

GREATEST 1 COMMAND

“Love one another as I have loved you.” (St. John 13: 34)

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“As I Have”

After we learned that the commandment to love God with all ones heart, mind, and strength, (which originates in Deuteronomy Chapter 6: 4, 5 of the Old Testament) was inconclusive to be God’s Ultimate Will, we set our hearts on the second great commandment: “Love your neighbor as thyself”, found in Lev. 19: 18. It seemed to be more tangible, attainable, or shall we say, more *user-friendly*. However, it became another misunderstanding for us, just as it has been for many others, because after a time of contemplation, we realized that loving your neighbor as thyself is also too incomplete, and therefore, could not sum up God’s Ultimate Will. On the other hand, after further observation, we truly set our eyes on Jesus and concluded that his New Command, exemplified by Jesus, modifies and completes: “loving your neighbor as thyself- Lev. 19: 18.” Therefore, Jesus’ Command is more suited to be God’s Ultimate Will. And that New Command is, as stated in St. John 13: 34 and taken from the New International Version: **“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.”** And from the The Living Bible Version verse 34, it reads, **“And so I am giving a new commandment to you now – love each other just as much as I love you.”** Verse 35 states, **“Your strong love for each other will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”** – The phrase **“as I have”** is the key phrase in Jesus’ command.

And specifically, what does the phrase, **“as I have”** entail? It entails that we are to love people and our enemies so much that we would carry our cross (as Jesus did) to the death for those people. (St. John 15: 13 & Matt.16: 24, 25) Also, we are to deny ourselves, and he who loves mother, father, son or daughter more than Jesus is not worthy of him. (Matt. 10: 37- 39) Furthermore, we are to seek the well being of the community first and ourselves second, so in the end, together, we’ll achieve a healthy community and never die! (Matt. 6: 33 & 19: 29/ Mark10: 29, 30/ Luke 18: 29, 30) In summary, **“as I have”** means, that we are to look towards Jesus’ historical life and imitate his example as Peter stated in 1st Peter 2: 21.

In addition, one must keep in mind that the Old Testament was turned into a book, and the New Testament is rightfully called letters. However, the New Testament letters have wrongfully been called books, just because, they were combined with the Jewish Old Testament. Also, you can *not* look in the Old Testament book, or books, to attain Jesus’ historical example; you must look in the New Testament letters only. So then, when we once stated “the weak need a book”, we were referring mainly to the Old Testament, just as St. Paul in Romans chapters 14 & 15 referred to the weak that were adhering to the Old Testament. But “weak” can also be applied to any student of the New Testament or the Bible as a whole, if one has not graduated knowing God’s Ultimate Will. Here’s an illustration to help explain what we mean: “Suppose you went into a hospital for heart surgery. As you were waiting in the operating room, your surgeon walks in with a few books. In your curiosity, you ask him, “Why the books?” He turns and says to you that they are his manuals to help guide him through your surgery. Consequently, would you see him as a competent surgeon or an undergraduate? If he was well educated and experienced with all that a complete surgeon should know, he would be able to do surgery by faith, or shall we state by spirit, and not by the letter of the books. (Gal. 5: 18)

The illustration above is given to show that once an individual learns God’s Ultimate Will, as stated by Jesus and emphasized in 1st John 3: 23, one graduates and knows all that he needs to know, for “love” is the greatest. (1st Cor. 13: 13) We must stop being undergraduates and put our beloved religious Bibles on the

shelf of human development, beginning with our personal home shelves, then go out into our communities and commit to its political decision making, and social needs such as, feeding the homeless, visiting the sick, visiting the prisoners, and if we are merchants, lowering the cost of living. (Matt. 25: 31- 46) Yes, there is a temporary need for the book, specifically the New Testament Letters, so that the mature who think and act like Jesus can show to others, from within the book, that there is no need for the book/letters anymore. (Romans 15: 1– 7)

Last of all, the Old Testament book led the Jews and their contemporaries to Jesus, and there should not have been a return back to the Old Testament as a guide for righteous living. However, due to ignorance, turning their backs on Jesus' Sacred Command by the first generation as written in 2nd Peter 2: 21, the rejection of Jesus' Year of Jubilee from Luke 4: 9, and especially, the misunderstanding of God's Incarnation as stated in Matt. 1: 23, for these reasons the New Testament letters had to be written, for therein, is God's Ultimate Will fulfilled by Jesus' Bible closure and religion ending command: **to love one another as I have loved you.** (Romans 10: 4) (Gal. 3: 23- 25 & 5: 18, 22)

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