

10 – What Happened to Right and Wrong? (God’s Law)



Does It Really Make a Difference?



A man stormed into police headquarters one day, very upset. Someone had broken into his home and taken several valuable items. He had managed to catch a glimpse of the thief and demanded that the police do something about it.

So the officer in charge led him over to a stack of mug-shot books. He helped the man look through the pictures of people with criminal records, to see if he recognized the burglar.



Suddenly the officer said, “Wait a minute!” He pointed to a picture on the page and took a careful look—from the photo to the man’s face and back again. “That’s you!” the policeman exclaimed, “And it says there is an outstanding warrant for your arrest!”

As it turned out, the outraged homeowner, who had stomped into the police station demanding justice, ended up unwittingly identifying himself as a wanted criminal!



It seems like crime and violence are everywhere, even where you do not expect it. It is in the work place, in schools, in shopping malls, and even churches. And it’s not just organized crime. More and more we read about lone individuals, young or old, often without a criminal record, going on violent shooting sprees, killing multiple victims.



Why is such crime on the rise?

What’s behind the lawlessness and violence?

What has happened to our world?



In the Western world and more affluent countries of the world, a whole new generation of youth has emerged – youth who are questioning, skeptical and challenging.

And who are their role models? Many times they are drawn to the entertainers and athletes who are “living for the moment.” Too often they watch their own parents lie or steal when it’s

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convenient.



Some churches today are even teaching that God's standard of right and wrong no longer applies.



His commandments, they say, have been abolished,



or are no longer relevant,



or are impossible to keep.



Without moral guidance, many people are just doing their own thing—and society is reaping a harvest of broken homes, uncontrolled children, and violent crimes.



(Text: Hosea 8:7)
In the words of Hosea, the prophet,
“They sow the wind, and reap the whirlwind.”

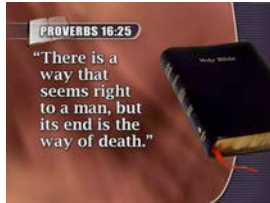
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But the question must be asked: Who determines when a situation is right or wrong?

Isn't the moral judgment of even good people often imperfect at times?

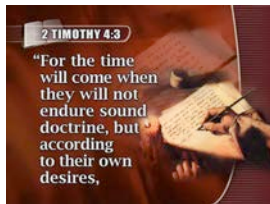


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(Text: Proverbs 16:25)

The Bible reminds us that we are not good judges of what is right and what is wrong: "There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death." Proverbs 16:25.

The fact is that our natural hearts often really don't want to know the truth about right and wrong. The apostle Paul predicted:



15

(Text: 2 Timothy 4:3, 4)

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires,



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because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers;



17

and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."

2 Timothy 4:3, 4.



18

Yes, sad to say, we are discovering that we do not get freedom by throwing out the rules!

It should be no surprise to anyone that if you remove the standard of right and wrong, chaos results.

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If you removed all the traffic signs and signals, there would be chaos on the roads and highways.

No, true freedom isn't found in getting rid of the rules. We don't prosper when we forget the foundations of a prosperous society.



A long time ago God gave us a formula for a crime-free society. And had it always been followed, crime would never have existed! Everyone would be safe and happy any place on Earth.



(Text: Exodus 20:2)

When the children of Israel camped at Mount Sinai, the Lord came down to meet them and said, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Exodus 20:2.



First the Lord identified Himself as their Deliverer from slavery. He was the One who had opened up the Red Sea before them; He was their Protector. In other words, He was saying, "I care for you. You can trust Me."



Then He gave them His divine law so that they could know how to live in peace and safety—so that man would know the difference between right and wrong.



Let's take a quick look at a list of the Ten Commandments which He spoke atop Mount Sinai:

(Text: 10 Commandments from Exodus 20)

"You shall have no other gods before Me..."



"You shall not make for yourself a carved image...you shall not bow down to them..."

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26

“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain...



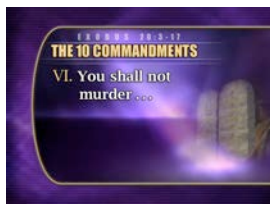
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“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor... but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God....



28

“Honor your father and your mother...



29

“You shall not murder...



30

“You shall not commit adultery.



31

“You shall not steal.



32

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

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33

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbors wife, nor his male servant,



34

nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.” Exodus 20:3-17.



35

Knowing how forgetful we humans can be, God wrote the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone with His own finger.



