

A NEW Commandment

Have you ever wondered what the Lord Jesus meant when He said in John 13:34 “A **NEW** commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even *as I have loved you*, that you also love one another.”

Since this is a NEW commandment, it was not previously given and so has to require more from us than the OLD commandment, “**YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.**”

Just as our Lord “upgraded” Old Testament law in Mat 5:17-48, here we see Him “upgrading” an old commandment. As Mat 5:17-48 shows, New Testament expectation is always far higher than the Old Testament expectation.

What then can it mean? What more can we do than “... **LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.**”

I think a hint might be given to us in 1Cor. 6:7 “*Actually, then, it is already a defeat for you, that you have lawsuits with one another. **Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be defrauded?***” We see this same attitude expressed in other verses:

- Rom. 15:1-3 “*Now we who are strong ought to bear the weaknesses of those without strength and not just please ourselves. Each of us is to please his neighbor for his good, to his edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, “**THE REPROACHES OF THOSE WHO REPROACHED YOU FELL ON ME...**”*

- 1Pet. 2:19-23 “*For this finds favour, if, for the sake of conscience toward God, a person bears up under sorrows when suffering unjustly. For what credit is there, if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if, when you do what is right and suffer for it, you patiently endure it, this finds favor with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, **WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;** and while being reviled, He did not revile in return; while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;*

- Gal. 6:2 “*Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ...*
- Rom. 14:7 “*For not one of us lives for himself, and not one dies for himself..*
- 1Th. 5:14 “*We urge you, brothers, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone.*

As Ray Stedman so succinctly puts it:

When we were enemies, when we were yet without strength, when we were helpless, when we were opposed to God, fighting him every way that we could, rebelling against his precepts, living our own lives without any regard for his rights, using his goods and his resources and all that he makes available for our own purposes — while we were enemies, Christ died for us!

Would we ever be prepared to take the blame (and punishment) for someone, for something we did not do?

Jesus did!

That is why it is a new commandment for we must love as Jesus says:

...as I have loved you.