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Scripture: Mark 12:28-34.

Theme: To be a Christian - love God.x

Text: Mark 12:30a --"-thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment."

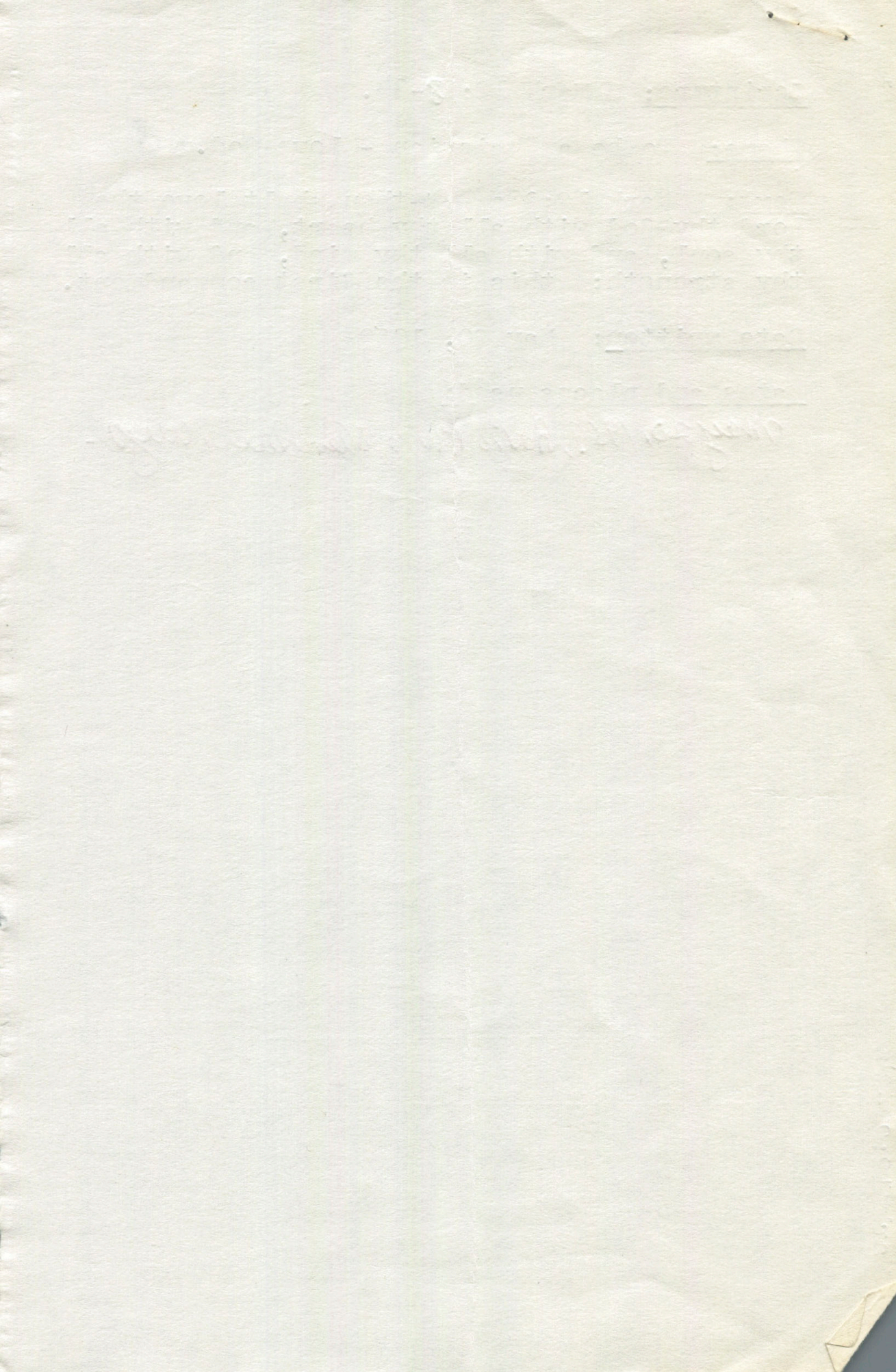
Date written: May 20, 1959

Dates and places used:

*May 20, 1959, Radio KWYO, Sheridan, Wyo.*

Mark 12:29-34



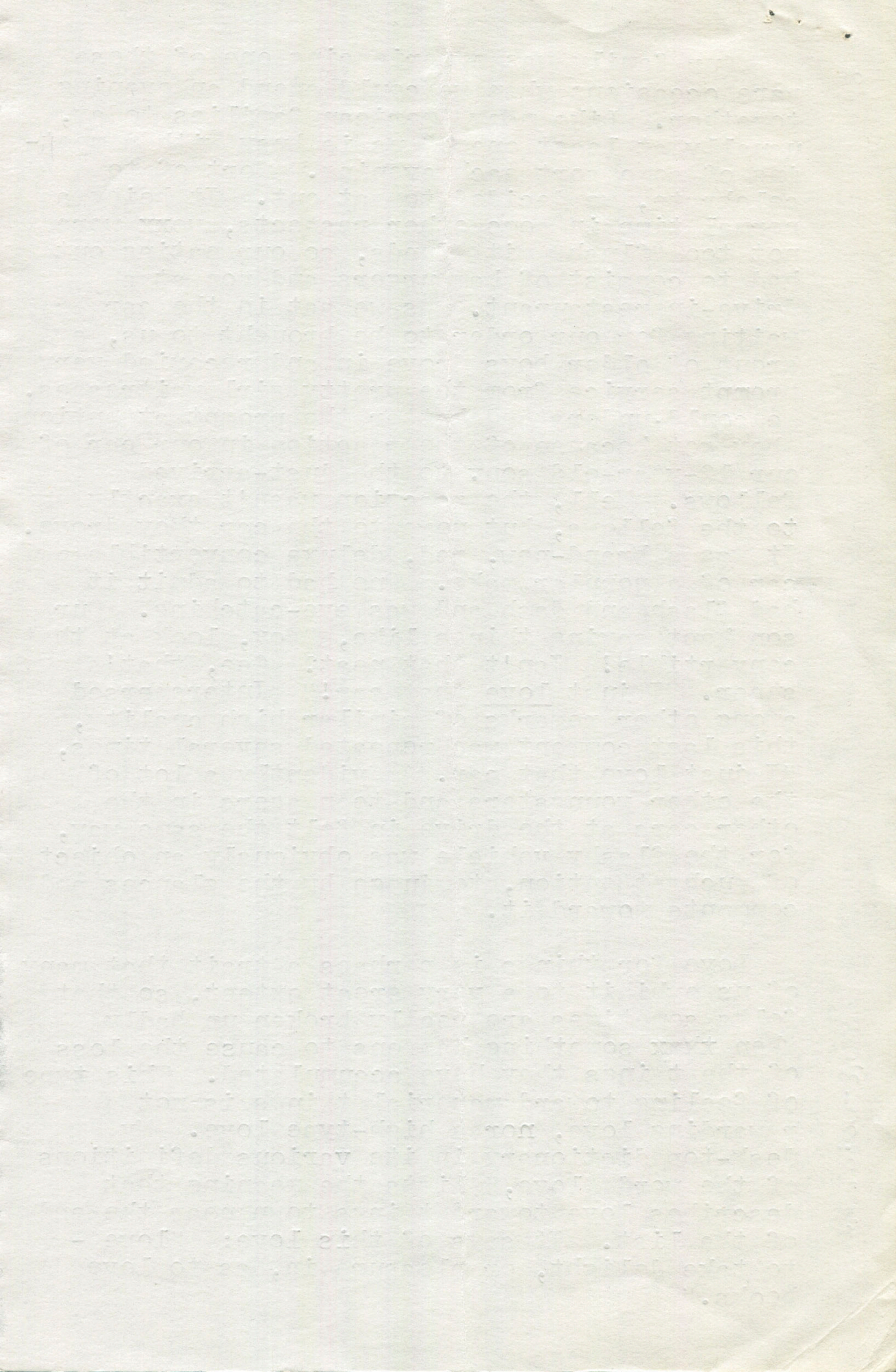




Our family was experiencing one of those rare occasions when we could spend an evening together. Like many American families today, usually at least one of us is busy with a meeting of some sort each evening. Sort of to celebrate, we decided to eat out. It being a normal time in some other respects, we~~xx~~ were not too "flush" with funds, so our eating out had to consist of hamburgers and pop at a drive-in restaurant. As we sat in the car waiting for our order to be brought to us, a group of older boys drove in and received very prompt service from the pretty girl waitresses. We could understand better the prompt attention they got because of the reaction in our car of our 12-year-old son~~x~~ to the just-arrived fellows. Well, the reaction wasn't exactly to the fellows, but more to the car they drove. It was a brand-new, red, deluxe convertible car of a popular make. One had to admit it had flash and dash and was eye-catching. Our son kept saying things like, "Boy, look at that convertible! Isn't that neat? Gee, that's super. I just love that car!" Interspersed among other remarks of similar high quality, this last comment was repeated several times, "I just love that car." Evidently a lot of the other youngsters and teen agers in the other cars at the drive-in felt the same way, for the flashy vehicle was obviously an object of much attention, to judge by the glances and comments toward it.

Love for things is perhaps a trait that many of us exhibit to a very great extent, so that folks sometimes are really broken up badly when ~~they~~ something happens to cause the loss of the things they have accumulated. This type of feeling toward material things is not a rewarding love, nor a high-type love. My desk-top dictionary in its various definitions of the word "love," lists the meaning that describes love toward things toward the end of the list. It says of this love: "love - to take delight, or pleasure in, as to love books."







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The first definition of love, and the one which fits with the meaning of the word love in the New Testament, is "love - a feeling of strong personal attachment induced by sympathetic understanding, or by ties of kinship."

When Jesus gave as the first and greatest commandment the words, "Thou shalt love the Lord, thy God," he surely wasn't speaking of that type of feeling which is a mere passing and pleasurable thing.