36

(Text: Exodus 31:18)
“When the LORD finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai,



37

He gave him the two tablets of the Testimony,



38

the tablets of stone inscribed by the finger of God.” Exodus 31:18
Even though this was the first time God had given His law in written form, it had existed from all eternity. The eternal, unchangeable standard of morality had been the basis of God’s heavenly government.



39

In fact, even the angels were governed by God’s commandments. They were given the choice of either following God’s law or ignoring it and rebelling against it.

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40

Satan and his angels chose to rebel, and this rebellion led to their expulsion from heaven.



41

(Text: Revelation 12:7-9)

The Bible says, “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought,



42

but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in heaven any longer.”



43

So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world;



44

he was cast to the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” Revelation 12:7-9.

But there were angels who chose to follow God and remain loyal to His law.



45

(Text: Psalm 103:20)

“Bless the Lord, ye His angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments.”

Psalm 103:20



46

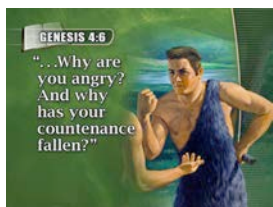
Adam and Eve had a knowledge of God’s law in Eden, for they felt the emotions of shame and guilt after they sinned.

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47

And when Cain became angry because God accepted Abel’s offering and not his, the Lord asked him,



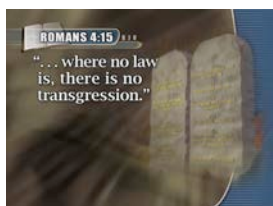
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(Text: Genesis 4:6, 7)
“Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen?



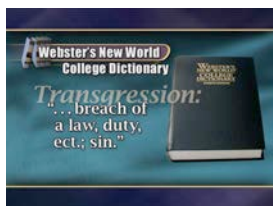
49

If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin lies at the door.” Genesis 4:6, 7.
God’s law had to be in effect at the time, for we are told,



50

(Text: Romans 4:15)
“...where no law is, there is no transgression.” Romans 4:15.



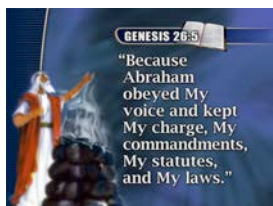
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Webster’s New World College Dictionary says,
“Transgression...breach of a law, duty, etc.; sin..”



52

Abraham knew and obeyed the law of God long before the law was spoken on Sinai.



53

(Text: Genesis 26:5)
God said He would bless Abraham and his descendants, “Because Abraham obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My Commandments, My statutes and My laws.”
Genesis 26:5.

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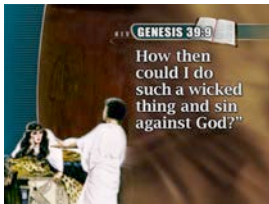
Of course, long before Sinai, Joseph’s sensitive conscience led him to meet the temptation of Potiphar’s wife by saying,



55

(Text: Genesis 39:9)

“My master has withheld nothing from me except you, because you are his wife.



56

How then could I do such a wicked thing and sin against God?”
Genesis 39:9.



57

Joseph knew that adultery was sin; he knew God’s standard of right and wrong.

He had firmly determined not to transgress God’s Holy Law!



58

The children of Israel had been instructed to serve and obey God, but during their cruel captivity in Egypt, they forgot God’s law.



59

After the Exodus, just a few weeks before they reached Sinai, the Lord rebuked Moses because the Israelites were breaking His law by attempting to gather manna on the Sabbath:



60

(Text: Exodus 16:28, 30)

“And the Lord said unto Moses, ‘How long do you refuse to keep My commandments and My laws?’”

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61

So the people rested on the seventh day.”

Exodus 16:28, 30.

So you see, the fourth commandment was recognized before Sinai.



62

Yes, God's law is the eternal standard of right for the universe.

And really, should it surprise us that God has a law governing His kingdom?



63

No harmonious, happy, safe society can function without rules.

Even children cannot play games without rules! Is it any surprise that God's government should also have rules to follow?



64

(Text: 1 Corinthians 14:33)

The apostle Paul wrote: “For God is not the author of confusion...”

The New Testament does not do away with the law, instead it

helps us better understand the reason for its existence, and how we can obey God's commandments.



65

(Text: John 14:15)

Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep my commandments.” John 14:15.

In fact, Jesus, quoting from the Old Testament, pointed out that love is the basis for keeping all the commandments.



66

(Text: Matthew 22:37-40)

“...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.

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67

This is the first and great commandment.”



68

Then Jesus said, “The second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.



