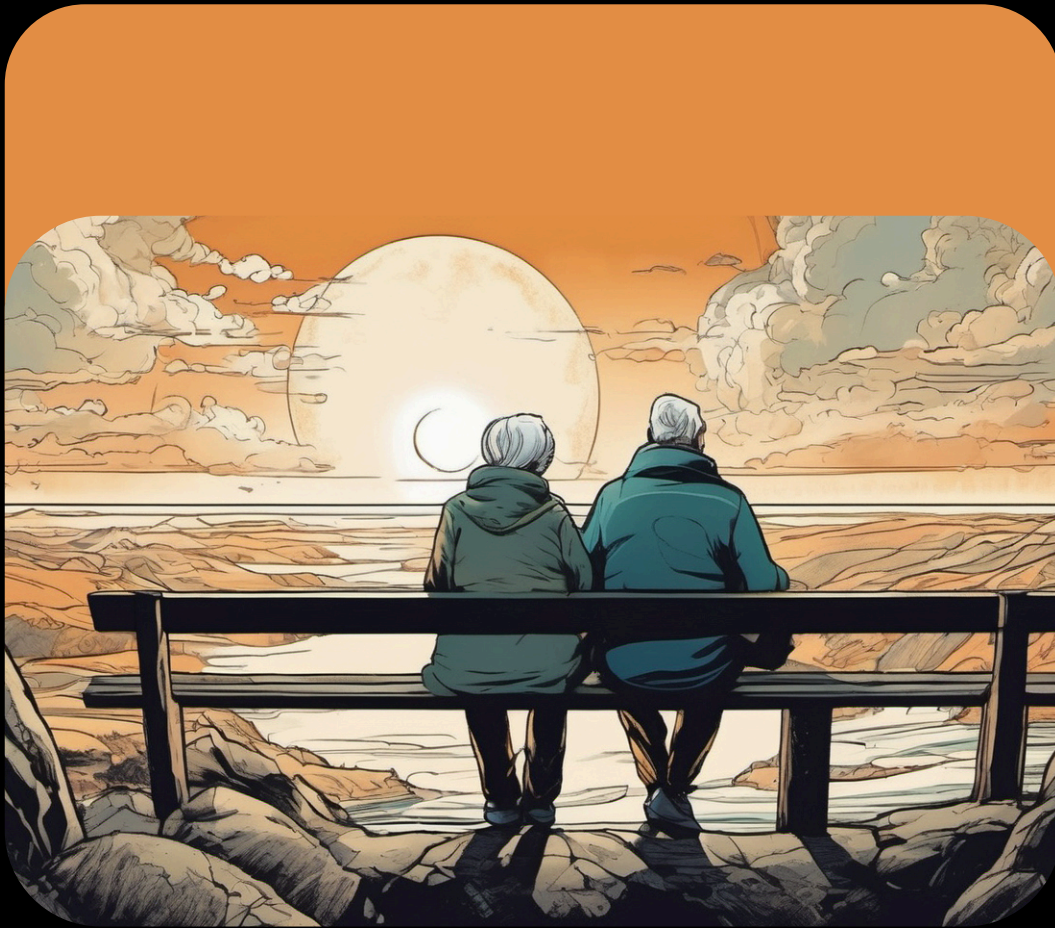


LIVING AS CITIZENS OF HEAVEN



BRINGING PRAISE, GLORY AND HONOR TO THE KING OF HEAVEN



Citizen ... a legally recognized subject; a person who has the legal right to belong to a particular country.

1. As true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ our citizenship is in heaven.

- (Philippians 3:20 ESV) **But our citizenship is in heaven**, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.

A citizen is a legally recognized subject; a person who has the legal right to belong to a particular country.

A. We are fellow citizens with the saints.

- (Ephesians 2:19 ESV) So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, **but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God**.

B. Our country of residence is a heavenly one and our city of residence has been prepared by God.

- (Hebrews 11:16 ESV) But as it is, they desire **a better country**, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, **for he has prepared for them a city**.

C. Our city is one that is to come so we do not have our minds set on earthly things which would cause us to walk as enemies of the cross.

- (Hebrews 13:14 ESV) **For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come**.
- (Philippians 3:18–19 ESV) **For many**, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, **walk as enemies of the cross of Christ**. 19 **Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things**.
- (Matthew 7:13 ESV) Enter by the narrow gate. **For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction**, and **those who enter by it are many**.

D. The Apostle Paul makes a very dramatic and powerful contrast between 3:18-19 and 3:20-4:1.

- He contrasts enemies of the cross whose minds are set on earthly things with ...
- Those whose citizenship is in heaven whose minds are set on the return of our Lord and who stand firm ...
 - (Philippians 3:20 ESV) **But our citizenship is in heaven**, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - (Philippians 4:1 ESV) Therefore, my brothers, whom I love and long for, my joy and crown, **stand firm thus in the Lord**, my beloved.

2. Citizens of heaven honor the King of heaven because all glory is due his name.

- (1 Timothy 1:17 ESV) **To the King of the ages**, immortal, invisible, the only God, **be honor and glory forever and ever**. Amen.
- (1 Corinthians 10:31 ESV) So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God**.
- (Romans 16:27 ESV) **To the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ!** Amen.
- (Philippians 4:20 ESV) **To our God and Father be glory forever and ever**. Amen.
- (Jude 24–25 ESV) Now to him who is able to keep you from stumbling and to present you blameless before the presence of his glory with great joy, 25 **to the only God**, our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, **be glory, majesty, dominion, and authority, before all time and now and forever**. Amen.
- (Revelation 5:13 ESV) And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, **“To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!”**

3. Citizens of heaven honor the King of heaven because he is God and as God he is Sovereign LORD over our lives and over all creation.

