

Calling the Bride

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“And you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free” – John 8:32

The Commandments of Jesus

Jesus said, *“If you keep My commandments, you shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love” (John 15:10)*. We show our love for God and Jesus by keeping Jesus' words as He said. – *“He that has My commandments, and keeps them, he it is that loves Me; and he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him” (John 14:21)*.

Every true believer in Messiah Jesus wants to obey Him. His instructions to us are laced all through the gospels. But what are His basic commandments that serve as the foundation upon which all of His words to us are based?

The first commandment that Jesus spoke when He began His ministry is, *“Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand” (Matthew 4:17)*. True Biblical repentance is a recognition of our sinfulness and a willingness to turn from our sins. We must acknowledge that we are sinners before we can recognize our need for our Savior to redeem us from them. This repentance coupled with faith, appropriates the saving grace that Jesus sacrificed Himself to give us.

Repentance is the expression of humility that God rewards, for *“He resists the proud and gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6)*.

Jesus came not only to save us so we could inherit eternal life, He also came to turn us from our sins, to change us into the people He wants us to be. This brings us to the next most important commandment. – *“This is My commandment, that you love one another, as I have loved you” (John 15:12)*. He goes on to explain – *“Greater love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends (John 15:13)*. The love Jesus wants us to exhibit is a self-sacrificing love that puts others first. Jesus is a selfless giver who gave Himself to save us. There is no greater illustration of self-sacrificing love than Jesus' tortured silhouette upon His cross.

No one can attain to that level of selflessness unless it is formed within a believer by Jesus' Holy Spirit. We just have to desire it and if we love the Lord, we

will. *“For without Me you can do nothing (John 15:5)*. We need to ask Him for this love and all its aspects as shown to us by the apostle Paul in I Corinthians 13:4-7. - *Love suffers long, and is kind; love does not envy; love does not vaunt itself, is not puffed up, does not behave itself rudely, seeks not her own, is not easily provoked, thinks no evil; rejoices not in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.*

Jesus has commanded us to love one another. He also commands us to apply the same love to our enemies. – *But I say to you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; (Matthew 5:44)*.

As anyone knows, this is not easy, but it is not impossible with the Lord's help. He wants to override our natural impulse to retaliate and replace it with His Spirit led response instead. The ability to achieve this kind of Holy Spirit control begins with our desire for it. As Jesus told us, if we seek we will find, and there will be an opening for us (from Matthew 7:7). Our requests will be granted because we are asking for things that are in accordance with His will.

And finally the last great foundational commandment is “Forgive.”- *And when you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against any: that your Father also which is in heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if you do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in heaven forgive your trespasses (Mark 11:25,26)*.

The ability to forgive is another aspect of the love that is created in us through the Holy Spirit. If we can't love, we can't forgive. If we can love those who have hurt us, we will be able to forgive. This puts all of us back at the foot of Jesus' cross where we witness His love and forgiveness being poured out upon those who hate Him. When we realize that we are not exempt from that miserable group of sinners gathered around His cross, and if we can retain this perspective in times when we have experienced our own wounds, then our view from the foot of His cross helps to enable our hearts to soften and forgive.

In conclusion, these four great commandments; repent, love one another, love our enemies and forgive – form the foundation for a successful walk with our Savior. He is always there to help us up when we fail and give us a new beginning – because He loves us.

All of us start off seeking our own will and desires in this life. It takes a consistent prodding from the Holy Spirit, and oftentimes our circumstances to change our direction until we are facing fully upward. As we allow His love to refresh our characters, we will find the challenges we face in this life easier to hurdle and all His other commandments and instructions to us will be a joy for us to fulfill.

There are many Christians who have been in church for years and still do not have a handle on these basic commandments. It's time to reexamine our walk with the Lord and put into practice His first commandment of repentance.

Change begins with repentance, prayer and a heartfelt desire for Him to transform us into the people He wants us to be. Amen.

The Principle of the Law

*You be holy, for I am Holy –
I Peter 1:16 from Leviticus 11:44,45*

When God gave the law to Moses, His purpose was not only to give them direction for their behavior, but to also set them apart from the practices of the pagan nations around them. No one else had those good laws.

And what nation is there so great, that has statutes and judgments so righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? – Deuteronomy 4:8

Therefore the Lord wanted a holy people set apart for Himself. In turn He intended the witness of their lives to be a sign to the nations around them as a witness to the reality of God.

The principle of the law remains the same today. God wants His people to live holy lives, set apart from the lawless practices of non-believers as a witness to the presence of God in their lives, and validate the gospel.

The Apostle Peter exhorts us to, “be holy, for I am holy.” He is quoting from the Old Testament where God is instructing His priests.

The Apostle Paul tells us to “Walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering

(Lewdness) and wantonness, (lust), not in strife and envying. But you put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts of it. – Romans 13:13,14

Do all things without murmurings and disputings: that you may be blameless and harmless, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world. - Philippians 2:14,15

Peter continues. -

For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries: Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you: - I Peter 4:3,4

Are you willing to stand out from the crowd and “put on the Lord Jesus Christ?” and follow His example for your life and not allow yourself to be influenced by the pagan practices in the world around you? Is the principle of the law being fulfilled in your life?

If it is rejoice; if it is not, pray.

The Mirror of God's Word

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. - Hebrews 4:12

As we look into the mirror of God's word, we see ourselves reflected by the image it portrays. We are contrasted by its portrait of perfection. It is designed to separate our chaff from our wheat. It brings death to our sin natures and shatters our illusions of who we pretend to be or think we are in the light of His perfection. It breaks the bones of the staying soul, like a shepherd deals with a staying sheep.

If we are truly His, we will look into our reflection in His word and be willing to allow Him to adjust us accordingly. We will let the truth change us and not attempt to change the truth to suit ourselves. When conviction begins to mar the image of who we think we are in its light, we will let it have its perfect work in us and not run away; for conviction is like a grain of sand in an oyster shell; it is the necessary irritant that grows the pearl.

