



“You shall love the Lord your God with all
your heart and with all your soul and with
all your might.”

Deuteronomy 6:5

NOT ALL THERE

AS A STAGE DIRECTOR I always taught the actors in my charge to look directly into the eyes of the person with whom they carried on a dialogue in a scene. It does not work, I would tell them, to look at them *indirectly*, to cast their gaze over their opposite's shoulder; the audience would be able to tell the difference, and that difference would sap the scene of most of its realism.

What I cautioned my actors not to do, accurately describes the behavior of the society in which we now live. Because of ubiquitous mobile, handheld devices, this is a culture in which few people are ever fully invested in their physical environment. Either or both, some or all in any physical gathering will be constantly referencing the device that has now become part of their existential being.

Those of us not members of this cult find such behavior baffling, rude, infuriating, and rather sad. Modern-day dialogues very often have the appearance of two soulless automatons mumbling inanities past each other, all the while transfixed by the hypnotic glow emanating from their palms. If called upon to describe their environment, and the sensation of being there, they would be dumbstruck. If asked to describe the one standing before them, they could not.

Taking advantage of the ability to be simultaneously elsewhere, they are never really where they are.



“Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances. You will live in the land that I gave to your forefathers; so you will be My people, and I will be your God.”

Ezekiel 36:26-28

Where once we were a people with hearts of flesh, we are becoming a generation of unfeeling androids with hearts of digital stone.

Such behavior in human relationships is unfortunate, but such behavior in our relationship with God and His Christ is utterly tragic. Such division of attention, such diminution of purpose has no place in a life supposedly devoted to God.

One of the scribes came and heard them arguing, and recognizing that He had answered them well, asked Him, “What commandment is the foremost of all?” Jesus answered, “The foremost is, ‘Hear, O Israel! the Lord our God is one Lord; 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.’”

Mark 12:28-30

When we come before the Lord we are to be all there. Our heart, our spirit, our very being is to be in union with Him. He does not countenance a

divided heart, for He is a jealous God; He will have all of us. There must be nothing between us and Him.

Do you think there is something more important than His voice coming at you through the ether? Is there anything displayed on a device in your hand that can possibly have preeminence over worshiping at His throne? Is there anything another human might say or write to you that carries more weight than what your Lord might say or write to you?

If so, you are an idolater.

If we choose to conduct our lives by long distance, rather than in person; if we deny ourselves the tactile and sensory pleasures of the immediate for the superficial inanities of strangers; if we willingly enslave ourselves to a plastic existence, played out in a world beyond our reach—if we choose to live this way, we are only diminishing the quality of our own life.

But when we bring the same attitudes and behavior into our relationship with holy God, we are offending—we are sinning against—*Him*. As children of God through the atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ we owe Him more than our distracted, secondhand attention.

He is due not what is left over, but the fullness of the best we are.

The man who comes to a right belief about God is relieved of ten thousand temporal problems, for he sees at once that these have to do with matters which at the most cannot concern him for very long; but even if the multiple burdens of time may be lifted from him, the one mighty single burden of eternity begins to press down upon him with a weight more crushing than all the woes of the world piled one upon another. That mighty burden is his obligation to God. It includes an instant and lifelong duty to love God with every power of mind and soul, to obey Him perfectly, and to worship Him acceptably.

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