

# **"THE TWO GREAT COMMANDMENTS"**

How To Love THE LORD And Others  
(A Publication Of "The Inner-city Church Planting Mission")

Introduction: We know of course that the Holy Scriptures are the Word of GOD. Within its pages we discover many important and eternal truths and principles. It is there that we learn of GOD's thoughts and ways. It is within this Book that we are given GOD's council as to how to experience true meaning, purpose and success in every area and detail of life. Of all the truths and principles contained within The Scriptures, two of them are particularly significant. Indeed, the LORD JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF taught us that all of Scripture (and life), is built upon them . . .

***"Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*** Matthew 22:37-40

The propose of this study is for us to learn the significance of these ***"Two Commandments"***, and how by GOD's grace and HOLY SPIRIT, we can implement them more and more into our everyday lives.

## **I. The First Great Commandment** (How To Love GOD)

***"Thou shalt love THE LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great Commandment."***

The word for ***"love"*** used by the LORD JESUS CHRIST here is the Greek word "agapao". It is the highest form of ***"love"*** given to us in the Scriptures. It is the same kind of ***"love"*** that GOD has for us!

**GOD has expressed HIS love for us by giving us HIS most prized possession, THE LORD JESUS CHRIST (see I John 4:9-10). The Scriptures declare that we are to have this same sacrificial, self-less love for HIM!**

The LORD JESUS CHRIST has instructed us that our "love" for HIM is to be a complete and all-consuming "love". HE tells to "love" HIM "with all (our) heart, and with all (our) soul, and with all (our) mind". This is not an option . . . but a command!

**The LORD JESUS CHRIST desires "all" of our heart.  
Anything less is disobedience!**

The question then arises . . . "How do we love GOD?"

CHRIST has answered this from one perspective in our Scripture above. That is, we are to "love" HIM with 100% of our being.

Following are some Scriptures that help us answer this question further . . .

*"If you love ME (JESUS has said), keep MY Commandments. He that hath MY Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth ME, and he that loveth ME shall be loved by MY FATHER, and I will love him, and will manifest MYSELF to him. He that loveth ME and keepeth not MY Sayings and the Word which ye hear is not MINE, but the FATHER's WHO sent ME."*

It is very clear from JESUS' Words here that a "love for GOD" means an obedience to HIS Commandments. Three times HE emphasizes this in this passage alone. There are many other Scriptures that teach this as well (i.e. - John 15:10; I John 2:5; 5:2; II John 6; etc.).

**"CHRISTian love has GOD for its primary object, and expresses itself first of all in implicit obedience to HIS commandments. Self-will, that is, self-pleasing, is the negation of love to GOD."  
W.E. Vine**

Another question then must be asked . . . "What Commandments do we obey that will show our love for GOD?"

The Scriptures of course contain literally hundreds! Following are only but a few . . .

- A. *"Love your enemies. . . "* Mt. 5:44a
- B. *". . . bless them that curse you. . . "* Mt. 5:44b
- C. *". . . do good to them that hate you. . . "* Mt. 5:44c
- D. *"But seek ye first the kingdom of GOD. . . "* Mt. 6:33a
- E. *"Judge not, that ye be not judged."* Mt. 7:1
- F. *"Owe no man anything . . . "* Rom. 13:8a
- G. *"Thou shalt not commit adultery . . . "* Rom. 13:9a
- H. *"Thou shalt not kill . . . "* Rom. 13:9b
- I. *"Thou shalt not steal . . . "* Rom. 13:9c
- J. *"Thou shalt not bear false witness . . . "* Rom. 13:9d
- K. *"Walk in the SPIRIT . . . "* Gal. 5:16a
- L. *". . . be strong in the LORD . . . "* Eph. 6:10a
- M. *"Rejoice in the LORD . . . "* Phil. 4:4a
- N. *"Children, obey your parents . . . "* Col. 3:20a
- O. *"Pray without ceasing."* I Thess. 5:17
- P. *". . . be not weary in well doing"* II Thess. 3:13b
- Q. *"Meditate upon these things . . . "* I Tim. 4:15a
- R. *". . . endure hardness . . . "* II Tim. 2:3a
- S. *". . . speak evil of no man . . . "* Titus 3:2a
- T. *"Let us therefore fear . . . "* Hebrews 4:1a

The true child of GOD, who sincerely loves the LORD JESUS CHRIST, expresses this love with a complete obedience to HIM and HIS commandments. This is not a burdensome obedience, but an obedience born out of a joyful love for HIM!

