

Mark 12: 28-31

When I interact with my young grandchildren I often wonder what they will remember about me. Especially when it comes to the twin boys Porter and Lochlan born just a month ago. At my age, like so many others of the baby boom generation, I will be lucky to see my grandchildren graduate from high school and hopefully head off to higher education. Getting to see any of them married I expect is a non-starter. So, I find myself wondering what helpful and empowering memories or experiences or interactions will stay with them? What will they say or think or feel at my funeral? Will they even come?

As we age we begin to think about our legacy. What have we done with our life? How will we be remembered? What is the personal legacy we hope to leave for others? Is there a legacy of love tucked in the somewhere?

As Christians, we know that we are to live the **Jesus Creed: *Love God, love neighbour and love oneself.*** We are to leave a legacy of love. We are to engage this creed, this legacy **with all our passion, prayer, intelligence and energy.** Or in the more traditional words, **with all our heart, soul, mind and strength.**

Now, in past times, when people heard this directive ‘**with all our**’, it meant devotion, being totally devoted to something or someone, to the exclusion may other things. And being devout was something to spire to. Remember when devotion was not a bad word?

Then the directive ‘**with all our**’ changed in our modern era to mean being totally engaged. **We** were focussed and committed right here, right now! No distractions! No hesitations!

Now, in our post-modern world, the directive ‘**with all our**’ seems to mean being obsessive compulsive. It means being somewhat out of control, locked in or hooked on something or some behaviour for good or ill.

So where does this leave us today with our gospel teaching of ‘**love God with ALL our passion, prayer, intellect and energy.**’ How do we insure that we are leaving a legacy of love? Let’s go back to our scripture.

Notice, **Jesus** puts two totalities, together in this answer.

First, it is the ‘**with ALL our**’ and then, it is the full list of inner human abilities; ‘**passion, prayer, intellect and energy**’. Or **heart, soul, mind and strength.**

Let's imagine four big red thermometers like the ones we use to measure or track fundraising drives.

***Our first thermometer is the Passion Thermometer. How are we registering on our Passion Thermometer?*** How passionate are we about life and loving one another?

***The second is the Soulful/Prayer Thermometer. How are we registering on our Soulful/Prayer Thermometer?***

How often are we caring and compassionate; holding people up to the light and love of God's presence?

***The third is our Intellect Thermometer. How are we registering on our Intellect Thermometer?***

How often are our thoughts and ideas focussed on the well-being of the rest of the world?

***And finally, the fourth is Our Energy Thermometer. How are we registering on our Energy Thermometer?***

How much energy do we expend and experience while caring for self and others? Notice where your strengths and weaknesses lie.

### **Application for Today**

Once a week, take a minute in your mind's eye to check yourself out on these thermometers. When we love **God** and seek to leave a legacy of love, we become Saints in the lives of those around us. Amen.

### **Mark 12: 32-34**

It has been my observation, that we church goers tend to believe that there is a very fine line between self-love and narcissism. So we shy away from self-love as much as we can. We also tend to believe that self-care too easily slips into selfishness. So we avoid self-care more than we should. How then do we hear **Jesus'** injunction to "***Love others as you love yourself.***"

Back in **Jesus'** day, loving self was surviving in dangerous times. With no social safety net, life was always at risk. So self-love was self-care in terms of food and shelter and belonging to a group.

In the modern era, loving self meant self-actualization through career, family and community: Upward mobility being the greatest good.

In the post-modern era, loving one-self can mean healthy eating and regularly visiting the gym or spa days and get-a-ways.

These changing understandings of self-love or self-care have very different actions attached to them.

To love others as yourself in **Jesus** day was to offer life giving, life saving, life protecting support.

To love others as yourself in the **modern era** was to provide opportunities for growth, achievement and upward mobility.

To love others as yourself in our **post-modern era** means to offer folks a break, a rest, a time out, a healthy meal or activity.

What does this mean for we Church goers today?

To love others as yourself means to have deep respect for life and the living.

**Deep respect and reverence** for your life and the lives of those around you.

Known and unknown.

I am often reminded of the child's tee-shirt which reads, "***I Know I'm somebody 'cause God don't make no junk.***" Or the sign I saw at a counter in a Canada Post Office, "***Be patient, God isn't finish with me yet.***" We can't love anyone without the **deep respect** of **acceptance** and acceptance goes hand in hand with **forgiveness**.

The **Jesus Creed: Love God, love neighbour, love self** emphasizes the positive. He expects each of us to be ready, willing and able to accept and forgive oneself and others. It is not a maybe.

Now, let's go back in our mind's eye to the image of the bright red fundraising thermometers again. This time the thermometer registers **Deep Respect**.

So, how are we registering on the **Deep Respect Thermometer** towards **oneself**?

How are we registering on the **Deep Respect Thermometer** toward **others, the people we know**?

How are we registering on the **Deep Respect Thermometer** toward **strangers, the people we only interact with briefly**?

How are we registering on the **Deep Respect Thermometer** toward **the unknown people we will never meet**?

Notice where your strengths and weakness lie!

The **Jesus Creed** emphasizes the positive, the **deep respect** of **acceptance** and **forgiveness**. This is how we leave a legacy of love.

### **Application for Today**

At least once a week take your Deep Respect Thermometer readings. Deep respect for self + others = **God's New Day, a legacy of Love**. Amen.

## Meditative Prayer

Let's settle into the Divine Mystery in the midst of life.  
Enter that prayerful place deep within.  
Let the music wash over you and flow through you.

Who are the Saints in your life?  
Who are the people who have left a legacy of love for you and others?  
Name some of these saints in your heart.

Recall

the accepting moments,  
the forgiving embraces,  
the respectful responses.

Feel the affirmation in those experiences.

Become aware of how your loved one, or loved ones  
were saints to others,

Remember

the accepting moments,  
the forgiving embraces,  
the respectful responses.

See, and feel how they were saints to you,  
with their gratitude,  
their deep respect,  
their allowing love.

Now, see yourself passing this legacy of love  
on to others;

in gratitude  
with deep respect  
with an allowing love.

Allow yourself to let go of self-centredness  
and experience Love-centeredness.

Be a legacy of love.  
Let it be so.

And now, let us join together and pray as Jesus taught us saying:  
**Our Father, who art in heaven...**