacher, which is the most important commandment in the law of Moses?" (Matthew 22:34-36 - NLT)

This was a WILD question on so many levels. First, "the Law" that this expert Pharisee referred to is the first five books of the Old Testament (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). It sounds like a lot (and it was), but there are 613 commandments that God gave the Israelites in those first five books. 613! And this Pharisee asked Jesus to pick out the most important commandment.

So, the question was the set-up for the trap. If Jesus answered this, He ran the risk of upsetting people by saying that there were commands of God that were more important than others. But if He didn't answer, somebody might call His GOAT status into question.

I'd like to think there was a dramatic pause where the Pharisees thought they had Him. They totally believed that Jesus was caught in their trap, but nope! Look at this:

[Show slide]

37 Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind." 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: "Love your neighbor as yourself." 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments. (Matthew 22:37-40 – NLT)

It might be hard to hear it in these few verses, but this was a total mic-drop moment. In this response, it was game over. Debate done. Jesus ignored the call for one commandment by finding a way to tie every book of the Old Testament (from Genesis to Malachi) into these two commandments. Love God. Love others.

### INSIGHTS ► What might this scripture mean?

I love this entire chapter of Matthew (22), and I hope you'll read it this week. As I was studying this and thinking about you and praying for our time together, I thought there were a few things I wanted you to know:

[Show slide]

#### 1. Jesus knew the Scriptures by heart.

I would have been toast if I were in Jesus' shoes and had to boil all of those 613 commandments down into one or two. Without a doubt, I would have missed something for sure. But Jesus? Nope. He nailed it on the first try.

But how could He possibly do it? He could do it because He knew the Scriptures backward and forward. But even more than that, He knew the heart of the God who inspired those Scriptures.

The Pharisees were more concerned with memorizing each command, but Jesus showed them that the law was about more than just knowing the commands. It's about understanding the heart behind the commands.

And Jesus proved this by how He worded His answer exactly. Did you notice the action word that both commands had in common? If not, here it is:

[Show slide]

#### 2. Jesus joined the two commandments with one central word: love.

Although these two commandments were fundamental to the people of Israel, this moment was the first time in Scripture that we see them being mentioned together. To take it one step further, Jesus linked these two commandments together when He said, **A second is equally important.** Let's take a look:

[Show slide]

37 Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 **A second is equally important:** ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:37-40 – NLT)

At first glance, the two commands may appear to address different topics. The first is focused on loving God, while the second is focused on loving others. But a closer look removes the differences between them. The action we are to take is one and the same: we are to **LOVE**.

[Show slide]

37 Jesus replied, “You must **love** the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: ‘**Love** your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.” Matthew 22:37-40 (NLT)

Let’s make sure we understand this love we are talking about. It isn’t a romantic feeling, and it’s not the kind of love we talk about when you say, “I love tacos.” The type of love mentioned here is far deeper. And we know that because of how Jesus describes how we are to love:

[Show slide]

37 Jesus replied, “You must love the Lord your God with **all** your heart, **all** your soul, and **all** your mind.’ 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 A second is equally important: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ 40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.” (Matthew 22:37-40 – NLT)

We are to love God with **all** our heart, **all** our soul, and **all** our mind. It is about total commitment to God with every part of our being.

Second, the call to love our neighbor states that we should love them in the same way we are to love ourselves. And we know from other Scriptures that our neighbor is everyone we encounter. Jesus calls us to look out for the people around us and ensure their needs are met.

And when Jesus combined these two commands into one, He wanted us to know that it’s impossible to love God if we don’t love others. The two go hand in hand.

And the third reason why these two verses are significant is that, in them...

[Show slide]

### 3. Jesus summed up all of Scripture in these two commandments.

Have you ever tried to explain something incredibly complex in just a couple of short sentences?

*[Show slide]*

Try this out. In two sentences or less:

- Explain the rules of soccer and how to play.
- Tell me everything I need to understand about your family history and dynamics.
- Sum up the entire plotline of the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

*[Teacher note: if your group dynamic allows for feedback, have some students try this out. As they try, ask them questions that may not be addressed inside their explanation.]*

It's not easy, right? In fact, I asked ChatGPT (artificial intelligence) to try to sum up soccer rules and how to play in two sentences or less.

*[Show slide]*

This was the answer:

Soccer, also known as football, is played with two teams of 11 players each, aiming to score goals by maneuvering a round ball into the opponent's net while using only their feet or any part of their body except their hands. The objective is to outscore the opposing team within a designated time period, with teamwork, skillful dribbling, passing, and strategic positioning being key elements of the game.

That's a decent response, but those are two very long sentences! It's clear, but it doesn't come anywhere near giving me enough details to go out and play a game of soccer:

- Are there boundaries?
- What size is the net?
- How long are the "time periods"?
- What about offsides, corner kicks, positions, and yellow cards?

Honestly, I don't even have enough detail to run a Pee Wee soccer league!

This is what makes Jesus' statement (in verse 40) SO AWESOME, where he summed up 613 commandments into two commands.

*[Show slide]*

40 The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments.  
(Matthew 22:40 – NLT)

He meant here that every commandment in the Old Testament could point back to one of these two commandments: to love God and others.

But is that really true?

*[Show slide]*

Let's quickly test it by looking at the Ten Commandments that God delivered to Moses in Exodus 20:1-21.

