

Yahweh, the Almighty God of Israel, is with us

**"Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet,
and shew my people their transgression,
and the house of Jacob their sins." Isaiah 58:1**

Divine Law

Study Prayerfully & Study Carefully

Love for God and Neighbour

1. Love for God

Love is, arguably, the most popular subject in the world today. Millions of magazine articles, books and TV plays are about **'love.'** But most are about **'romantic love;'** the well known attraction between lovers and spouses. This article, however, is not about romantic or sexual love. Nor is it about maternal love, that wonderful bond that dwells in the heart of a mother for her child. This file is about **love for God and one's fellow human beings.** The Almighty's command concerning this type of love is as follows:

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."***

An amazing command by any standard, you will agree. But what does the word **'love'** mean in this context? What must one do or feel towards God to love Him with all one's heart, soul and might? Obviously romance and sex are totally excluded here. Sexual love and romantic feelings have absolutely nothing to do with the kind of **'love'** God is requiring of us. So what does the Almighty mean when He uses the word love? What does He want us to do, or not do to show our love for Him? To arrive at the answer we must turn to other Bible texts where **Jehovah, (Yahweh)** and that is the Almighty's name, couples this word **'love'** with certain actions and mental attitudes. Searching the Scripture we find many, many texts that help us understand what God means when He commands us to love Him with heart, soul and might. I will list just a few texts for the reader's benefit. Study them carefully: because this command concerning **'love for God'** is the most important commandment in the whole Bible. It is referred to in Scripture as the **'great commandment.'** When the Saviour was asked which commandment was the greatest, **he quoted this commandment.** So you will agree it is important.

Matthew 22: 36: ***"Master, which is the great commandment in the law?"***

37: Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

38: This is the first and great commandment."

Now to those verses which explain what the Almighty wants His followers to do in order to show that they love Him with heart, soul and mind.

Deuteronomy 11: 13: ***"And it shall come to pass, if ye shall hearken diligently unto my commandments which I command you this day, to love the LORD your God, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul,"***

Deuteronomy 11: 22: ***"For if ye shall diligently keep all these commandments which I command you, to do them, to love the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, and to cleave unto him;"***

Deuteronomy 13: 1: ***"If there arise among you a prophet, or a dreamer of dreams, and giveth thee a sign or a wonder,***

2: *And the sign or the wonder come to pass, whereof he spake unto thee, saying, Let us go after other gods, which thou hast not known, and let us serve them;*
3: *Thou shalt not hearken unto the words of that prophet, or that dreamer of dreams: **for the LORD your God proveth you, to know whether ye love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.***
4: *Ye shall walk after the LORD your God, and fear him, and keep his commandments, and obey his voice, and ye shall serve him, and cleave unto him.”*

Joshua 22: 5: *“But take diligent heed to do the commandment and the law, which Moses the servant of the LORD charged you, to **love the LORD your God, and to walk in all his ways, and to keep his commandments, and to cleave unto him, and to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul.**”*

Did you carefully read all those texts? If you did you will have noticed that to **‘love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul’** means **to keep His commandments**. In other words to love God is to obey Him, to do what He says, to carry out His will. Before you can do this you must first acquaint yourself with His commandments; just as a motorist must first learn the highway code before he can obey it. In the new testament the word **‘love’** is used in exactly the same way as in the old. Love means obedience. Obedience proves that we love God. Disobedience proves that we do not love Him. Jesus said to his disciples:

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 2: 4: *“**He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.**”*

1 John 5: 2: *“**By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.***

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

John 14: 15: *“**If ye love me, keep my commandments.**”*

Some Christians assume that the commandments Jesus refers to are different from those of his father. They are mistaken. As mentioned above, Jesus didn't formulate a new set of commandments. When he spoke of **‘the law,’** he always meant his Father's commandments - **‘the commandments of God.’** In the New Testament we find that the church is advised to, and does keep - the **‘commandments of God.’** (1 Corinthians 7: 9, Revelation 12: 17, Revelation 14: 12)

2. Love thy Neighbour

The second most important commandment in the law of God is **‘love thy neighbour as thyself.’** Many Christians suppose that this is a New Testament revelation. They are mistaken. Jesus simply quoted this commandment from the Old Testament. Here it is:

Leviticus 19: 18: *“**Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD.**”*

The Saviour's words were as follows:

Matthew 22: 36: *“Master, which is the great commandment in the law?”*

*37: Jesus said unto him, **Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.***

38: This is the first and great commandment.

*39: And the second is like unto it, **Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.***

40: On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

In other words the divine principle of love called for in those two commandments governs all the other rules and regulations in the Torah, the law of the Almighty.

- **“And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might.”** (Deuteronomy 6: 5)
- **“...thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself...”** (Leviticus 19: 18)

When we study the **Ten Commandments**, which also hang on these two great commands, we notice that the first four of the ten specify **how** we are to love God. The last six tell us **how** we are commanded to love our fellow human beings. True love for God has nothing to do with the sexual, gushy sentimentality portrayed in the movies. **True love for God and others is a holy, spiritual principle, which expresses itself in obedience to Yahweh's commandments.** Emotion may play a part in the process; but it is a small part when compared to **holiness, obedience, respect for others, a sense of responsibility, self control, honesty, integrity, kindness, generosity, hospitality and contentment.**

You will learn a lot about true love for God and neighbour when you study Yahweh's law. It is the divine formula for true love. If, with His help, you seek to practice it, you will be well on your way to **“loving the LORD thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might ... and thy neighbour as thyself.”** Those who reject Yahweh's law are heading for disaster. That is what the Almighty says to all the peoples of the world. Here is His sobering warning.

Jeremiah 6: 18: *“Therefore hear, ye nations, and know, O congregation, what is among them.*

19: Hear, O earth: behold, I will bring evil upon this people, even the fruit of their thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my words, nor to my law, but rejected it.”

AMEN!

In the Son's Name - For the Father's glory.

Elder: Max W. Mader

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