



Links Players

Course Conditions Change—The Objective Does Not

And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these. (Mark 12:30-31)

You arrive at the course, and your tee time is pushed back because of a frost delay. You are bundled up under layers of clothing because it is so cold. By late morning, you've played a few holes, now wearing your golf shirt and a nice performance vest.

By early afternoon, the clouds have given way to blue skies and a bright sun. Now, it's warm, and you regret not wearing shorts. But, with a couple of holes left to play, the sun has crept behind the tree line, and there's a little nip in the air. Scrambling through your bag, you grab a quarter zip to finish the round.

We all love perfect days on the course, but sometimes, we must prepare for Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall conditions. And in doing so, the objective remains the same – "Get the ball in the hole."

Elements change. Course conditions change. But the objective will always be the same—"Get the ball in the hole."

When it comes to our faith, our objective must be the same. We live in a rapidly changing society. What was unthinkable a few years ago is now acceptable and celebrated. Yet, despite all the changes that culture and people bring, the objective for the believer is the same: Love Him and love others.

In Mark's account of The Great Commandment, he helps us see the primary objective in this life. Jesus is conversing (12:28-34) with a scholar regarding the law and legal matters. The scribe asks Jesus what he thinks is the most important thing to do in life. Jesus answers directly: "Love God with everything you've got, and in the same way, love your neighbor."

In Mark 12, Jesus uses the word *agapaō* to describe love. This Greek word describes deep affection and a profound closeness. It is a command for those who follow Christ.

This is central to the professing believer. It is expected of those redeemed by the blood of the Lamb (Ephesians 1:7). Our objective along life's journey to Glory is to love God deeply and love others the same.

As seasons change, so does life. God becomes distant because we have allowed the world and sin to rule and tempt us from His presence. People and situations change. At times, they become difficult, even unbearable, to be around.

God will forgive us if that's where we are— distant and bitter. Yet, despite what culture says, how the world changes, or what it says is acceptable, we are to love God with every fiber of our being.

He's worthy of our affection. And we are to love others, even when they are unlovable. May we be reminded that we, too, were once unlovable (Romans 5:8).

These are our objectives as we enter another year of life. No matter what 2025 brings or how life may change, love the Lord God with everything you have and your neighbor well.

Prayer: Lord God, May The Great Commandment be my guide this year to being a faithful follower of Christ.

Joey Denton

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