

Love - Fulfillment of the Commandments

Jesus said, "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (John 14:15). I remember as a new Christian wondering, "What are those commandments? Are they the Ten Commandments? I thought the New Testament teaches that we are not under the law, but under grace? So how does that fit in with keeping the commandments of Jesus?" The answer is found in several principles or truths, which are repeated in the Scriptures: **1.)** If you love Jesus you will keep His commandments; **2.)** All the commandments are summed up in "**LOVE God and LOVE your neighbor as yourself**"; **3.)** The Holy Spirit gives us the love of God in our hearts and the power to carry out the commandments; **4.)** Keeping His commandments and **abiding in His LOVE** is proof that we belong to Him. So, it is a continuous cycle of God pouring His love into us so that we can keep His commandments, and our obeying His commandments keeps us abiding in His love. If God Himself gives us the power to love and keep His commandments, then what is our responsibility, what is our part in the equation? Jesus said, "You shall LOVE the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This means that we must be WILLING to ALLOW God to pour out His love in and through us. We must turn ALL of our strength and purpose, ALL of our emotions and feelings, ALL of our thought-life towards God, and **ASK Him to use us** as a container and channel of His love. He provides the power, but He does not force it on us, or give it to us **while our hearts and minds are occupied in selfish, worldly concerns**. He waits for us to be willing vessels, and then He will pour out His love and power into us and through us to others.

1. **If you love Jesus you will keep His commandments** - You can talk all you want about how much you love Jesus, but He wants you to "**walk the walk**, and not just talk the talk." Actually, Jesus is saying that keeping His commandments is proof that you do love Him.
 - **John 14:15** "If you love Me, **keep My commandments**."
 - **John 14:21 & 23-24** "He who has My commandments and keeps them, **it is he who LOVES Me**. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him." "Jesus answered and said to him, '**If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word**; and My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make Our home with him. **He who does not love Me does not keep My words**; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.'"
 - **I John 2:6** "He who says he abides in Him ought himself also **to walk just as He walked**."
 - **I John 5:2-3** "By this we know that we LOVE the children of God, when we LOVE God and keep His commandments. For **this is the LOVE of God, that we keep His commandments**. And His commandments are not burdensome."
2. **All the commandments are summed up in "love God and love your neighbor as yourself"** - On the surface, you may not think that everything could be covered by those two commandments, but if you find the root cause of any sin, it comes down to not loving God completely and wholly, or not loving others with the God kind of love. The same commandment is stated in a slightly different way in I John 3:23, "And **this is His commandment**, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and LOVE one another, just as He commanded us." **You can't love God without believing in His Son Jesus Christ**. "Whoever denies (does not believe in) the Son does not have the Father; the one who confesses the Son has the Father also" (I John 2:23).
 - **Romans 13:8-10** "Owe no man anything except **to LOVE one another**, for he who **LOVES another has fulfilled the law**. For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'You shall not covet,' and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, 'You shall LOVE your neighbor as yourself.' **LOVE does no harm to a neighbor**; therefore **LOVE is the fulfillment of the law**."