*"For this is the love of GOD, that we keep HIS commandments, and HIS commandments are not grievous (i.e. - burdensome)." I John 5:3*

## II. The Second Great Commandment (How To Love Others)

***"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself."***

The word for "**love**" used by the LORD JESUS CHRIST here is again the Greek word "agapao" (as in our "**love**" for GOD). As noted earlier, it is the highest form of "**love**" given to us in the Scriptures, and is the same type of "**love**" that GOD has for us .

**The same quality of "love" that we are commanded to have for GOD, is the quality of "love" we are commanded to have for our "neighbor" as well!**

The question then arises . . . "Who is my neighbor?"

CHRIST HIMSELF was once asked this very same question (see Luke 10:29). HE answered by giving us the parable of the "Good Samaritan". The parable is a story of a man who is robbed and beaten by thieves and left for dead. It is then that a priest comes along, sees the man lying close to death, but passes on, wanting nothing to do with him. Likewise a Levite comes along and also ignores him. Then a Samaritan passes by. Unlike the priest and Levite, he has compassion on this man, doctoring his wounds and taking him to an inn where he recovers from his beating. JESUS concludes the parable by telling all of us, "**Go, and do thou likewise.**"

**Our "neighbor" is someone who may be our very best friend or a total stranger. Our "neighbor" is everyone, regardless of race, religion, or social status.**

It is also important then to ask the question . . . "How do I love my neighbor?"

CHRIST has answered this already from one perspective in our original Scripture above. That is, we are to . . . **love** (our) **neighbor as** (ourselves)." We of course "**love**" ourselves in such a way that we are concerned about our whole being . . . body, soul and spirit. We naturally desire what is best for us . . . whether it be the physical, emotional, or spiritual realm. It is to this "extreme" (CHRIST commands us), that we are to " . . . **love** (our) **neighbor as** (ourselves)."

Following are some Scriptures and principles that help us answer this question even further . . .

#### A. John 13:34

*"A new Commandment I (JESUS) give unto you, that ye love one another, as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."*

According to the teaching of CHRIST above, we are to **"love"** others in the same way that HE **"loved"** us. How did CHRIST show HIS **"love"** for us?

*"For when we were yet without strength, in due time CHRIST died for the ungodly. But GOD demonstrated HIS love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, CHRIST died for us."* Romans 5:6,8

CHRIST loved us so much HE ". . . died for us." We must **"love"** our neighbor to the same extreme!

#### B. I John 3:16-18

*"Hereby perceive we the love of GOD, because HE laid down HIS life for us, and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of GOD in him? My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth."*

This Scripture reminds us that it is one thing to say we "love" someone, but quite another thing to demonstrate it. This Scripture then gives us two examples of how we can demonstrate our "love" for someone else. First, to actually give our life which again, CHRIST was our example in, and then second, in a more practical way, to give to someone in the physical realm (i.e. - food, clothing, shelter, etc...)

True, genuine **"love"** for others is a **"love"** of action, demonstrated by the acts we do for them!

C. I Corinthians 13:4-8a

It is in this portion of Scripture that we find the most comprehensive definition of "**love**" in the Bible. It is a "**love**" of action. Truly, if we are demonstrating this kind of "**love**" toward our "**neighbor**", we will be fulfilling the LORD's command to, ". . . **love thy neighbor as thyself.**"

There are sixteen aspects of this "**love**" given to us here . . .

1. "**Love suffereth long . . .**"
2. ". . . (love) **is kind . . .**"
3. ". . . **love envieth not . . .**"
4. ". . . **love vaunteth not itself . . .**"
5. ". . . (love) **is not puffed up . . .**"
6. ". . . (love) **doth not behave itself unseemly . . .**"
7. ". . . (love) **seeketh not her own . . .**"
8. ". . . (love) **is not easily provoked . . .**"
9. ". . . (love) **thinketh no evil . . .**"
10. ". . . (love) **rejoiceth not in iniquity. . .**"
11. ". . . (love) **rejoiceth in the truth. . .**"
12. ". . . (love) **beareth all things . . .**"
13. ". . . (love) **believeth all things. . .**"
14. ". . . (love) **hopeth all things . . .**"
15. ". . . (love) **endureth all things. . .**"
16. "**Love never faileth . . .**"

**True, genuine "love" for others is a selfless "love", a "love" that always seeks to put our neighbor's well-being before our own!**

Conclusion: There was a group of CHRISTians that the LORD JESUS CHRIST once addressed with some very important instructions and warnings (see Revelation 2:1-7). One of these warnings was that HE was disappointed in them because they had " . . . **left** (their) **first love.**" (v.4). This "**first love**" was the LORD HIMSELF. This same admonition is for us today. And it concerns our priorities. If our "**love**" for GOD is our most important desire, everything else in our CHRISTian life will "fall in place", including our "**love**" for each other.

**As our "love" for the LORD grows,  
our "love" for others around us  
will naturally grow as well!**