

## GOD'S COMMANDMENTS AND YOU

There will be times in your life when you will be tempted to set aside the commandment of God and commit yourself to a course that is wrong.

- a. You will be tempted to believe that because you have obeyed God in most things He will accept your disobedience in this one thing.
- b. I don't know which of God's commands you will be tempted to set aside, but I know the temptation will come.
  - ▶ I hope this lesson will help you prepare for that kind of temptation so that when the time comes you will do what's right.

Most of what I say in this sermon will come from **Psalm 119**, and I want to read you a portion of that psalm right now.

### **Psa 119:97-104**

97 Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.

98 You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they are ever with me.

99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation.

100 I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts.

101 I have restrained my feet from every evil way, That I may keep Your word.

102 I have not departed from Your judgments, For You Yourself have taught me.

103 How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth!

104 Through Your precepts I get understanding; Therefore I hate every false way.

This text is taken from the longest chapter in the Bible.

- a. It is appropriate that this, the longest chapter, emphasizes what it is that we should do throughout the length of our lives ~~ obey God's commandments.

### **1. IT IS ABSOLUTELY ESSENTIAL THAT WE DEVELOP THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD'S COMMANDMENTS.**

TRUE CHRISTIANS ARE COMMITTED TO OBEYING ALL OF GOD'S COMMANDMENTS (**Matt 28:19**).

- a. Some people have tried to see the Old Testament as the way of *obedience* and the New Testament as the way of *faith*.
  - ▶ But that idea is not taught in the Bible
    - **1Cor 9:20-21** ~~ "and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; 21 to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law;"
- b. It is clear from the first book to the last book, in the NT, that Jesus requires obedience to His commandments.
  - ▶ **Matt 7:21** ~~ "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven."
  - ▶ **Jn 15:10,14** ~~ "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. . . . 14 You are My friends if you do whatever I command you."
  - ▶ **Heb 5:8,9** ~~ "though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,"
  - ▶ **1Jn 2:3-5** ~~ "Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His

- commandments. 4 He who says, "I know Him," and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. 5 But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him."
- ▶ Rev 22:14 ~ "Blessed are those who do commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life, and may enter through the gates into the city."
- c. But the true Christian, in submitting to the commandments of God, is not practicing some kind of phony, hypocritical "perfectionism".
- ▶ The true Christian understands that the Bible is not just a collection of rules.
    - Yes, the Bible reveals the law of God -- but it also reveals His grace, and love, and mercy.
    - And it reveals so much more: wonderful truths . . . "exceeding great and precious promises" . . . and inspiring examples.
    - The true Christian obeys the commandments of God in response to the love of God and in hope of receiving the promises of God.
      - + Rom 6:17-18 ~ "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine to which you were delivered. 18 And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness.
      - + Gal 5:6 ~ "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails anything, but faith working through love."

#### TRUE CHRISTIANS UNDERSTAND THAT GOD'S COMMANDMENTS ARE A PRECIOUS GIFT.

- a. Many people resist the idea that following Christ means obeying His commandments because they think that's burdensome and dreary.
- ▶ They believe the lie told to Eve in the garden of Eden, that God's commandments are not really for our good.
  - ▶ But God's commandments are "for our good always" (Deut 6:24).
- b. In Psa 119 the psalmist expresses the kind of appreciation for God's laws and commandments that all of us ought to feel.
- ▶ vs111 -- "Your testimonies I have taken as a heritage forever, for they are the rejoicing of my heart."
  - ▶ vs162 -- "I rejoice at Your word as one who finds great treasure."
  - ▶ vs72 -- "The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of coins of gold and silver."
  - ▶ vs127 -- "Therefore I love Your commandments more than gold, yes, than fine gold!"
- c. We **need** the Lord's commandments.
- ▶ We need the Lord's commandments to guide us in the way of wisdom.
    - We are like sheep; we must be led -- Jer 10:23.
      - + vs98-100 -- "You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; for they are ever with me. 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, for Your testimonies are my meditation. 100 I understand more than the ancients, because I keep Your precepts."
      - + vs105 -- "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."
      - + vs9 -- "How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word."
  - ▶ We need the Lord's commandments so that we can know how to worship God and walk in fellowship with God.
    - + vs7 -- "I will praise You with uprightness of heart, when I learn Your righteous judgments."
    - + vs11 -- "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You!"
- d. And, if your heart is right, the commandments of God are not beyond your ability to

understand and do.

- ▶ Deut 30:11-14 ~~ “For this commandment which I command you today is not too mysterious for you, nor is it far off. 12 It is not in heaven, that you should say, ‘Who will ascend into heaven for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ 13 Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, ‘Who will go over the sea for us and bring it to us, that we may hear it and do it?’ 14 But the word is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may do it.”

TRUE CHRISTIANS HAVE THE SAME ATTITUDE TOWARD THE LORD’S COMMANDMENTS AS THE PSALMIST DOES IN PSALM 119.

a. **Respect**

- ▶ vs161 ~~ “. . . my heart stands in **awe** of Your word”

b. **Longing**

- ▶ vs131 ~~ “I opened my mouth and panted, for I **longed** for Your commandments”
- ▶ vs20 ~~ “My soul breaks with **longing** for Your judgments at all times”

c. **Delight**

- ▶ vs47 ~~ “And I will **delight** myself in Your commandments, which I **love**.”
- ▶ vs103 -- “How **sweet** are Your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!”

d. And this attitude toward God’s commandments will lead us to a zealous diligence . . .

