

First Commandment

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Last week Milton spoke about self-centeredness being the sin that goes against the first and second commandments, which are:

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.”

About two years ago, I used the same verse as the base to analyze how all the bible is about love and how our love to our neighbors should be like. In other words, we concentrated in the second commandment.

I will use the first part, which analyzes love, but this time we will talk about love to God. In other words we'll concentrate in the first commandment.

In that occasion, I was desperately looking for a reason for the cascade of problems that suddenly struck my family in general and me in particular.

So in addition to lots of praying for understanding, I started to look for answers in the bible. The first place was Exodus 20, the 10 commandments, which I knew well, but I read and read again. I had never realized that it is mostly prohibitions, menacing, warnings and consequences, the exceptions being:

Exodus 20:1a

“I am the Lord your God”

and

Exodus 20:8

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy”

and

Exodus 20:12

“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you”

The answer I was looking for was not there, so the search continued, lots of reading. In my search I found Christ's resumed version of the commandments, which we just read. The commandments resumed and described in positive terms, as he came to change the law for the grace: Let's read again.

“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.”

By the way, God did not call them the ten “suggestions” and Jesus did not call them the great “suggestion”.

Then I realized that he spoke about a one-word-law:

Galatians 5:14a

“For all the law is fulfilled in one word...”

So the whole law is now down to one word:

Love

Life is all about love, my dear brothers and sisters, all about LOVE. The first and great commandment is to love our God with all our heart, soul and mind.

But what is love anyway? How can we define it? If we ask Wikipedia, this is what you get

Love is any of a number of **emotions** and experiences related to a sense of strong **affection**.^[1] The word **love** can refer to a variety of different feelings, states, and attitudes, ranging from generic **pleasure** ("I loved that meal") to intense **interpersonal attraction** ("I love my girlfriend"). This diversity of meanings, combined with the complexity of the feelings involved, makes love unusually difficult to consistently define, even compared to other emotional states.

Such is the wisdom of mankind...

Now I'm really lost! It sounds to me as clear as...

"Darling, I love you. I'd climb the highest mountain for you; I'd swim the deepest stream for you; I'd fight a jungle of lions for you; and if it doesn't rain, I'll be over to see you tonight.

How about some famous quotes?

To love deeply in one direction makes us more loving in all others. Anne-Sophie Swetchine

To fear love is to fear life, and those who fear life are already three parts dead. Bertrand Russell

The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed. Carl Jung

Nothing takes the taste out of peanut butter quite like unrequited love. Charles M. Schulz

We're not getting any closer to what love means...
If we read Ambrose Bierce's funny dictionary:

Love, n. A temporary insanity curable by marriage or by removal of the patient from the influences under which he incurred the disorder. This disease, like caries and many other ailments, is prevalent only among civilized races living under artificial conditions; barbarous nations breathing pure air and eating simple food enjoy immunity from its ravages. It is sometimes fatal, but more often to the physician than to the patient.

I'm lost again, totally lost this time, let's see what the Word says about it.

2 John 1:6

"This is love, that we walk according to His commandments. This is the commandment, that as you have heard from the beginning you should walk in it."

Which takes us back to the one-commandment-law.

Galatians 5:14a

"For all the law is fulfilled in one word..."

And down to one word:

Love

But love to God and our neighbors not to ourselves, as Milton pointed out last week.

So dear friends, We are running in circles. Let's see if some of God's instructions and love to us help us understand.

Proverbs 22:17-19

**"Incline your ear and hear the words of a wise,
And apply your heart to my knowledge;
For it is a pleasant thing if you keep them within
you;**

**Let them all be fixed upon your lips, So that your
trust may be in the Lord;
I have instructed you today, even you."**

To listen, to obey and to trust...perhaps not easy to do but certainly easy to understand.

Matthew 25:40

***"And the King will answer and say to them,
Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to
one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to
Me"***

Love God by loving others...

John 3:16

**"For God so loved the world that He gave His only
begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should
not perish but have everlasting life."**

God definitely loves us...

John 13:35

**"By this all will know that you are My disciples, if
you have love for one another."**

Again, love God by loving others...

Romans 5:8

**"But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in
that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."**

God definitely loves us, big time...

Romans 8 38-39

**"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor
angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things
present nor things to come, nor height nor depth,
nor any other created thing, shall be able to
separate us from the love of God which is in Christ
Jesus our Lord."**

God definitely loves us, big time AND for good...

1 Corinthians 13:3

**“And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor,
and though I give my body to be burned but have
not love, it profits me nothing.”**

Again, love God by loving others...

1 Corinthians 13:4-8a

**“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy;
love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does
not behave rudely, does not seek its own, it is not
provoked, 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.”**

Not a love we have naturally but a love only God can implant in us...

John 15:5

**“I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man
remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit;
apart from me you can do nothing.**

We can do everything while connected to God and nothing while disconnected from Him. As a radio set can play music while receiving the waves from a broadcasting station but not alone, we can love and bear fruit while connected to God but not alone.

Matthew 6 33

**But seek first the kingdom of God and His
righteousness, and all these things shall be added
to you.**

When we are connected with God, He provides everything we need.

1 Samuel 17:37

Moreover, David said, "The Lord, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine." And Saul said to David, "Go, and the Lord be with you!"

We know the rest of the story with Goliath. But do you realize what "being connected" with God means? What would have been David's chances without God?

Be connected!

1 Kings 2:1-3

Now the days of David drew near that he should die, and he charged Solomon his son, saying: "I go the way of all the earth; be strong, therefore, and prove yourself a man. And keep the charge of the Lord your God: to walk in His ways, to keep His statutes, His commandments, His judgments, and His testimonies, as it is written in the Law of Moses, that you may prosper in all that you do and wherever you turn"

David, as all of us, made many mistakes in his life. But he knew that the connection with God was the only way he could defeat a giant or his son Solomon could succeed as king.

Be connected!

Revelation 22:20a

"He who testifies to these things says, "Surely I am coming quickly."

We are running out of Sundays,

Genesis 1:1 to Revelation 22:21

"Love!"

For us to love God and to love others are commandments, something we must learn how to do. The love of God, however is in His essence and beyond our knowledge. The more we love God and others the more his love dwells in us and the more we can understand it:

1 John 4 15-16

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 in love abides in God, and God in him.

Ephesians 3:17-19

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- to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God

**GOD LOVES YOU, LET HIS LOVE DWELL IN YOU,
FLOW THROUGH YOU, TRANSCEND IN YOU**

Be connected! And let the Lord fight the Goliaths of your life.

Let's pray.

God we thank you for Your word and for Your commandments and for Your love and we ask for understanding, so we can connect and be clear receptors and transmitters of Your love, wisdom and blessing to those around us. Let us be messengers and good example of what You do in the hearts, minds, souls and lives of those who love you. Flow and glow through us and let us be centered and focused in You and Your kingdom and not in us and our world.

We praise and pray in the name of Jesus our Lord, amen.

God bless you all!