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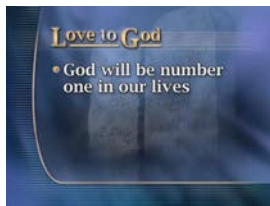
On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.”
Matthew 22:37-40.

If we truly love God with all our heart, mind, and soul,



70

we certainly will express that love by keeping the first four commandments:



71

God will be number one in our lives



72

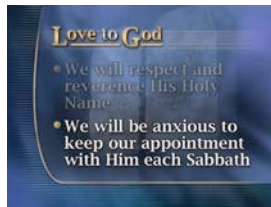
Our worship will be reserved for Him alone



73

We will respect and reverence His Holy Name

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74

We will be anxious to keep our appointment with Him each Sabbath



75

And if we really love our fellow men as we love ourselves, we will surely:



76

Respect and honor our parents



77

Value life



78

Preserve morality



79

Respect the property of others



80

Be honest in our relationships with each other

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81

Not covet that which belongs to another.

These are amazingly concise, yet comprehensive principles to live by!



82

Estimates indicate that, to control behavior, man has drafted more than 35 million laws.

But in the Ten Commandments, God gave principles that truly cover all human behavior.

Only God could write such a perfect law. The Bible says:



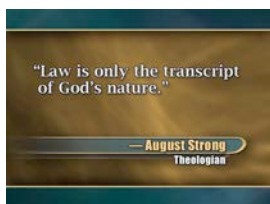
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(Text: Psalm 19:7)

"The law of the Lord is perfect converting the soul."

Psalm 19:7

Perhaps the reason the law is perfect is because it is a reflection of the very Person of God.



84

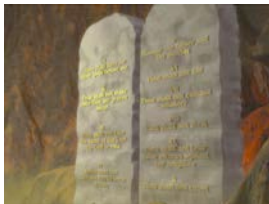
A Bible scholar named August Strong wrote:

"Law is only the transcript of God's nature."



85

Today we would say, "The Ten Commandments are but a profile of God's character—a character that is unchangeable!"



86

Being a perfect law, it can never be altered. Just as God doesn't change, but is the same eternally, so the principles of His government remain the same in all times and in all places.



87

(Text: Luke 16:17)

That is the truth Jesus spoke when He said:

"And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle [tiny part] of the law to fail"

Luke 16:17.

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88

But, you say, “I’ve always felt that the Ten Commandments restricted my happiness—sort of fenced me in.”

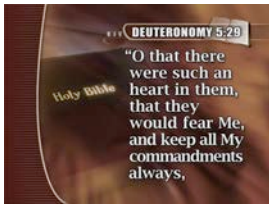
God never meant His law to be a burden to man or to restrict his happiness.



89

On the contrary, God intended it to be a wall of protection, shielding us from sorrow and guilt.

He intended that His law would ensure everyone’s freedom and safety everywhere.



90

(Text: Deuteronomy 5:29)

The Lord said, “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My commandments always,



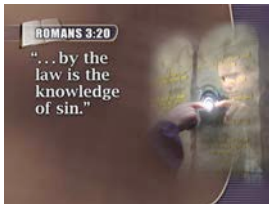
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that it might be well with them, and with their children forever!” Deuteronomy 5:29.



92

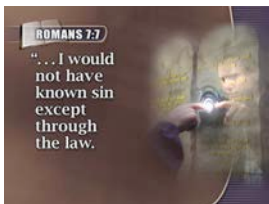
Just as we build guardrails on bridges and mountain roads to protect us from danger, God gave us His law to protect and guard us on the road of life.



93

(Text: Romans 3:20)

But there is another reason God gave man His law: “...by the law is the knowledge of sin.” Romans 3:20.

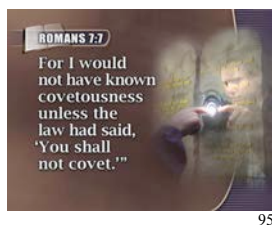


94

(Text: Romans 7:7)

As Paul said, “...I would not have known sin except through the law.

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For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.' ”
Romans 7:7.



A story is told about a princess who had been led to believe by her subjects that her beauty was unsurpassed.



However, one day a trader came to her village and sold her a mirror.
When she looked into the mirror she was horrified by her appearance and smashed the mirror to pieces!



God's law is like a mirror, and as we look into it, like the princess, we may not be pleased with what we see, but destroying the law or ignoring it won't change our condition.



God's law points out our sins and helps us feel the need of a Savior.
For while it shows us the problem, the law cannot give us power to overcome sin or remove guilt.