- **Matthew 22:36-40** "'Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?' Jesus said to him, 'You shall **LOVE** the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall **LOVE** your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.'"
 - **John 15:12 & 17** "This is My commandment, that you **LOVE one another as I have LOVED you.**" "These things I command you, that you **LOVE one another.**"
 - **I John 2:7 & 3:11** "Brethren, I write **no new commandment** to you, but an old commandment which you have had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which you heard from the beginning." "For this is the message that you heard from the beginning, that **we should LOVE one another.**"
 - **I John 3:23** "And **this is His commandment**, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and **LOVE one another**, just as He commanded us."
 - **I Timothy 1:5** "But the goal of **our commandment is LOVE from a pure heart** and a good conscience and a sincere faith."
3. **The Holy Spirit GIVES us the LOVE of God in our HEARTS and the power to carry out the commandments** - God never meant for us to try to live the Christian life in our own strength. Why do you think we just have the one commandment to LOVE in the New Testament, whereas they had over 600 commandments to keep in the Old Testament? Romans 5:5 and John 7:37-39 give us part of the answer: they did not have **the Holy Spirit DWELLING inside each believer** in the Old Testament times, and it is by the Holy Spirit that God **gives us His love** by which we are able to love one another. On the Day of Pentecost, AFTER Jesus was "glorified" by His resurrection and ascension to heaven, the Holy Spirit was GIVEN and continues to be given to ALL WHO BELIEVE in Him (II Cor. 1:22 & II Cor. 5:5).
- **Romans 5:5** "Now hope does not disappoint, because **the LOVE of God** has been poured out in our hearts **by the Holy Spirit who was GIVEN to us.**"
 - **II Timothy 1:7** "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and **of LOVE**, and of a sound mind."
 - **John 7:37-39** "On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, **out of his HEART** will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning **the SPIRIT, whom those believing in Him WOULD RECEIVE; for the Holy Spirit was NOT YET given**, because Jesus was not yet glorified."
 - **I John 3:23-24** "And this is His commandment, that we should believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and **LOVE one another as He gave us commandment.** Now he who keeps His commandments abides (dwells) in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that **He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.**"
 - **I John 4:13-16** "By this we know that we abide in Him, and He in us, **because He has GIVEN us of His Spirit.**" (Verse 15) "Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. And we have known and believed **the LOVE that God has for us. God is LOVE;** and he who abides (dwells) in [*God's*] **LOVE** abides in God, and God in him."
4. **Keeping His commandments and ABIDING in His LOVE is proof that we belong to Him** - Notice how many of the Scriptures are from the Gospel of John and the Epistles of John. No wonder John is called the Apostle of Love! Just as Jesus said that keeping His commandments is **proof that we really love Him**, our love for one another is **proof to the world** that we belong to Jesus.
- **John 13:34-35** "A new commandment I give to you, that you LOVE one another, even as I have loved you, that you also LOVE one another. By this **all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have LOVE for one another.**"
 - **John 15:8-10** "By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; **so you will prove to be My disciples.** As the Father loved Me, I also have loved

you; abide in My LOVE. **If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My LOVE**, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love."

- **John 15:14** "You are My friends **if you do whatever I command you.**"
- **I John 3:18-19** "My little children, let us not **LOVE** in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And **BY THIS we know** that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him."
- **I John 2:3-6 & 10-11** "Now **BY THIS we know that we know Him**, if we keep His commandments. He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But **whoever KEEPS His WORD**, truly **the LOVE of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.** He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked." "He who **LOVES** his brother abides in the light, and there is no cause for stumbling in him. But he who hates his brother is in darkness and walks in darkness, and does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded his eyes."

There are three kinds of love mentioned in the Bible: sensual, sexual love (the Greek word is *eros*), brotherly love (the Greek word is *phileo*), and God's kind of love (the Greek word is *agape*). **God's kind of love is sacrificial and giving, not selfish.** The Holy Spirit gives us the love of God in our hearts.

- **I John 3:16** "By this we know LOVE, because He laid down His life for us. And we also ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."
- **Romans 12:9-10** "Let LOVE be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be **KINDLY** affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another."
- **Philippians 2:3-4** "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind **let each of you regard one another as more important than himself**; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests (welfare, well being) of others."
- **I Thessalonians 4:9** "Now as to the LOVE of the brethren, you have no need for anyone to write to you, for you yourselves are **taught by God to LOVE one another.**"
- **I John 4:7-11 & 19** "Beloved, let us love one another, for **LOVE is from God**; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for **God is love**. In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation (sacrifice) for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." "We love Him because He first loved us."

