

## Keeping the Commandments

### INTRODUCTION:

1. The idea of commandment-keeping is a bit repugnant to a lot of people today.
  - A. Some equate it with what they call “legalism.”
  - B. Others look upon keeping God’s commandment as a heavy, burdensome thing that Christ liberated us from.
  - C. Yet, in the N.T. alone, command in some form or another is found 195 times!
    - i. Granted, many relate to the O.T. commandments, or someone commanding another to act which has nothing to do with N.T. Christianity.
    - ii. Yet, there are a very large number of specified commands given to.
      - a. 2 Thess. 3:4 – “And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, both that you do and will do the things we command you.”
      - b. 2 Thess. 3:10 – “For even when we were with you, we commanded you this: If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.”
      - c. 1 Tim. 4:11 – “These things command and teach.”
      - d. 1 Tim. 6:17 – “Command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy.”
2. So, true Christians should not have adverse feelings about keeping the commandments of God, as Paul said (1 Cor. 7:19 – “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.”). NIV: “...Keeping God’s commands **is what counts.**”
3. In this lesson...
  - A. I want us to consider what the Bible says about keeping the commands of God.
  - B. And, it is my hope that if there is anyone here who has a negative attitude toward “commandment-keeping,” this lesson will help to bring about a change in your attitude.

### BODY:

#### **I. Let’s talk about our attitude toward God’s commandments and “commandment-keeping”**

- A. Our attitude toward God’s commands ought to be like that of...
  1. Moses (Deut. 6:24 – “And the Lord commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the Lord our God, **for our good always**, that He might preserve us alive, as it is this day.”).
  2. David
    - a. Psa. 119:86 – “All Your commandments are faithful...”
    - b. Psa. 119:151 — “...all Your commandments are truth.”
    - c. Psa. 119:172 – “...all Your commandments are righteousness.”
  3. Paul (Rom. 7:12 – “Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good.”).
- B. We should not feel that commandment-keeping is legalism, or earning our salvation.
  1. Such an attitude would be wrong on the part of Christians (Tit. 3:3-5, 7 – “For we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. <sup>4</sup> But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, <sup>5</sup> not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit,...<sup>7</sup> that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”).
  2. Yet, this is not cause to swing to the other extreme in saying commandment-keeping is not important.
    - a. Yet *Paul*, the apostle of grace, is the one who said, “keeping the commands of God is what matters.” (1 Cor. 7:19).
    - b. And, no one could ever accuse Paul of being a legalist!
  3. So, what is commandment-keeping to God and His people?

#### **II. We ought to think of commandment-keeping as “faith working through love.”**

- A. Compare statements of what matters to God:

1. 1 Cor. 7:19 – “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, **but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.**”
  2. Gal. 5:6 – “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, **but faith working through love.**”
- B. Putting these together we understand that keeping the commandments of God with a willing heart is “faith working through love,” not legalism, not earning salvation.
1. For, by keeping Christ’s commandments *I demonstrate my faith* (Jas 2:17-18 – “Thus also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. <sup>18</sup> But someone will say, “You have faith, and I have works.” Show me your faith without your works, and **I will show you my faith by my works.**”).
  2. By keeping the commandments of Christ, *I show my love...*
    - a. To Jesus:
      - i. Jn 14:15 – “If you love Me, keep My commandments.”
      - ii. Jn. 14:21 – “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.”
    - b. To God (1 Jn. 5:3 – “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”).
    - c. To the children of God (1 Jn. 5:2 – “By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.”).
  3. It is the proof of our relationship (1 Jn. 2:4-5 – “He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. <sup>5</sup> But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.”).
  4. When we think about it in these ways, keeping God’s commandments is very important!

### **III. Keeping God’s commandments helps us in becoming a new creation.**

- A. Coming into Christ means becoming a new creation.
1. Of course, God’s work of redemption in Christ is the means of our new life (2 Cor. 5:17 – “Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.”).
  2. Yet, coming into Christ raises us to live as a new creation, which requires keeping God’s commandments.
    - a. 1 Cor. 7:19 – “Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping the commandments of God is what matters.”
    - b. Gal 6:15 – “For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but a new creation.”
- B. So, keeping Jesus’ commandments is a part of what God uses to help us become a “new creation”?
1. It is the means of abiding in Christ’s love and being filled with joy (John 15:10-11 – “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. <sup>11</sup> “These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.”).
  2. It requires putting off ungodly, earthly ways, and putting on godly thoughts and ways (Col 3:1-6 – “If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. <sup>3</sup> For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. <sup>4</sup> When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory. <sup>5</sup> Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry. <sup>6</sup> Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience”).
  3. It requires putting on the characteristics of Christ (Col. 3:12-14 – “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; <sup>13</sup> bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against

another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. <sup>14</sup> But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.”).

4. Again, when we think of keeping the commandments of God as necessary to becoming a new creature in Christ, then keeping the commandments becomes very important!

#### **IV. Commandment-keeping should not be viewed as a burden too heavy to bear.**

- A. Consider words of those who lived this life!
  1. The Psalmist: “Your testimonies are wonderful; therefore my soul keeps them. <sup>130</sup> The entrance of Your words gives light; it gives understanding to the simple” (Psa. 119:129-30).
  2. The apostle John: “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome” (1 Jn. 5:3).
- B. The hardest part is deciding that you really want to keep all of God’s commandments!
  1. That requires understanding what is truly important in life and trusting God to provide it!
  2. The person who really hasn’t made up their mind to do this cannot expect God’s help (Jas. 1:6-8 – “But let him ask in faith, with no doubting, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. <sup>7</sup> For let not that man suppose that he will receive anything from the Lord; <sup>8</sup> he is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.”).
  3. But when we make up our minds He can and will help us do so.
    - a. Christ strengthens (Phil 4:13 – “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”).
    - b. God helps us overcome sin and temptation (1 Cor. 10:13 – “No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.”)..
    - c. God help encourages us to succeed (Phil. 2:12-13 – “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.”).
    - d. Even if we are forsaken by all others in times of greatest need, God will still be with us! (2 Tim. 4:16-18 – “At my first defense no one stood with me, but all forsook me. May it not be charged against them. <sup>17</sup> But the Lord stood with me and strengthened me, so that the message might be preached fully through me, and that all the Gentiles might hear. Also I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion. <sup>18</sup> And the Lord will deliver me from every evil work and preserve me for His heavenly kingdom. To Him be glory forever and ever. Amen!”).

#### **CONCLUSION:**

1. So, how important is it that we keep the commandments of God?
  - A. It is if you want to receive mercy from God (Psa. 103:17-18 – “But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting on those who fear Him, and His righteousness to children’s children, <sup>18</sup> To such as keep His covenant, and to those who remember His commandments to do them.”).
  - B. It is if you want to have fellowship with God (Jn. 14:23 – “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.”).
  - C. It is if you want your prayers answered (1 Jn. 3:22 – “And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.”).
2. So, if you are a child of God or want to be one, I want to encourage you to seek out God and determine to keep His commandments given us through Christ!
3. Will you come to Christ today, obeying His will in faith, by B-R-C-B-LF?