[Teacher note: These commandments have been paraphrased to help teach through them more quickly. Also, check out the slides to see how they build out to help you drive this point home.]

*[Show slide]*

Look at the first four commandments:

1. You should have no other gods before God.
2. You should not make any idols.
3. You should not misuse God's name in vain.
4. Honor the sabbath by keeping it holy.

Consider why a person would want to obey any of these commandments. As you follow them, you will do so because you *[Show slide]* love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

*[Show slide]*

And here are the last six commandments:

5. Honor your father and mother.
6. Do not murder.
7. Do not commit adultery.
8. Do not steal.
9. Do not lie.
10. Do not covet.

The reason to follow any of these commandments will be rooted in the fact that you *[Show slide]* love your neighbor as yourself.

So, it really is true! All the commandments from Genesis to Malachi are based on one of these two commandments. Everything boils down to loving God and loving others.

Now, I'm going to take it a step further. Here, Jesus' reference to "the law and the prophets" covers every command of Scripture given up to the point where He was debating the religious leaders. The New Testament had not been written yet. And as we find other commandments in the New Testament given to followers of Jesus, we see that they also point back to loving God and loving others.

Jesus summed up the calling of those who have put their trust in Him as Savior into those two actions: Love Him with everything and love those around you. The GOAT makes it so clear. Okay, now that we know, what do we do with it?

**ACTION ► How can we live this out?**

As we go through this series, I will always offer you a challenge to put into practice every week.

So with this passage, I think it's good to KNOW what Jesus said, but we should take it a step further and decide what we will DO about it.

I have a few ideas for you:

*[Show slide]*

**1. Commit to loving God whenever we meet together.**

My prayer is that you would come to see this gathering as a safe and accessible space for us to express our love for God openly. And often, we do that by singing songs to God together, thanking Him for His greatness, faithfulness, holiness, and grace while also expressing our need for Him.

But loving God through worship isn't just about showing up and being present when we meet. Worship begins with the attitude that lives in your heart. So, will you intentionally choose to express your love and gratitude to God when we worship together? Because your worship requires your willingness. So every time we arrive here for youth group, let's choose to love God through the act of worship.

*[Show slide]*

**2. Commit to loving others whenever we meet together.**

Each week at youth group, we have a lot of opportunities to show love to each other. You can show love by introducing yourself to someone new to our group, by making an effort to grow your friendships with people here, and by your encouragement, support, and prayers for the people in your groups.

So, let's be sure not just to show up here but to step up and live out these two commandments.

And as important as it is to love God and love others while you're here, I think we need to...

*[Show slide]*

**3. Commit to loving God and loving others when you leave here.**

Living out these two commandments goes beyond our meeting times together. It extends to your home, school, job, and sports and to all your activities.

Ask God to help you see ways to love Him, and ask Him to help you see practical ways to love others in your life. Pray for this every day. The possibilities are endless, and they're doable for all of us.

Showing love for God can be as simple as worshipping God through singing while you're in your bedroom, spending some quiet time each day with God through reading your Bible and praying, or being obedient to something you know God wants you to do.

Showing love for your neighbor can look like paying for someone's lunch, texting a friend that you are praying for them, or simply giving someone the gift of your time and helping them with something or really listening to them when they need to talk.

I want to invite you to take up a challenge with me. I want to be this "loving God and loving others" type of leader. Like you, I need opportunities to practice. So, over the next 14 days, we will do something called

*[Show slide]*

"14 Days of Love." Think of it as a 14-day journal designed to help us be more purposeful about loving the people around us.

*[Teacher note: you'll find the "14 Days of Love" devotional/workbook at the bottom of the coleader session flow for Week 1. In it, students will be directed and challenged to engage in practical ways to love God and others, along with space to journal their thoughts each day.]*

I'm looking forward to hearing your stories about how you all put loving God and loving others into practice! And I look forward to seeing you all here again next week, where we'll continue to look closely at the GOAT, Jesus.

*[Close in prayer.]*

### **DISCUSS ► (What can we learn from one another?)**

*[Note: These discussion questions are designed to be used in a Small Group setting. We have also included a phone-friendly PDF version of the discussion questions in the Small Group section of this series in Coleader.co.]*

- 1.** We have to do it, but I'm putting a timer on the clock for 2 minutes. Who's the GOAT? Michael Jordan or LeBron James (or pick a GOAT argument that resonates with your group)? Once the clock hits 0, we are moving on and dropping this question.
- 2.** Who is someone you've met that was just dominant at something (aka a GOAT in a specific area)?
- 3.** What are some reasons why Christians can easily say Jesus is the GOAT?
- 4.** Which is harder for you to find ways to put the Greatest Commandment into practice? Loving God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind, or loving your neighbor as yourself? Why did you find it harder?

5. What is an area where you struggle to figure out what God wants you to do? How could The Greatest Commandments of Jesus help you determine your next best step?
6. How do you feel about worship music, and how could viewing it as a way to live out the commandment to love God with all your being affect how you view it?
7. Who is willing to take the “14 Days of Love” challenge? How can we encourage each other in this journey?

[Tip: Set up a group text where everyone commits to text the group by the end of the day if they've finished the challenges and give a brief report on their experiences.]