The "Love Chapter" of the Bible, I Corinthians 13, and Ephesians 4:31-32 and 5:1-2 tell us how to "walk in love," what love is, and also what it is not. The individual commands in God's word are there as guidelines, so that we can **CHECK OURSELVES to see if we are truly WALKING in LOVE**. For instance, if you find you are holding onto resentment, anger or bitterness against someone, you could either look at it as "breaking the commandment" of Ephesians 4:31-32, which says "Let all BITTERNESS, wrath, ANGER be put away from you.....and be **KIND** to one another, **tenderhearted, FORGIVING** one another," or you could just realize, "I am not **walking in LOVE** towards this person. Love is not puffed up with pride, does not behave rudely, does not seek its own (is not selfish), is not provoked (doesn't get easily irritated), and thinks no evil, therefore I see that I am not walking in love where this person is concerned, or in this situation."

- **I Corinthians 13:1-8 & 13** "Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become as sounding brass or a clanging

cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned (as a martyr), but have not love, it profits me nothing. Love suffers long (is patient) and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up (with pride); does not behave rudely, does not seek its own (is not selfish), is not provoked (not easily irritated), thinks no evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails." "And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love."

- **Ephesians 4:31-32 & 5:1-2** "Let all BITTERNESS, wrath, ANGER, clamor, and all evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice. And be **KIND** to one another, **tenderhearted, forgiving** one another, **just as God in Christ also forgave you**. Therefore be followers of God as dear children. And **WALK in LOVE, as Christ also has LOVED us** and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma."

I Corinthians 13 also gives us the true motivation for our serving God in the Body of Christ, the church. Rather than arguing about which commandments we must keep, or which spiritual gifts are the best, God's word tells us that the motivation of LOVE is what really matters. Unfortunately, many people try to serve God out of "duty" only, and they will miss out on rewards in heaven, because they tried to keep the commandments in their own strength ("in the flesh").

Romans 13:10 says, "**LOVE does no harm to a neighbor**; therefore **LOVE is the fulfillment of the law**," but what if I am doing something wrong, but it doesn't harm anyone else? What about gluttony - you may be hurting your own body, but you're not hurting anyone else? What about drunkenness if you only drink alone, and no one else is harmed? If you are a Christian, that would be breaking the commandment to "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." You have made food, alcohol, or whatever addiction or compulsion your "idol" or your "god," and that addiction takes away time, energy and devotion that rightly belong to the Lord. You are turning to those things for "comfort" instead of to the Lord, who tells us **He is the God of ALL comfort, and the Holy Spirit is the Comforter**. What if you say, "I drink to forget the pain in my life"? God's word says that "strong drink is for him who is perishing, and give wine to those who are bitter of heart. Let him drink and forget his poverty, and remember his misery no more" (Proverbs 31:6-7). If you are a Christian, a child of God, then you are not one who is perishing! John 3:16 says you will never perish! You are a king and a priest to God, and He says, "It is not for kings to drink wine, nor for princes intoxicating drink..." (Proverbs 31:4). You have no excuse and no reason to turn to drink or anything else if you are in misery or pain. God wants to relieve you of that pain. Jesus came to this earth and **died on the cross to relieve you of that pain**, and to take your heavy burdens, and to undo the works of the devil in your life, if you will only let Him.

- **I John 3:8** "...For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil."
- **John 10:10** "The thief (Satan) does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I (Jesus) have come that they might have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."
- **Matthew 11:28** "Come to Me, **all you who labor and are heavy laden (burdened)**, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls."
- **II Corinthians 1:3** "Blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies, and the **God of all COMFORT**."

- **Revelation 1:5-6** "...To Him who loved us and washed us from our sins **in His own blood**, and has **made us KINGS** and priests to His God and Father...."
- **I Peter 2:9** "But you are a chosen generation, **a ROYAL priesthood**, a holy nation, His own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light."
- **Ephesians 3:17-21** "That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, that you, being **rooted and grounded in LOVE**, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height, and **to know the LOVE of Christ** which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now unto Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, unto Him be glory....by Jesus Christ. Amen."