▶ **To learn God’s commandments**

- vs45: “I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts”
- vs97 -- “Oh how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.”
- vs11 -- “Your word I have hidden in my heart . . .”
- vs16 -- “I will delight myself in Your statutes; I will not forget Your word”

▶ **To do God’s commandments**

- vs8: “I will keep Your statutes . . .”
- vs106 -- “I have sworn and confirmed that I will keep Your righteous judgments.”
- vs33-34 -- “Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. 34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.”
- vs59-60 -- “I thought about my ways, and turned my feet to Your testimonies. 60 I made haste, and did not delay to keep Your commandments.”

▶ **To teach God’s commandments** to others

- v13 -- “With my lips I have declared all the judgments of Your mouth.”
- vs46 -- “I will speak of Your testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.”

## 2. BUT WE NEED MORE THAN A GOOD ATTITUDE TOWARD THE COMMANDS OF GOD; WE ALSO NEED HUMILITY, AND WE NEED HELP.

ALONG WITH A POSITIVE ATTITUDE TOWARD GOD’S COMMANDMENTS, WE FIND THAT THE PSALMIST, IN PSALM 119, IS HUMBLED BY HIS RECOGNITION OF HIS OWN LIMITATIONS.

a. The Lord’s commandments are not beyond us.

- ▶ We can understand God’s commands, and we can do them.
- ▶ But, still, we must reach up to them.

b. We must seek God’s help in faithfully doing His commandments.

- ▶ vs173 ~~ “Let Your hand become my help, for I have chosen Your precepts.”
- ▶ Jn 15:5 ~~ “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing.”
- ▶ Php 2:13 ~~ “. . . for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure”

- ▶ Php 4:13 ~ “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”
- ▶ Heb 13:20-21 ~ “Now may the God of peace . . . 21 make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight . . .”

AND OUT OF THAT HUMILITY OF HEART COMES A CRY FOR GOD’S HELP IN UNDERSTANDING AND DOING HIS COMMANDMENTS.

- a. So, I want us to look at some of the prayers found in **Psa 119**, and I want us to let these prayers be our prayers.
  - ▶ And remember: it takes a certain kind of heart to faithfully obey God’s commandments
    - According to the Parable of the Sower, the seed of the kingdom (the word of God) does not produce any lasting good in the heart that’s represented by the wayside soil, the stony ground, and the thorny ground -- “**but the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience**” (Lk 8:15)
- b. We need to pray to God for that kind of heart.
  - ▶ As David does in **Psa 51:10** ~ “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

THE PSALMIST, IN PSALM 119, PRAYED FOR AN UNDERSTANDING HEART.

- a. **vs33-34** ~ “Teach me, O LORD, the way of Your statutes, and I shall keep it to the end. 34 Give me understanding, and I shall keep Your law; indeed, I shall observe it with my whole heart.”
  - ▶ **vs73** ~ “Your hands have made me and fashioned me; give me understanding, that I may learn Your commandments.”
  - ▶ **vs125** ~ “I am Your servant; give me understanding, that I may know Your testimonies.”
- b. He prayed that he might understand God’s law.
  - ▶ **v12** ~ “Blessed are You, O LORD! Teach me Your statutes!”
  - ▶ **v18** ~ “Open my eyes, that I may see wondrous things from Your law.”
- c. He also prayed that he might know how to apply God’s law.
  - ▶ **vs66** ~ “Teach me good judgment and knowledge, for I believe Your commandments.”
- d. Even among those who are faithfully obedient to the Lord’s commandments, there is always room for improvement.
  - ▶ **1Th 4:1** ~ “Finally then, brethren, we urge and exhort in the Lord Jesus that you should abound more and more, just as you received from us how you ought to walk and to please God . . .”

THE PSALMIST, IN PSALM 119, PRAYED FOR A MOTIVATED HEART.

- a. He prayed for a heart inclined to obey.
  - ▶ **vs36** ~ “Make me walk in the path of Your commandments, for I delight in it.”
- b. We have all seen the tragedy of a person who *knows* what God commands, but is not motivated to *do* it.
  - ▶ Example: King Agrippa (**Ac 26:27** ~ “King Agrippa, do you believe the prophets? I know that you do believe.”)
- c. **vs165-168** talk about the things God has given to motivate us to do what we know is right to do.
  - ▶ “Great **peace** have those who love Your law, And nothing causes them to stumble. 166 LORD, I **hope for** Your **salvation**, And I do Your commandments. 167 My soul keeps Your testimonies, And I **love** them exceedingly. 168 I keep Your precepts and Your testimonies, For **all my ways are before You.**”
    - These are strong motivators: the desire for peace with God . . . the hope of salvation . . . love for God and His word . . . the knowledge that God sees all

that we do.

THE PSALMIST, IN PSALM 119, PRAYED FOR A STEADFAST HEART.

- a. vs38 ~~ “Establish Your word to Your servant, who is **devoted** to fearing You.”
- b. vs10 ~~ “With my whole heart I have sought You; Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!”

**Conclusion.**

May the Lord give us . . .

- a. an understanding mind
- b. a motivated spirit
- c. and a steadfast will to obey his commandments