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# Real Change?

## Part 3 - Strength

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### Intent - Execution Gap

In all areas of life, we are faced with the reality of making change so that the best of our intentions are actually executed and bring about the desired outcomes.

Jesus set the standard of living to our full potential when we love God with everything we are and have.

*And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" And he answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbour as yourself." And he said to him, "You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live."*

Luke 10:25-28 (ESV)

A life that is worth living is one that loves God with every part of who we are:

Heart – Soul – Strength – Mind!

### Whole-hearted, Life-encompassing Allegiance to God

The Deuteronomy passage referred to in Luke 10 calls us to wholehearted, life-encompassing, community-impacting, exclusive commitment to our God.

There needs to be an authentic love for God that starts with God-oriented affections, desires, and thoughts, that permeates our every day lives, all our comings and goings inclusive of our strength.

*Be very careful, then, how you live—not as unwise but as wise, making the most of every opportunity, because the days are evil. Therefore, do not be foolish, but understand what the Lord’s will is. Ephesians 5:15-17 (NIV)*

God wants your whole life.

*“Do not let any part of your body become an instrument of evil to serve sin. Instead, give yourselves completely to God, for you were dead, but now you have new life. So use your whole body as an instrument to do what is right for the glory of God.”*

Romans 6:13 (NLT)

Are you loving God with everything you are and have?

## **All Your Strength**

The strength of a person is not simply who they are, but what they have at their disposal.

The outworking of loving God with all our hearts and all our souls comes to doing so with all our strength – with everything that is at our disposal.

We are commanded to love him with the things that make us strong. We are to love Him with our accomplishments, our influence and all our tangible capacities. I like to look at it this way:

- + What are you good at?
- + What is your strength?
- + What do you have going for you?

- + Money, abilities, influence, talents, time?
- + What are you capable of?

*“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money”.*

Matthew 6:24 (NIV)

Jesus doesn't say you "should not" serve God and money – He says you "cannot" serve God and money. He says it's impossible. What's He talking about? He's saying it is impossible to have two number one priorities in your life – this isn't just about our money.

To love God with 'all your strength' means to have Him above all other things at your disposal.

*In all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight.*

Proverbs 3:6 (NIV)

**Three main areas where we struggle to love God with all our strength:**

1. **Money** – are you loving God with your finances?
2. **Time** – how are you loving God with your time?
3. **Talent** – how are you using the abilities you have, to love God by loving and serving others?

## Discussion Questions

1. What ways have you tried to close the Intention – Execution Gap?
2. What worked and what didn't?
3. Discuss what 'strengths' you have.
4. If 'strength' can be defined as anything that you have at your disposal, material or otherwise, what would it look like for those things to come under God's control?
5. What is different to how those things are currently used?
6. Address the last three main areas people find hard to bring under God's control (Money/Time/Talent). Why do you think these are three of the hardest areas to love God with?
7. How are you going to now bridge the gap between the intention of loving God with all your strength and actually doing it? Why not start with a simple expression in those three main areas?