

# Commands of Jesus Sermon Series

## *Love Demonstrated*

### March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2020

Let's begin this morning by considering two very important questions.

1. **Can I effectively order someone to love me?**

2. **How would I obey such a command?**

Let's look at this from a parent to child relationship. Can I as a parent command my son or daughter to love me? For example: As a parent I can order my child to go clean their room. And that order can be either obeyed or disobeyed based on the resulting cleanliness of their room. But we're in a different realm when we talk about ordering someone to love you. I sat in on a counseling session once where a husband complained that his wife wouldn't obey him. But I've never been a part of a counseling session where the husband complained that his wife wouldn't love him.

And yet these questions are precisely the foundation of the Biblical texts we're going to be looking at this morning. In the book of Deuteronomy are laid out various commands of God that the Israelite nation are to faithfully keep. At the beginning of them is what is often referred to as the Shema and that Jews back then and even today repeat twice a day to remind themselves of who they are and how they are expected to live their lives. **Please read this with me.**

**Deuteronomy 6:4-7 (NIV)** *Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. 5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. 7 Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up.*

A couple of observations from this.

1. **God wants more than mere obedience. He wants a relationship with you.**
2. **God wants all of you.** He's not content with a part-time relationship. He doesn't want to be just a portion of your busy life. He demands to be the core commitment and the deepest love of your life.

When we turn to the New Testament we see the same emphasis from Jesus.

During the last week of his life, prior to his crucifixion, Jesus is in the Temple teaching. And the Jewish leaders are there trying to trap him and discredit him with their questions.

- First the **Pharisees** tried to trick Jesus by asking them if it's **lawful to pay taxes to Caesar**. It says they were stumped by Jesus' response and left.
- Next, the **Sadducees** tried to stump Jesus by asking him a question of **who a woman would be married to in heaven** if each brother married her and then died. Once again, Jesus' answer stumped the Sadducees.
- So, when the **Pharisees** heard that Jesus had silenced the Sadducees they tried once again to stump him. One of the Pharisees, who was a lawyer, came forward to **"test him."** And he asked him, **"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?"**

**Matthew 22:37-40 (NIV)** Jesus replied: **"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' 38 This is the first and greatest commandment. 39 And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."**

To make it simple to understand this morning:

- **The heart is the seat of your emotions.** How do you change your feelings for someone? You get to know them by spending time with them. Therefore, in order for you to love God deeper you'll need to spend time with Him – sharing your deepest desires, your hurts and joys and listening to His heart. Spend time reflecting on who God is and what He's done for you and is continuing to do in and for you.
- **The mind is the seat of your intellect.** To love God we must know Him. One of the steps to loving God would be to get to know Him better. You do that by reading God's Word and particularly by studying the life of Jesus. Jesus came to show us the Father. **John 14:7 (NIV) If**

*you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." And a short while later he said "Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father". (John 14:9)*

- **The soul is the seat of your will.** You determine every single day how you're going to live your life. You choose where to go and what to do and who to spend your time with and thinking about. You choose what to spend your money on and which interests to pursue. God is commanding us to spend our time loving Him.

This is just like anyone else that you love deeply in your life. How do you live your life in love with them? You think about them, you want to spend time with them and you pattern your life around demonstrating your love for them. It's obvious to the people around you that you're in love with them.

The summary would be that God wants all of us. He wants a life-long love relationship with you. You often see this kind of relationship reflected in the writings of the psalms.

**Psalms 73:25 (NIV)** *Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you.*

**Psalms 16:2 (NIV)** *I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; apart from you I have no good thing."*

**Psalms 43:4 (NIV)** *Then I will go to the altar of God, to God, my joy and my delight*

One of the frequent criticisms God had for the Israelites and Jesus had for the Pharisees and the Sadducees was that their deeds were fine but their hearts were far from him.

**Isaiah 29:13 (NIV)** The Lord says: *"These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me."*

**Matthew 15:7-8 (NIV)** *You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: 8 "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.*

**God is after not merely your obedience. He wants an exclusive relationships of love with His children.**

So, the answer to how can you obey the command to love God is by spending time with Him and getting to know about Him, through His Word and reflecting on the life of Jesus and by giving all your energy to making Him great for everyone else to see, in every aspect of your life. But God is also committed to helping you develop this love relationship with Him.

**1 John 4:7-13 (NIV)** *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. 9 This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that **we might live through him.** 10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. 12 No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, **God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.** 13 This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: **He has given us of his Spirit.***

Your ever deepening love for God is not just produced by your will power. It's also developed and deepened through the work of God in you through His indwelling Spirit. So, part of the answer to "how do you obey the command to love God" is by yielding your life and will completely to the leading and empowering of the indwelling Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit won't force you to do this. It's you daily surrendering your will and passions and desires to God's control. It's saying, God I want to give all of me completely to you today.

Both here and in our original passage in Matthew, the natural overflow of our love for God is our love for the people around us.

*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God (1 John 4:7a)*

*And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' (Matthew 22:39a)*

We are commanded to love the people around us. And of course when asked to define who a "neighbor" is, Jesus proceeded to tell the parable of the **Good Samaritan**. The hero of the story was the Samaritan man who spent his time and money and risked his own life to take care of the man beaten up and laying on the side of the road. Jesus intentionally pointed out that a "neighbor" is not just the people who are just like us, but those who may be quite different from us. People who may even irritate us and make us uncomfortable. Follow the lead of Jesus who reached out to the rejected by society and showed them the love and the compassion and the glory of God through his words and healing touch.

When he was in the Upper Room with his disciples, Jesus gave us a standard of love that is quite challenging and yet can be empowering as well. He said to them: *"A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."* (John 13:34-35)

What's the extent of our love for one another? ". *As I have loved you*. This took on a whole new significance when he died on the cross for them and you and me.

Notice that Jesus says this is a "*new*" commandment. The word he uses doesn't mean new in time but new in quality. There's never been a quality or depth of love like this prior to this point in time. What makes it new is the standard of love it requires. Love others to the depth that Jesus loved us. That's sacrificial love. And when the world sees this type of love, it sits up and takes notice.

Coming full circle:

1. God can effectively command us to love Him because of what He's done for us through Jesus and because He's committed to helping us fall deeper in love with Him through His indwelling Spirit.
2. We can obey this command by submitting all of us to His control, by getting to know Him better, and by allowing the Holy Spirit to fill us up to overflowing so that God's love spills over to all of our relationships.

Next week we're going to be looking at Jesus' challenging command to "Love our Enemies" and discovering what that means and how it's even possible.

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2. How would I \_\_\_\_\_ such a command?

**Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-7)**

1. God wants more than mere \_\_\_\_\_. He wants a \_\_\_\_\_ with you.
2. God wants \_\_\_\_\_ of you. He demands to be the \_\_\_\_\_ and deepest \_\_\_\_\_ of your life.

**Matthew 22:37-40**

1. The heart is the seat of your \_\_\_\_\_
2. The mind is the seat of your \_\_\_\_\_
3. The soul is the seat of your \_\_\_\_\_

God is after not merely your \_\_\_\_\_. He wants an exclusive relationships of \_\_\_\_\_ with His children.

**1 John 4:7-13**

According to this passage what is your part in loving God?  
According to this passage what is God's part in loving God?

What should be the natural outflow of your love for God?

Who is your "neighbor" that God want you to love? (be specific)

How might you show God's love to this person?

According to John 13:34-35 what is the extent of our love for one another?

What's the greatest act of love you've experienced?  
What's the greatest act of love you've shown someone else?

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