

COMMANDED TO LOVE

Matthew 22:37-40

(Not entirely original with me)

Introduction: There are many commands the Lord gives that most Christians don't have any trouble obeying and fulfilling, however there is one in particular that creates difficulty for it is totally alien, a stranger to one's own human nature and that command is to "love God with all one's heart and his/her neighbor as him/herself..." Commanded to love someone? There's some people, even Christians that are just impossible to love, no matter how hard one tries, the feeling of "love" just isn't there. So, how does a Christian obey Jesus' command to love "his/her neighbors as him/herself?"

1. Many Christians live lives absent of religious emotion (love for others) and those around them get the idea/opinion that such Christians are not really Christians at all.

- Christians who display no love for everyone give the impression that they missed something somewhere and their "Christianity" is nothing more than an empty profession.
- Such Christians do believe in God, they have indeed trusted Jesus Christ as their savior, but they just can't display love.

2. How can anyone "love" by commandment?

- There is no such law that has been passed by any government that compels one person to love another.
- Love, by human nature, is voluntary and no person can be forced, frightened or coerced into "loving" anyone.
- Love just does not come that way, yet Jesus commanded believers to love God and his/her neighbor.

3. There are actually two kinds of love.

- There is the love of "feeling" and the love of "willing."
 - "Feeling" love lies with the emotions and "Willing" love is by determination.
- "Feeling" love comes and goes, depending on emotions and this kind of love that Jesus was talking about.

4. The love Jesus is talking about is the "love of willing," a love from the willingness of one's heart.

- People are not to be controlled by their emotions, including love.
- Jesus' kind of love is found in the believer's will, heart as does his/her righteousness.

5. In God's eyes, every person is what he/she "wills" to be and to meet the requirements Jesus gives in commanding believers to "love," comes from one's desire and determination to love, his/her will.

6. The root of all evil in man's human nature is the corruption of his/her will.

- What a person spends his/her time dwelling upon becomes the way of life for that person.
- Repentance brings a change in one's will, purpose and a total, sudden reversal of one's spiritual direction.
- The prodigal son took his first step in getting out of the pig pen/sty when he said, "I will arise and go to my father..." (*Luke 15:18*). He made up his mind to make a change and he did.

7. To obey Jesus' command to "love God with all our heart..." one must first WILL to do so.

- Christians who want to love as Jesus commanded must repent of their lack of love and determine, make up their minds that from this moment on, God is first and set their thoughts on things above and their hearts toward Jesus Christ and heavenly things.

CONCLUSION:

1. Christians are never commanded to do what they cannot do although it might seem that way at times, but Jesus knows everyone's weaknesses and strengths but to every believer He gave the commandment to love God above all else and to love neighbors as well, no exceptions.
2. If believers will become WILLING to love, then their lives will begin to change and love for more and more people will begin to grow.
3. To love God and others as Jesus commanded, one must WILL to do so, for the WILL is what controls a person's life.
4. YOU can love God and your neighbors IF you want to.