

Commandments (#41)

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The most important sanctifying act a Christian can do is to keep the commandments. In fact, our salvation depends on it.

*As Jesus was setting out on a journey, an influential young man ran up to Him and kneeling down before Him said, "Teacher, what good thing shall I do to obtain eternal life?" Jesus said, "Why do you ask Me about what is good? No one is good except God alone; but if you desire eternal life, keep the commandments." (Since there were 613), He asked, "Which ones?" And Jesus replied, "Do not murder. Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not commit adultery. Honor your father and mother (Ex 20:12-16, Deut 5:16-20), and love your neighbor as yourself" (Lev 19:18). [Matthew 19:16-20 from *One Gospel in Clear English*].*

To show the influential young man the way to salvation, Jesus named five commandments from the Decalogue and another command from Leviticus leaving 607 unmentioned commandments from the Law of Moses. In other words, this was just a sample of all God's commands. Salvation by keeping God's commands is as true in the NT as it was true in the OT. Because of Dispensationalism, I hearken only to NT Scripture, even though OT commands not dealing with the Sabbath, the Priesthood, and dietary restrictions are still true.

The very first psalm, describing the "man who is blest" or saved, capsulizes the intent of the remaining 149 psalms by saying: "But he **delights** in keeping God's commandments day and night." This was the man who was saved in the OT and is also the man who is saved in the NT.

The longest psalm, and in my view the most important psalm, is Psalm 119. It is an acrostic psalm represented by 22 Hebrew letters each with 8 verses. It is classified as a wisdom and a didactic psalm. It deals exclusively with God's commandments or law. Some of the opening octaves are "*O how I love Your law! I ponder it all day long [Mem]*"; "*Your law is wonderful, so I observe it [Pe]*"; "*You created me and gave me character. Now, give me understanding so that I may learn Your commandments [Yodh]*." The concept of "understanding" is mentioned seven times in the longest psalm (119:34, 73, 104, 125, 130, 144, 169) and seven times the psalmist mentions that God will extend your life if you keep His commandments (119:17, 35, 77, 88, 117, 134, 175). Reading through Psalms you will immediately see that a "commandment" is not an impersonal command from a parent to a child, but to use other synonyms: a precept, instruction, testimony, statute, ordinance, judgment, covenant, word, law, Scripture, will, the Path, and the Way. In short, it is what God wants you to do delightfully to inherit salvation.

But a theologian will immediately ask: “What about faith. I thought we were saved by our faith?” The answer is that God wants more from us than just our faith. As Jesus’s half-brother, James the Just, points out: “Foolish man, can’t you see that faith without works is useless (futile) [James 2:20]!” So, God wants you to act out your faith. And that is why John, our greatest theologian, never used the word “faith” in the Gospel, but used “born again” to show the unification of faith and works. This is why I call the following the greatest takeaway from OT and NT Scripture:

Engage the mind with the body to save the soul [from James 2:14-26].

Engaging the mind with the body is not just necessary for the initial moment of salvation, but for the lifelong sanctification process to follow. All actions must be done with the correct attitude and conduct to God (*eusebeia*), as Paul would have said. This means that it must be a “delightful” engagement, or you are a hypocrite and sin in keeping the commandments for the wrong purpose—under duress or to look good.

So, back to the original question: “Are we saved by our faith?” One of the Commandments is a command to the mind (CMM) listed under systematic theology (ST) section 4 (Christology). Matthew 17:5 reads as follows: *Believe that this is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Listen to Him!* There it is. It is a commandment that we believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that we listen to Him. Listening means faith plus works or engaging the mind with the body. And not said but understood is that you must delight in listening to Him. So, what more is needed?

Keeping God’s Commandments is not only necessary for salvation, but a prerequisite for the Assurance of Salvation. In John 5:13 we read: “***These things*** I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God (Jesus Christ) so that you may know that you have eternal life. The question is: What are “these things”. They are posited in 1 John 2:5: “*Whoever keeps His Commandments will come to the realization that God loves him, and by this he will know that he knows Him* (i.e. he is in Him and saved). Now notice carefully that the realization only comes to the one who “keeps His Commandments”.

Only after the Assurance of Salvation, which necessitates keeping God’s Commandments, will you have the Assurance of Answered Prayer (1 John 5:14-15). There is a spiritual progression from keeping the Commandments, to Salvation, to Sanctification, to the Assurance of Salvation, and to the Assurance of Answered Prayer.

God’s Commandments

There were 619 Commandments in the OT as attested to by Jews today. My detailed research into the NT has uncovered over 1000 Commandments. I refuse to give a specific number because I am not a nomian. If you doubt the number of commands issued by Jesus and the

Apostles can be so high, go to Naves Topical Living Bible and look at the entries under Commandments. However, I did not use the Naves Topical Living Bible as my source guide, but rather I went verse by verse through the New American Standard (NAS) from Matthew to Revelation cataloging 1) specific commands, 2) required beliefs, and 3) facts. A specific command can be positive (Honor thy father and mother.), or negative (Thou shalt not murder.) A required belief could be: I am the Lord thy God who brought you out of...). A fact could be: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God... After reading this “fact” it is incumbent upon you to believe that the Word (Memra) existed from the beginning. This is a command.

