

The doctrine is you love God alone directly and you love others because God is so connected to them and they are so important to him and created by him for that amounts to another way of loving God.

CATHOLIC DOCTRINE: "Love God above all things and your neighbor as yourself for the love of God"

Fr. John A. Hardon, S.J. in the Modern Catholic Dictionary, says we must become the kind of person who "loves God above all things for his [that is, God's] own sake, and loves others for God's sake."

“Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for his own sake, **and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God**” (Catechism of the Catholic Church 1822). The bolded line shows that when the Church says love God above all it means love everything totally just because you love God. So it is really only God that is loved. The Bible calls this charity the greatest virtue of all - see 1 Corinthians 13:13.

"CHARITY, as treated of here, is an act of the will by which we love God for his own sake above all things, and our neighbour for the sake of God. The love of charity, then, is different from the love of concupiscence, by which we love God as our reward exceeding great, and desire to possess him in whom our supreme and perfect happiness is placed. This love of concupiscence is good and belongs to the virtue of hope, but it is imperfect. By charity we rise above the consideration of our own reward and happiness; we see in God the infinite Good, the Source and Origin of all good, and we rejoice in his infinite Perfection. We wish him all honour and glory and every good, and desire, as far as we can, to obtain it for him, because he is infinitely worthy of our whole-hearted devotion. So that the formal object of charity, the reason why we love God, is his own infinite goodness and worth; for this reason we love him and our neighbour, for such is his will. He has made us all in his image and likeness ; all rational creatures form the great family of God, our common Father ; all are capable by grace of eternal happiness with him in heaven."

From a Catholic book called Beautiful Pearls.

One of the Scribes asked our Lord, " Which is the great commandment of the Law?" He answered : " Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and thy whole soul and thy whole mind. And the second is like to this : Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments dependeth the whole Law and the Prophets."

1. The centre of all sanctity is the love of God. We must love Him with our whole soul and heart and mind. The affectional loyalty of our hearts must be given entirely to Him, our bodies must be consecrated to Him, and our intellectual powers must be used for Him. Alas ! how defective is my love and service ! Can I say that my heart is wholly fixed on God?

2. The second law of holiness is no less binding than the first. It flows from it and is inseparable from it. We must love our neighbor as we love ourselves. This is a very high standard, and few indeed are they who attain it. Yet it is what God requires. It is a command, not a counsel, that we should regard the interests of others as our own. This is the great lesson of Christ's life. To what extent have I learned it ?

3. The obstacle to the keeping of these commandments is self-love. It prevents our loving God wholly, since He will brook no rival ; and it prevents our loving our neighbor as ourselves, for it makes us postpone our neighbor's interests to our own. Yet this is fatal to all true self-love and self-interest. Those who forget themselves are those who alone promote their own interest and their happiness.

One may love creatures, but only for God's sake.

Jesus said that we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength (which is commanded by the depraved prophet Moses in Deuteronomy 6). That is, God is to be loved wholly. We do not love him most and give the rest of our love to others. We must love him alone and love others for his sake.

An early source for passing on Jesus' teaching reminds us that it can be reworded, "Do things for others but make sure it is only and really for God!" Here it is: Ephesians 6:7-9

7 Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not people,

8 because you know that the Lord will reward each one for whatever good they do, whether they are slave or free.

9 And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him.

New International Version (NIV).

This is the strongest paraphrase and statement of the doctrine imaginable for it is about how slaves should treat their Master the exact same as if they were God.

Jesus is saying we must love God not with some of our energy, most of our energy but ALL our energy. In other words, everything we do must be solely motivated by what pleases God. Its all about pleasing him. When you help the sick, it is not done to help the sick but to honour God. It is done for God.

The Catechism Explained: "We may only take pleasure in creatures in so far as they are conducive to the service of the Most High. The Creator ought to be loved in His creatures, not the creatures in themselves. God calls Himself a jealous God (Exod. xx. 5), because He cannot tolerate our loving anything which interferes with our love for Him. He must reign supreme in our hearts, or hold no place in them at all (St. Francis of Sales). Because the patriarch Jacob was too fond of his youngest son, Joseph, He took him from him for a time, and He did the same with Benjamin. So He acts towards us now. Christ says: "He that loveth father or mother more than Me, is not worthy of Me" (Matt. x. 37). St. Augustine says: "He loves God too little who loves anything besides God ; unless indeed he loves it out of love to God."

From Brand Blanshard The Gifford Lectures: "Jesus took the love of God to be an essential part of morality. Jointly with the love of man, it was the prime motive of the good life. True Christians were to be childlike in their teachableness and affection, and of such he declared the kingdom of heaven to be composed. Their trust in their divine father was absolute; the good life meant his will for them, and their overriding concern must be to learn that will and do it. The love of man was important too, but Jesus seems not even to have considered the possibility of its standing alone. Human selfishness, lust, and greed would be too much for it. It was only as morality was infused with religion and human souls were seen as children of God that their infinite value could be recognised."

My comment is that if the command to love others could do on its own then Jesus is doing a bad thing by making the love of God so necessary and by implication condemning any morality that ignores it or is devoid of it as a wolf in sheep's clothing.