

The Second Commandment

"And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked him, Which is the first commandment of all? And Jesus answered him, The first of all commandments is, Hear, O Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord: And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. And the second is like, namely this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these." (Mark 12:28-31).

The apostle John wrote, "If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment we have from him, That he who loveth God loveth his brother also." (I John 4:20-21). James said, "But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be." (James 3:8-10). Both John and James echoed the words of Jesus regarding love for our fellow man. Both expressed the same sentiment of the Savior in stating that love for God and love for mankind are inextricably bound. If we don't have one, we don't have the other. It's just that simple.

Just as love for God shows itself in obedience to God's will, love for man shows itself in service to others. In the great judgment scene of Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus spoke of those who in life had served Him as well as those who had not. As He spoke of being visited, clothed and ministered unto, He was asked by the respective groups, "When saw we thee (in these conditions)?" To those who showed their love through service to mankind, Jesus said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." (verse 40). To those who thought only of service to self He said, "Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me." (verse 45). If we are not willing to be servants, we are not showing the love for others that God expects and thus in turn cannot truthfully be referred to as people who love God.

Our love for mankind is seen in the way we treat others. We may sorely disagree with someone. We may even greatly dislike their actions. Nonetheless, we must never cease to see them as eternal souls who need the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus said, "Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you: That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." (Matthew 5:44-45). We must always speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15).

Our love for our fellow man is demonstrated in our efforts (or lack of same) to teach others the saving message of salvation through Jesus Christ. The ultimate demonstration of love was Jesus' sacrificial death (John 3:16). How can we be considered loving toward our fellow man if we keep this marvelous message of salvation to ourselves?

Love for God is the first commandment but Jesus indicated that love for man, the second commandment, follows closely behind. Our love for our fellow man must be shown in our service to, our treatment of and our spiritual concern for each and every man and woman on the face of the earth. Did Jesus die for all or, as per Calvinism, did Jesus die only for a chosen few? Romans 5:6-8 declares that Jesus died for all. Should we not ourselves follow in His steps of sacrifice and service in showing love to all rather than just a chosen few? (Matthew 5:46-47).

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