Presentation of the Commandments

Using the criteria mentioned above, the Commandments are presented in four ways:

- 1) Sorted by Verse in chronological order from Matthew to Revelation
- 2) Sorted by ST
 - a. ST (branch of systematic theology with 12 Topics)
 - i. Bibliology (Facts)
 - ii. Trinity
 - iii. Paterology (Father)
 - iv. Christology
 - v. Pneumatology (Holy Spirit)
 - vi. Angelology/Demonology
 - vii. Anthropology (man)
 - viii. Hamartiology (sin)
 - ix. Soteriology (Salvation)
 - x. Ecclesiology (church)
 - xi. Israelology
 - xii. Eschatology (End Time)
 - b. Secondary sort is on Sub-Topic
 - c. Tertiary sort is on Sub-Sub-Topic
- 3) Sorted by Sub Topic
 - a. Seven Modern Sub-Topics
 - i. Angelology
 - ii. Baptism
 - iii. Belief
 - iv. Christology
 - v. Church
 - vi. Conduct
 - vii. Doctrine
 - b. Secondary sort is on Sub-Sub Topic

- c. Tertiary sort is on ST
- 4) Sorted by Sub-Sub Topic
 - a. Sub-Sub-Topics are like the Naves Topical Living Bible
 - i. Abuse, Adoption, Adultery, All preaching is good, Ambition, Anger, Anti-Christ, Armor, Assurance, Attitude, Avoidance, Bad Company, BC, Be Perfected, Behavior, Behavioral Doubts, Believers, Belligerence, Blasphemy, Boasting, Boasting of Visions, Book of Revelation, Borrowing, Bride of Christ, Brothers Esteem, Brothers Hospitable, Brothers Love, Build on Rock, Burdens, Buried with Christ, Busybody, Call on Lord, Calling, Carnal, Celibacy, Charity, Children, Church, Circumincision, Civil, Clear Conscience, Close Family, Come to the Lord, Commandments 1-10 (James), Communion, Compassion, Compassionate, Complaining, Conduct, Confession, Confrontation, Congregant, Convert, Cornerstone, Creation, Criticism, Culture, Custom, Daughter, Day of the Lord, Diligence, Discernment, Disorderly, Dissension, Divorce, Doctrine, Drinking Blood, Drunkenness, Eating, empathy, Enemy, Engage Mind/Body, Envy, Evil, Evil Intent, Evil Expose, Evil Hate, Examine, Exorcism, Faith, Faith & Patience, Faith by Grace, Faithful, Falling Away, False Teacher, Fasting, Father, Favoritism, Fear, Fear God, Fear vs Love, F-H-L, First Priority, Follow Role Model, Foolish, Forgiveness, Freedom, Fruit of Holy Spirit, Gentleness, Gifts, Giving, Glorify God, God, God is Light, God like Spouse, Godliness, Godly, God's Name, God's Will, Golden Rule, Good Deeds, Good Living, Good Will to All, Gossip, Government, Grace Accept, Grateful, Great Harlot, Greed, Greed Pay Taxes, Greeting Grieve HS, Grieving, Harlot, Hate, Hate Evil, Hate God, Healing, Hierarchy, Holy, Holy Spirit, Homoousia, Homosexuality, Honor all People, Honor the Ruler, Honoring a Man, Hope, Hope for Salvation, Hospitality, Humility, Husband, Hypostatic Union, Idol Wealth, Idols, Imputation, Increase, Industrious, Instigator, institution, Investing, Irrational, Jealousy, Jesus, Jesus Christ, Jesus is our Salvation, Jesus over Angels, Jesus over Moses, Jesus over Priests, Jesus's Wounds, Jew First, Journey, Judge Yourself, Judged by Works, Judging, Judgment, Kenosis, Kerygma, Kidnapper, Kind, Kindness, Knowledge, Lamb of God, Law of Christ, Law of Liberty, Law of Moses, Law was Replaced, Lawful, Lawless, Laziness, Leaders, Legends, Light, Live for God, Living Stone, Living Water, Load, Love, Love Brothers, Love God, Love Good, Love of Money, Love Brothers, Love Defined, Love F-S, Love He Loved First, Love Origin, Love Salvation, Love Self, Lying, Malicious, Man & Woman, Man Good Works, Mark of Beast, Mediator, Mercy, Mercy to Ignorant, Message,