No amount of good we can do in the future will erase sin committed in the past.
How then can we receive forgiveness?
How can we be saved from the penalty of a broken law, which is death?



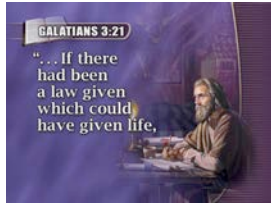
At the very gates of the Garden of Eden, God instituted a graphic reminder that disobeying heaven's eternal principles brings death. An innocent lamb was to be offered to show the faith of the sinner in God's plan to save man.

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102

This was God's way of helping Adam understand how the innocent Son of God must die to satisfy the claims of a broken law. Christ, the Lamb of God, would take man's punishment and suffer his death. It was the only way for man to be restored. The broken law certainly couldn't save him!

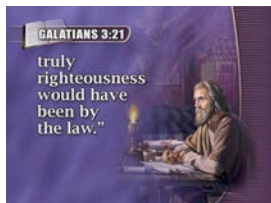


103

(Text: Galatians 3:21)

The apostle Paul said,

"If there had been a law given which could have given life,



104

truly righteousness would have been by the law."

Galatians 3:21.

If the law could save us, Christ wouldn't have had to die. If the principles of the law weren't very important, they could have just been changed and man's sin excused. But they are the principles of the very character of God! God in His love and mercy found a way to save man that was in perfect harmony with heaven's principles. But Jesus' sacrifice doesn't do away with the law!



105

Think of it for a moment.



106

If there is no law, there is no sin,
because sin is the
"transgression of the law."



107

If there is no law, we do not need grace, since grace is God's loving mercy when we have broken God's law.

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108

If we don't need grace, we can do away with the cross.



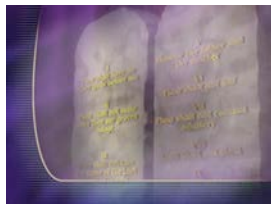
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If there is no need for the cross, we certainly don't need a Savior. If you do away with the law, you also do away with Sin, and the need for Grace, the Cross, and a Savior.



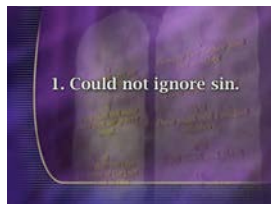
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The old rugged cross on a hill called Mount Calvary is an eternal memorial of the price God was willing to pay to satisfy the claims of the broken law and save guilty man.



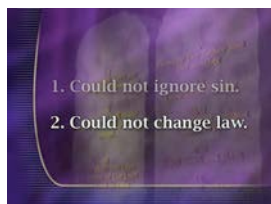
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If God's law could have been abolished or changed, Jesus would not have needed to die. Calvary would have been unnecessary.



112

But God could not ignore guilty man's sins!



113

He couldn't change His law.



114

So sinful man needed a Savior. And thank God for His love in consenting to give His only-begotten Son to die as our substitute!"

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(Text: John 3:16)

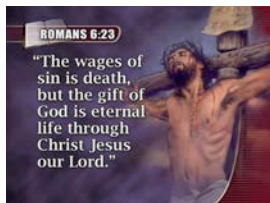
“For God so loved the world, that He gave his only begotten Son,



116

that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.”

John 3:16.



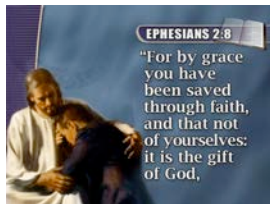
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(Text: Romans 6:23)

For, “The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 6:23.

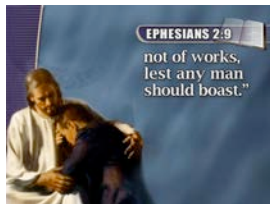
Yes, God's love led Him to give the gift of Jesus, so that we could enjoy eternal life with Him. The more we study this gift, the more we realize that there's nothing we can do to deserve or earn it.



118

(Text: Ephesians 2:8, 9)

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,



119

not of works, lest any man should boast.”

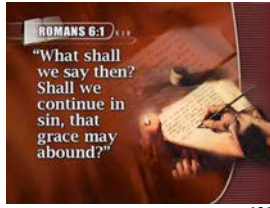
Ephesians 2:8, 9.



120

So, some might ask, If we are saved by grace, are we free then to live a life of disobedience? NEVER!

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121

(Text: Romans 6:1, 2)

Paul wrote: "What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound?"



122

God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?"

