

“The teacher of religious law replied, “Well said, Teacher. You have spoken the truth by saying that there is only one God and no other. And I know it is important to love him with all my heart and all my understanding and all my strength, and to love my neighbor as myself. This is more important than to offer all of the burnt offerings and sacrifices required in the law.” Realizing how much the man understood, Jesus said to him, “You are not far from the Kingdom of God.” And after that, no one dared to ask him any more questions.” Mark 12:32-34 NLT

lectio // Mark 12:28-34

How many Rabbi's does it take to screw in a lightbulb on the Sabbath? Five. One to remind the others that God is the creator of light and give thanks. One to get a gentile neighbor to remove the old light. One to get that gentile neighbor to get a new one from storage. One to get the gentile neighbor to install the new light bulb. One to get the gentile neighbor to turn on the light to test it and one to, again, remind the others that God is the eternal light and give thanks. The religious leaders were extremely difficult to reach. They had layers and layers of rules. Here Mark comments that one of them compliments Jesus on his exegete and additional comments on the Shema. But more than just flattery, he also comments from the prophets, a concept that most of the religious leaders had abandoned. God wanted MORE than sin offerings and sacrifices. How could God demand more than the law required? Because the law was only training wheels for learning how to love God and love others. The more was what this teacher focused on... “this is MORE important!” he stated. It was that “more” comment that caught Jesus’ attention and signaled that this religious leader GOT IT. And with that Jesus must have smiled and given the perfect Jewish, Rabbinical compliment, “you’re almost there.” A Jewish Rabbi would never have been so outwardly, brash and direct to say, “you got it!” or “good job!” That would have been insulting to such a smart, hardworking, earnest and honest man of his reputation. Just a wink and a “ah, you’re close” was more than enough. How do I respond to people when they begin to “get it,” “connect the dots,” or make sense of what God is up to? Maybe like Jesus, I can say, with a wink and a smile - keep going!

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Dad,

Even among the religious, there is hope. Even among the layers of law, rules upon rules, you can still reach some by your spirit. Some will hear the words of God and it will cut through years of tradition, rote, and customs. Some will hear your simple words of life and it will be so refreshing, so enlightening, so clean and clutter-free that they will be able to say, “Oh, I get it, the MORE important thing is...” and be on their way to a whole new lighter, brighter experience with you. May I be someone who can bring clarity and life to your words!

contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root