Minister, Minister Suffering, Missionaries Aid, Missionaries Prayer, Motivation, Murder, Murderer, Name of Jesus Christ, Neophyte, Harmony, No Good from Evil, No One Good, Non-Believers, Obey and Love, Obey Boss, Obey Parents, Occasion, Olive Tree, Omnipotent, Opinions, Ordination, Original Sin, OT, Paterology, Patience, Peace with Others, Perfected, Persecution, Persecution Alarm, Persecution Bless, Persecution Resist, Persecutor, Persevere, Philosophy, Pillar, Please to Edify, Polemics, Poor, Power, Power of Keys, Practice Sin, Praise, Praise the Lord, Prayer, Prayer Church, Prayer Persecution, Prayer Position, Prayer Prisoners, Prayer Wisdom, Preaching, Preaching Bias, Pride, Prison, Prisoners, Profanity, Projection, Prolonged Life, Promises, Prophecy, Prophet, Purity, Rapture, Rebellious, Reconciliation, Regeneration, Rejected Stone, Rejoice, Rejoice & Mourn, Rejoice in Hope, Remember Teachers, Repent, Resist Death, Resist Devil, Resist Evil, Resolute, Respect Good, Resurrection, Retribution, Revelation Teaching, Righteous, Rock of Offense, Salvation, Sanctification, Savior & Prince, Scripture, Scripture Inspired, Scripture Reprimand, Scripture Taught, Scripture Training, Scripture Truth, Second Coming, Sects, Self-Sufficiency, Separation from World, Serving, Sexual Abstinence, Shunning, Sin Singing, Sober, Son, Son in Believer, Soul Blameless, Stalwart, Stealing, Stumbling Stone, Suffering, Teaching, Technique, Thinking, Throne of Grace, Time, Tongue, Trinity, Ungodly, Unloving, Untrustworthy, Vengeance, Vigilance, Violent Aggressor, Visions, Visit Saints, Wealth, Wife, Wisdom, Witnesses, Women, Work out Salvation, World View, Worldliness, Worry, Worship, Worship Man.

Sort 1 by Verse is useful for finding a commandment following the standardized order of Scripture from Matthew to Revelation. Most hits occur within Matthew and taper off because they have already been recorded previously. Some are repeated when they apply to a specific segment of the church: general, Minister, elder, deacon, old woman, youth.

Sort 2 by ST is useful for those looking for commandments falling within anyone of the twelve bodies of systematic theology.

Sort 3 by Sub Topic is for those looking for a commandment that falls within the seven modern sub-topics tabulated above. This I find very useful. Note that most commandments concern the church.

Sort 4 by Sub-Sub Topic is for those looking for an alphabetized categorization without regard to a school of thought (ST) or major Sub Topic. This is similar to the Naves Topical Living Bible.

Love and God's Commandments

Only by keeping God's commandments can we be saved, sanctified for the remainder of our lives, have the Assurance of Salvation, and the Assurance of Answered Prayer. John, the Apostle that Jesus loved, defined love as keeping God's commandments [2 Jn 1:6]. Six times he mentions the tie between man's love and man keeping God's commandments, for six is the number of man; and the seventh time this connection is made, it is between Jesus's love for His Father and His Father's commandments (Jn 15:10), for seven is the number of perfection on Earth. The OT mentions many times not only that we should love keeping the commandments, but that we are saved by loving the Lord and keeping his commandments (Exodus 20:6 and following). The latter point is because the two (love and commandments) cannot be separated, and John says that directly in 2 Jn 1:6.

The three infused virtues are faith, hope, and love and the greatest of the three is love [1 Cor 13:13] because it directs the other two. John says further that perfect love casts out fear [1 Jn 4:18]. Therefore, the man who is fearless not only has love, but keeps God's commandments. There is a circumincession between the two.

Since only nine commandments from the OT Decalogue come over into the NT, the one inactive commandment (Keep holy the Sabbath.) has been replaced by a "new commandment", namely, to be known for our love [John 13:34-35, 1 Jn 2:7, 2 Jn 1:5].

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| 1. Have no other gods before Me. | Mt 4:10, Ac 14:15 |
| 2. Make no idols. | Ac 15:20, 1 Jn 5:21 |
| 3. Do not take the name of the Lord your God in vain. | Ro 12:14, Ja 5:12 |
| 4. Keep holy the Sabbath. | ----- |
| a. Be known for your love. | Jn 13:34-35, 1 Jn 2:7 |
| 5. Honor your father and your mother. | Mk 10:19, Eph 6:1 |
| 6. Do not murder. | Mk 10:19, 1 Jn 3:15 |
| 7. Do not commit adultery. | Mk 10:19, 1 Cor 6:9 |
| 8. Do not steal. | Mk 10:19, Eph 4:28 |
| 9. Do not lie. | Mk 10:19, Col 3:9 |
| 10. Do not covet. | Eph 5:3, Ro 7:7 |