Romans 6:1, 2.

Salvation is offered to those who want to be saved from sin and want to be a part of God's kingdom.

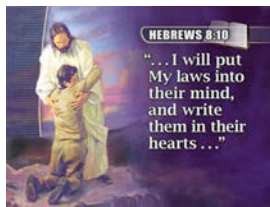


123

Suppose a man is in prison for killing a policeman. If he receives a pardon and is set free, does that mean he is then free to kill as many police as he wants? Of course not!

Because he is pardoned, he will want more than ever to obey the law.

As we accept pardon from Christ, He provides forgiveness and also the power to keep His commandments, for He promised:



124

(Text: Hebrews 8:10)

"...I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts..."

Hebrews 8:10.



125

It is easy to do something you love to do, isn't it?

And that is what the Lord promised to those who choose to follow Him: He will write His law in their heart so they will love to keep it.

That is the only way man will be able to obey and follow God.



126

It was because of His love for His Father that Christ was able to keep the commandments, for He said,

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127

(Text: John 15:10)

“I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love.”

John 15:10.

And Jesus asks us to show our love for Him by keeping His commandments:



128

(Text: John 14:15)

“If you love me, keep my commandments.”

John 14:15.



129

The book of Revelation describes the people who are ready to meet Jesus at His second coming and go home with Him to spend eternity in the Heavenly City.



130

(Text: Revelation 14:12)

God says this about them:

“Here is the patience of the saints: here are those who kept the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

Revelation 14:12.



131

Evidently it won't always be easy. It won't always be popular. But John the Revelator saw God's last day people as keeping His commandments even in the face of opposition and persecution:



132

(Text: Revelation 12:17)

“And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring



133

who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

Revelation 12:17.

Why will they be keeping the commandments of God? Because they love Him!

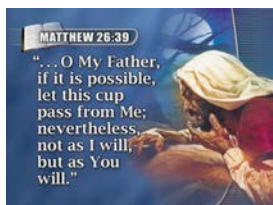
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134

The greatest demonstration of love and obedience to the will of God was vividly portrayed one cold, dark night under an old olive tree in a garden.

With drops of blood trickling down His face, the Son of God prayed,



135

(Text: Matthew 26:39)

“...O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will....”

Matthew 26:39.

The fate of the human race hung in the balance—a guilty world was to be saved or lost. Would this young Galilean put all desire for life and human fulfillment aside and die at Calvary?

He could wipe the sweat from His brow and say, “Let the sinner suffer the consequence of his own sins.”



136

Or He could carry the cross for us. I'm so thankful He made that choice to die for our sins! He shed His blood so that we could be pardoned.



137

He died the death that was ours so that we could live eternally with Him. And He did it all because of love.

That love does something to our hearts. It awakens a love for Him in return.



138

God's people love their Redeemer so much that they want to do all that He asks or desires.

They want to show their love for Him by doing His will.

They want to live the way He lived, and make His principles their own.



(Text: John 14:15)

They want to follow His simple request: “If you love me, keep my commandments.”

John 14:15.

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Is that your desire tonight? Do you want to love the One who first loved us? Do you want to make His principles your own? Jesus wants to write His law, His principles in your heart, to make them an actual part of who you are. He wants to give you the grace and power to keep His law. You may feel weak, but Jesus is strong. No matter how many times you've failed in the past, Jesus invites you to begin anew with Him today.

Would you like to quietly kneel and say, "Lord, yes, I am willing?" "I'm willing to surrender my ideas for Yours. I'm willing to live by Your principles. I want Your law to be written in my heart. I want to keep Your commandments, because I love You." Would you like to pray that prayer tonight? If so, I'd invite right now to simply slip to your knees. Forget about the audience. Think only of Jesus as you kneel. The prayer of our hearts right now is, "Yes, Jesus, I am willing." Let's pray.

[Suggested Prayer]

"Dear Jesus, thank for loving us so much that you were willing – willing to die on Calvary's cross for our sins. Please give us willing hearts today. Please take our hard hearts and give us hearts made soft by Your love. Give us hearts that will love and obey You in return.

Thank you for giving us Your commandments as a guide for happy, holy, eternal living. Please write them in our hearts and make them the principles by which we live our lives. Tonight we want to be among those You describe as keeping Your commandments. We want to be obedient – not because we have to, but because we love You.

Please come again soon to save us in Your kingdom. And when You come, help us to be among those who are ready and waiting for Your return. Help us to be among those who are keeping the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus, we pray in His name, Amen."
