

## **Love *and* Justice: The Two Greatest Commandments**

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**Memory Text:** “If someone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen?” (1 John 4:20, NKJV).

- Thru/out Bible = evidence makes clear
  - We can have confidence God will make all things right in end
- Many injustices / evils now = God won’t eradicate immediately
  - because of moral obligations – rules of engagement
    - to allow short time for Satan’s lies to be disproved
  - And because of self-imposed boundaries of love
    - God will not violate = His gift of free will to us
- If we love God = will love one another
  - share concern for others well-being
- God expects His children to help alleviate suffering / evil
  - to whatever degree possible
- If we love God = we will love justice
  - His love/just are inseparably entwined
- Affliction of poverty / oppression / any kind of injustice s
  - Should concern us
- Cannot turn blind eye = rather must ask what we can do = individually / corporately to advance God’s love / justice
  - in way that reflects to our broken world
  - our Lord’s perfect character of righteousness / love.

**SUNDAY****The Two Greatest Commandments**

**ABSG QUOTE** To reflect on what we might do, individually and corporately, to advance God's love and justice in our world, it is appropriate to begin by focusing on what God has commanded us. **UN**

**Matthew 22:34–40** <sup>34</sup>But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. <sup>35</sup>Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, <sup>36</sup>“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?”

<sup>37</sup>Jesus said to him, “ ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ <sup>38</sup>This is the first and great commandment. <sup>39</sup>And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ [same idea as Golden Rule = do unto others]

<sup>40</sup>On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”

- Indeed, these commands / quoted from OT – **Deut 6:5, Lev 19:18**
- **Love for God = first 4 commandments / Love for others = 6**
- Divine love = cannot be achieved on our own
- God is love = nature of self-sacrificing love = love does no harm
- Love works to provide abundant life now = always having eternal benefit in mind
- **Romans 5:5** God pours His love into our hearts = by HS

**1 Thessalonians 3:12–13** <sup>12</sup>may the Lord make you increase and abound in love to one another and to all, just as we do to you, <sup>13</sup>so that He may establish your hearts blameless in holiness before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all His saints.

- As He conforms us to image of Christ = we become more loving
- More we love = more we become like Him
- Grow in love = grow in holiness = separation of sin

- God responds to us = self-sacrificing actions of grace/mercy/ truth
- **1 John 3:18** My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth.

**Matthew 19:16–23** <sup>16</sup>Now behold, one came and said to Him, “Good Teacher, what good thing shall I do that I may have eternal life?” <sup>17</sup>So He said to him, “Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. [i.e. are you flattering Me, or do you recognize I am God?] But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.” <sup>18</sup>He said to Him, “Which ones?” Jesus said, “ ‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ <sup>19</sup>‘Honor your father and your mother,’ and, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ ” <sup>20</sup>The young man said to Him, “All these things I have kept from my youth. What do I still lack?”

- **Mark 10:21 parallel account** = Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, [Jesus knew / wanted what was best for this young ruler]

**Matthew 19:21** <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to him, “If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.”

<sup>22</sup>But when the young man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful, for he had great possessions. <sup>23</sup>Then Jesus said to His disciples, “Assuredly, I say to you that it is hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

- Rich Young Ruler = exalted position / great possessions = cherished power/wealth more than walking w/God = idol
- Evidently didn’t recognize = Person of Jesus Christ as God = who had not grasped His exalted position/possessions = but humbled Himself to become Son of Man = die on Cross **Phil 2:5-8**

***The Desire of Ages*, p. 520.** To keep back little or much from God was to retain that which would lessen his moral strength and efficiency; for if

the things of this world are cherished, however uncertain and unworthy they may be, they will become all-absorbing.”

- **Though we might not all be called to sell all that we have, as was this rich young ruler,**
- **what might you, personally, be clinging to that if you don't give up, could lead to your eternal ruin?**