A. The LORD is God and there is no other.

- (Isaiah 45:5a, 6–7 ESV) **I am the LORD, and there is no other, besides me there is no God; ... 6 (that people may know)**, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the LORD, and there is no other. 7 I form light and create darkness; I make well-being and create calamity; **I am the LORD, who does all these things**.

B. Citizens of heaven know, as did Job and Paul, that the LORD can do all things [his sovereignty] and cause all things to work together for good [his providence].

- (Job 42:2 ESV) **I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted**.
- (Romans 8:28 ESV) **And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good**, for those who are called according to his purpose.

C. Everything the LORD does is right and just.

- (Daniel 4:37 ESV) Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, **praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just**; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Citizens of heaven praise and exalt and honor the King of heaven from a place of peace, quietness and trust that overflows from their absolute conviction that everything God does is the right and just thing to do.

- (Isaiah 32:17 ESV) And the effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and trust forever.
- (Daniel 4:37 NIV) Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the King of heaven, **because everything he does is right and all his ways are just**. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble.
- (Psalm 145:17 ESV) The LORD is **righteous in all his ways** and kind in all his works.
- (Deuteronomy 32:4 ESV) The Rock, his work is perfect, for **all his ways are justice**. A God of faithfulness and without iniquity, **just and upright is he**.
- (Revelation 15:3 ESV) And they sing the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, "Great and amazing are your deeds, O Lord God the Almighty! **Just and true are your ways, O King of the nations!**"
- (Hosea 14:9 LSB) Whoever is wise, so let him discern these things; Whoever is discerning, let him know them. **For the ways of Yahweh are right**, And the righteous will walk in them, But transgressors will stumble in them.

4. Citizens of heaven relate to the King of heaven in all things and in every way with all our heart.

A. We trust him with all our heart.

- (Proverbs 3:5–7 ESV) **Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding**. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. 7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil.

B. We seek him with all our heart.

- (Deuteronomy 4:29 ESV) But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him **with all your heart** and with all your soul.
- (Jeremiah 29:13 ESV) You will seek me and find me, when you seek me **with all your heart**.

C. We love him with all our heart and commit ourselves to his word with all our heart.

- (Deuteronomy 6:5–6 NLT) And you must love the LORD your God **with all your heart**, all your soul, and all your strength. 6 And you must **commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands** that I am giving you today.

D. We serve him with all our heart.

- (Deuteronomy 10:12 ESV) And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, **to serve the LORD your God with all your heart** and with all your soul.
- (Deuteronomy 11:13 ESV) And if you will indeed obey my commandments that I command you today, to love the LORD your God, **and to serve him with all your heart** and with all your soul.

E. We carefully obey and live by his words with all our heart.

- (Deuteronomy 26:16 ESV) This day the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and rules. You shall therefore **be careful to do them with all your heart** and with all your soul.
- (Joshua 22:5 ESV) **Only be very careful to observe the commandment** and the law that Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways and to keep his commandments and to cling to him and to serve him **with all your heart** and with all your soul.

F. We repent of our sins with all our heart.

- (Joel 2:12–13 ESV) "Yet even now," declares the LORD, "return to me **with all your heart**, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning; 13 and rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and

merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster.

G. We draw near to God with a true heart—our whole heart—in full assurance of faith.

- (Hebrews 10:22a ESV) Let us draw near **with a true heart in full assurance of faith.**

H. If we do not invest our whole heart in our relationship with God, then our hearts will be deceived and we will turn aside to serve other gods.

- (Deuteronomy 11:16 ESV) **Take care lest your heart be deceived,** and you turn aside and serve other gods and worship them.

I. The person who pursues a relationship with God with less than his whole heart will ultimately refuse God's words and stubbornly follow his own heart.

- (Jeremiah 13:10 ESV) This evil people, **who refuse to hear my words,** who **stubbornly follow their own heart** and have gone after other gods to serve them and worship them, shall be like this loincloth, which is good for nothing.

J. Keeping our hearts from God in religion is dangerous beyond imagination as this person further deepens his or her deceit.

The great deception for many worshipers is that the mere outward worship of God creates a powerful delusion of closeness to God when in reality the person's heart remains far away.

Here is how this can be ... The person is speaking and singing powerful truth about his Creator with words from his mouth and through his lips.

- (Jeremiah 12:2 ESV) You plant them, and they take root; they grow and produce fruit; **you are near in their mouth and far from their heart.**
- (Isaiah 29:13 ESV) And the Lord said: "Because this people **draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips,** **while their hearts are far from me,** and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men.

CONCLUSION: Why the great commandment is the greatest and most important commandment ... and why it should come with a warning label ...

A. The choice is not between having a good, better or best relationship with God depending on how much we love God.

B. The choice is between loving God in this way or having no relationship with God whatsoever.

- (Matthew 16:25 ESV) **For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**

C. Loving God in this way is the only way to have a right relationship with our Creator and Redeemer.

- (Matthew 22:35–38 ESV) And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 **This is the great and first commandment.**

D. Anything less than loving God in this way is sin because the person is disobeying the command that the Lord said is the greatest and most important.

E. Three things are true in the life of the false worshiper who loves God less than what God commands.

- (Isaiah 64:6 LSB) For all of us have become like one who is unclean, **And all our righteous deeds are like a filthy garment; And all of us wither like a leaf, And our iniquities, like the wind, carry us away.**

i. His superficial religion is false religion and makes him even more impure in the eyes of God than he already was.

ii. What he believes in his deluded mind and heart to be righteous deeds are declared by God to be like a filthy garment.

iii. He withers like a leaf and his sin, like the wind, carries him away from God.

- (Psalm 1:4 LSB) The wicked are not so, **But they are like chaff which the wind drives away.**