

“If You Love Me, You Will Keep...”

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In many, many passages of Scripture, the Lord says, “If you love Me, keep My commandments.” Some appear below:

Exodus 20:6

...showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who **love** Me and **keep** My commandments.

Deuteronomy 7:9

"Know therefore that the LORD your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who **love** Him and **keep** His commandments;

Deuteronomy 11:1

"You shall therefore **love** the LORD your God, and always **keep** His charge, His statutes, His ordinances, and His commandments.

Deuteronomy 11:22

"For if you are careful to **keep** all this commandment which I am commanding you to do, to **love** the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and hold fast to Him,

Deuteronomy 30:16

...in that I command you today to **love** the LORD your God, to walk in His ways and to **keep** His commandments and His statutes and His judgments, that you may live and multiply, and that the LORD your God may bless you in the land where you are entering to possess it.

Joshua 22:5

"Only be very careful to observe the commandment and the law which Moses the servant of the LORD commanded you, to **love** the LORD your God and walk in all His ways and **keep** His commandments and hold fast to Him and serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul."

Nehemiah 1:5

I said, "I beseech You, O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and lovingkindness for those who **love** Him and **keep** His commandments,

Daniel 9:4

I prayed to the LORD my God and confessed and said, "Alas, O Lord, the great and awesome God, who keeps His covenant and lovingkindness for those who **love** Him and **keep** His commandments,

John 14:15

"If you **love** Me, you will **keep** My commandments.

John 14:23, 24

Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will **keep** My word; and My Father will **love** him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. He who does not **love** Me does not **keep** My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me."

John 15:10

"If you **keep** My commandments, you will abide in My **love**; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His **love**."

1 John 5:3

For this is the **love** of God, that we **keep** His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.

There are many other Scriptures in both the TANAKH and Apostolic Writings that talk about obeying God's commandments as part and parcel of loving Him. Nevertheless, when we say this to fellow believers, sometimes they take offense by these passages of Scripture. It comes off to them as judgmental and arrogant on our part and sounds as though we have already judged their hearts and determined their lack of love to the Lord by their non-observance of the commandments of God (that we can see externally).

Sometimes this perception is true and we are doing *just* that. I know I've been guilty of doing that and having others do that to me.

Yet, I recall that even when I wasn't Torah submissive, I still loved the Lord! I thought I was being obedient to Him in how I lived! And if anyone would have implied that I didn't love Him because I didn't wear tzit-tzit, or keep kashrui, or observe the Moedim (Leviticus 23), I would have been offended!

We really need to be sensitive to this in our fellow believers: many really *DO* have a heart-felt love for God – even in their non-Torah observance! Yet, somehow, we must be able to convey that there is more to "walking the walk" than what we are being taught in our churches and synagogues today. We are all exhorted to the upward call (Philippians 3:14) of God in Messiah Yeshua and "walk like the Messiah," (1 John 2:3-6) who *was* Torah observant.

Yeshua said in Luke 6:46:

"Why do you call Me, '**Lord, Lord,**' and do not do what I say?"

It is imperative that *we* live out what He said to us in His Word first *before* we compel others to comply with His Torah! How can we expect others to listen to our words if our own lives are not in compliance with His Word?

Yeshua, our perfect example, lived out Torah *perfectly* (Hebrews 4:15) even in the midst of walking with us sinners (Matthew 9:11)! Though He didn't compromise His own standards to walk among us, nevertheless, He didn't make the people whom He walked among (those who didn't comply with those standards) feel like they were "scum of the earth" because they didn't automatically come up to those standards! He understood their weaknesses and had compassion on them, yet always calling them back toward His Torah! To the woman caught in adultery, He said, "Go, and sin no more." (John 8:3-11) To Zaccheus in Luke 19, Yeshua said by His words and actions something that caused him to say, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I will give to the poor, and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will give back four times as much."

It is for those who are sick, that He came to heal (Matthew 9:12). He said, "{It is} not those who are healthy who need a **physician**, but those who are sick." Nevertheless, it was to the "righteous" and judgmental that He reserved His harshest words for. They had the external appearances of righteousness, but not the heart. They were hypocrites in that they professed to know God and have a relationship with Him by their words and actions, yet their hearts were far from Him (Mark 7:6).

We all have to be careful in this regard. Though the "externals" of how a person lives can tell us about the faith others claim to possess, they can be deceiving. For instance, a person may not be as "Torah-compliant" as we think we are, yet have a true loving relationship with God. On the other side of the coin, a person can say all the "right things" and do all the "right things" under the Law and *still* their hearts can be far from God.

We must be very careful about how we judge (Romans 2):

¹ Therefore you have no excuse, everyone of you who passes judgment, for in that which you judge another, you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things. ² And we know that the judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things. ³ But do you suppose this, O man, when you pass judgment on those who practice such things and do the same *yourself*, that you will escape the judgment of God?

¹⁷ But if you... rely upon the Law and boast in God, ¹⁸ and know *His* will and approve the things that are essential, being instructed out of the Law, ¹⁹ and are confident that you yourself are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, ²⁰ a corrector of the foolish, a teacher of the immature, having in the Law the embodiment of knowledge and of the truth, ²¹ you, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself? You who preach that one shall not steal, do you steal? ²² You who say that one should not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? ²³ You who boast in the Law, through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?

So, when we say to our brethren, God says, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments," we need to be sure we are keeping His commandments *first* - out of

love for Him – not out of a legalistic sense of self-righteousness. Then, we must exhort our brethren to keep them out of that same love.

We need to be careful to pose the question not in the past tense, as though they *obviously don't love the Lord* because of their *non*-observance of His commandments, but rather in the present and future tense. The question could be better asked to our fellow believers, “If you love Him, why *not* keep His commandments? What’s holding you back from observing what He says is for your own benefit anyway? Is there resistance in your heart that keeps you from doing what He says? Where do you think that resistance is coming from?”

Perhaps their resistance to keeping the Torah arises out of our own non-compliance of the Torah! Maybe we are looking at the speck in our brothers’ eye when we have a log in our own (Matthew 7:3-5)! That being the case, we need to get rid of the log before we can help our brother with his speck!

In short, what we preach, we need to live out in our own lives *before* we judge others about their non-compliance for we shall be judged by the same measure as we judge. Keeping the Law does not save a person – it never has and never will. A living relationship with God DOES!

Does this mean that we are never qualified to say anything to our fellow believers? I don’t think so, else who could ever be qualified to say *anything* to a brother or sister, *ever*? No, but Scripture tells us to go to a brother or sister who is sinning and reprove them – even though we too have faults! We are exhorted to preach and teach the Word, which reproves and corrects and trains us all in righteousness (2 Timothy 3:16).

So, by our *own* righteousness, we cannot go to our brother and sister and correct them, but from the righteousness of the One we follow, Who has given us His Word, by *His* righteousness we can and should exhort our brethren.

Let us all aspire to do what Shaul did with his brethren and imitate the One (1 Corinthians 11:1) who he followed: Walk, talk, and live like the Master who bought us and paid for all of our non-compliance of His Torah with His precious blood on the tree.