

Are you obeying God's greatest commandment? Please proceed to read the tract entitled: *'Intimacy with God'* to begin and develop an intimate, spiritual relationship with God!

Scriptural References:

Exodus 20:3-17
Deuteronomy 6
Deuteronomy 11
Deuteronomy 30:16
Joshua 23:11
Job 15:34
Proverbs 13:11
Proverbs 22:16
Proverbs 28:8
Ecclesiastes 5:10
Jeremiah 17:5-8,10-11
Matthew 6:19-21,24-34
Matthew 22:36-38
Mark 7:20-23
Mark 12:30
Luke 6:24
Luke 8:1-15
Luke 10:27
Romans 8:37-39
1 Corinthians 13
1 Timothy 6:9-10
Hebrews 13:5
James 1:11
James 5:1-6
1 John 2:15-17
Revelation 3:14-22

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The Greatest Commandment

What did Jesus say is the greatest and most important commandment? Both the Old and New Testaments mention that the greatest commandment is to love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul and strength. (Please read tract 'Ten Commandments').

Deuteronomy 6:5 - *And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.*

Mark 12:30 - *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.*

What is the Biblical definition of love? The Greek verb is not *phileo*, which expresses friendly affection, but is *agapao*, which is more than just a warm, fuzzy, sentimental feeling. It means to "value," "cherish," "admire," "respect," "to delight in," and "be faithful towards." Deep devotion and loyal affection towards God. A deep respect for and admiration of God. Involves complete submission, obedience, surrender and commitment. Love is not just expressed in words, but is demonstrated by action. We are to love God with all our being, and live in complete unity, fellowship, agreement and harmony with Him. In a physical relationship, it is not the world's definition of "sexual desire," but is described as "outgoing concern." It is an unconditional and sacrificial love. 1 *Corinthians* chapter 13 is called the 'love' chapter, and mentions in greater detail what love is:

1 Corinthians 13:4-7 - *Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

How do we demonstrate our love for God? Through obedience to His commandments. We live according to God's will and standard for our lives, and avoid what the Bible defines as sin. Sin is a transgression of God's law, and barrier that separates man from God (Please read tract 'Repent or Perish!'). We must aim for godly perfection and perfect obedience.

Luke 11:28 - *But he said, Yea rather, blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it.*

John 14:21 - *He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me: and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest myself to him.*

1 John 5:3 - *For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.*

God demands first place and top priority in our lives. Our relationship with Him takes pre-eminence. He must be of greatest importance. As Jesus mentions, we must love Him more than anyone else! The word 'hate' in the following verse means to love family and our very lives, less by comparison.

Luke 14:26 - *"If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters—yes, even his own life—he cannot be my disciple.*

We must seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and not worry about daily provisions and basic necessities of life. The Lord will provide us with everything we need when we put our faith, hope and trust in Him. God promises to see us through in any situation, no matter how difficult the circumstance. He will never abandon us.

Matthew 6:33 - *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

Hebrews 13:5 - *Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*

There are other essential qualities that we are to display in our spiritual relationship with God to show that we love Him, such as: faith, faithfulness, trust, commitment, devotion, dedication, communication, honor, patience, perseverance, endurance, and so forth (Please read tract 'Intimacy with God'). We must love the LORD and remain faithful and devoted to Him. Those who love the world, rather than God, commit the sin of spiritual adultery and are called adulterers and adulteresses because they are spiritually unfaithful, and therefore, enemies of God.

James 4:4 - *You adulterous people, don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred toward God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God.*

The Christian life is a life of self-sacrifice. True disciples of Christ will deny self, take up their cross, and follow Christ. This means we submit to God's will, and

crucify the carnal nature with its sinful passions and desires. We become more like Christ in all aspects of our lives. For example: humble, obedient and submissive to God. We must be ready to suffer for Christ. Those who choose to live a life of self-indulgence here on earth, will not inherit eternal life, in the Kingdom of God.

Luke 17:33 - *Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.*

Ephesians 5:5 - *For of this you can be sure: No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a man is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*

As illustrated in the 'Parable of the Sower,' in *Luke 8*, the cares, worries, deceitfulness of wealth and pleasures of this world will interfere in one's relationship with the Lord and that person will be unfruitful. Greed (excessive desire for food or wealth) is a major hindrance. Prosperity tends to give a false sense of security, self-sufficiency, and well-being.

Reasons why NOT to place your trust in the physical things of this world:

- 1) God, and His will (which includes obeying His commandments) must be first love and top priority in one's life. He who does God's will lives forever.
- 2) One who commits the sin of greed and covetousness (which are forms of idolatry) WILL NOT inherit the Kingdom of God.
- 3) Wealth is worthless in the day of God's wrath. In other words, when God is angry, riches will not save.
- 4) Physical things fade away and are temporary, and do not provide long lasting peace, happiness, joy or satisfaction.
- 5) Those who love pleasure become poor.
- 6) Trusting in wealth is living under a curse, and that person is compared to a bush in the wastelands and will not see when good comes.
- 7) Whoever trusts in his riches will fall.
- 8) The desire to get rich can ruin a person's life in all aspects - spiritually, physically and emotionally. For example, It can destroy one's faith, health, relationships, and lead to robbery, theft, extortion, gambling addiction, and even murder and suicide. The love of money is the root of all evil.
- 9) Material things are subject to theft.

The fate of those who become wealthy by unjust means:

- 1) He who gives gifts to the rich (e.g. bribes), and he that oppresses the poor to increase his wealth, both come to poverty.
- 2) He who increases his wealth through unjust gain and usury (the lending of money at an excessive rate or amount of interest charged), amasses it for another, who will be kind to the poor.
- 3) One who becomes wealthy by unjust means is compared to a partridge that hatches eggs it did not lay. When his life is half gone, those riches will desert him, and in the end, he will prove to be a fool - reprobate (immoral and unprincipled person).
- 4) The company of the godless will be barren, and fire will consume the houses of those who love bribes.
- 5) Dishonest money (wealth gained by extortion, oppression, deceit, bribery, etc) will be diminished.

We demonstrate our complete devotion to God, by not allowing the physical things of this world to separate us from Him. There are temptations all around us, but we are to watch and pray always, so that we will resist them, and continue to focus on, and serve God faithfully, with wholehearted devotion.

Luke 16:13 - *"No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money."*

We must be careful that we do not allow ourselves to be polluted by the world. Even entertaining evil thoughts is sinful. Thoughts translate to actions. One's life is shaped by his thoughts. We must remain spiritually pure, clean and undefiled. The things that defile a person are clearly mentioned in: *Mark 7:20-23*.

God promises blessings for those who obey His commandments, and truly love and trust Him: We always acknowledge our dependence on God (*Psalm 91:14-16*).

- 1) **Deliverance** - From foes, trouble, oppressors, persecutors, distresses and destruction (*Psalm 97:10; Psalm 119:134; Psalm 142:6*).
- 2) **Protection** - God will protect us from trouble, evil and those who malign us (*Psalm 37:28; Psalm 32:7; Psalm 41:2; Psalm 12:5; John 17:15*).
- 3) **Honor** - The Lord bestows favor, honor, and all kinds of beautiful blessings upon those who have clean hands (are innocent and blameless) and a pure heart (have right motives) (*Psalm 62:7; Psalm 71:21; Psalm 84:11; Psalm 91:15*).
- 4) **Long life** - God promises long life to those who truly love Him (*Psalm 91:16*).
- 5) **Salvation** - God saves those who fear Him (*Psalm 85:9*).

The Lord bestows many other beautiful blessings upon us...