My 12-year-old felt the same type of love for our old family car when it was shiny new, but now his affection for it has waned, and his love goes out to newer and fancier models. Love of this type isn't lasting, isn't good for self or for the beloved object.

The love for God was best stated by Jesus when he repeatedly referred to God as a ~~father~~ good father. A father in a sense is the creator of the child, provides for the child, loves the child deeply. He is hurt to the core when the child is ill, in danger, does something wrong. He is proud and happy as can be when the child is well, happy, and achieves worthwhile accomplishments. He will do anything that he can for the welfare and happiness of his child. Sometimes he has to deny his child things and liberties which the child desires because they are not good for the youngster, but such denial pains the father.

Over the years the child builds up a feeling of real, highest-type love for the father. First it is dependence, then a dim understanding of the personality of the father; then come gratitude and love; and as the child becomes ~~conscious~~ an adult a feeling of strong personal attachment and sympathetic understanding; so that the child wants to do whatever he can to please and make happy the parent.

Jesus' parables are timeless, and his comparison of the relationship of father and







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and child to that of God and man gives a true picture for us today of the christian's basic attitude toward God. It is one of love: love with all ones heart, soul, mind and ~~xxx~~ strength. As the love of a child for his parent ~~xxxxx~~ becomes less and less self-seeking and more and more for the parents' pleasure, so does the love of a christian for God. The ever-lasting paradox, though, is that as one loves God more completely and unselfishly, he receives greater blessings and benefits within himself than he could ever know otherwise.

A hymn by Frederick Fater tells of the value of loving God: *Meth. Hymnal, # 374*

"O how the thought of God attracts  
And ~~draws~~ the heart from earth,  
And sickens it of passing shows  
And dissipating mirth!

'Tis not enough to save our souls,  
To shun the eternal fires;  
The tho't of God will rouse the heart  
To more sublime desires.

God only is the creature's home,  
Tho rough and strait the road;  
Yet nothing less can satisfy  
The love that longs for God.

O utter but the Name of God  
Down in your heart of hearts,  
And see how from the world at once  
All tempting light departs!

A trusting heart, a yearning eye,  
Can win their way above;  
If mountains can be moved by faith,  
Is there lsss power in love?"

To be a Christian -- love God.



