

Test Your Love

"If you love me, you will obey what I command." John 14:15

Four times in John 14:15-24, we see that the test for genuine love for Christ is revealed in our keeping His commands. If repetition is one way of stressing importance then this is a very important point to Jesus. The test of authentic love to Jesus is whether you keep His commandments or His word. That sends a clear message to us about the authenticity of worship. If worship is the release of our love to Jesus in song and prayer and music and meditation, then the authenticity of worship is whether we as worshippers keep the commandments of Jesus. What happens in the sanctuary of your heart cannot be separated from what happens outside during the week. God sees them both together and He judges the reality of what happens here by what He sees out there.

Love and 'commandment-keeping' are not the same thing.

Some people say that keeping the commandments of Jesus is the definition of loving Jesus. But consider a similar sentence: "If you take this medicine you will get well." Is taking the medicine the same as getting well? No. Getting well is one thing and taking the medicine is another thing. The one leads to the other, and in fact brings about the other. That's the way it is here: **"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."** The point is that if you will do the one it will bring about the other. The point is not that they are the same, but that they are connected as root and fruit. Loving Jesus is what brings about keeping the commandments. And so keeping the commandments is the test of authenticity of whether a person really loves Jesus.

Keeping the commandments of Jesus does not earn the love of Jesus.

It does not mean that he loved us because we first loved him. One could easily take verses 21 and 23 to mean that. Verse 21: **"He who has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him."** So Jesus says that He and His Father in heaven will love us in response to our obedience.

Similarly, verse 23 Jesus answers a question, **"If a man loves Me, he will keep My word, and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him."**

Again, Jesus promises that He and His Father will respond to our obedience with love. So the least we can say is that there is a love from God the Father and a love from God the Son that is a response to our keeping the word of Jesus. But this does not mean that He loved us because we first loved Him and that our love somehow earns His love for us. God's love for us goes before any of our love for Him, and without it there would be no relationship at all. God loved us first. Jesus loved us first before we kept any commandment. 1 John 4:19 says it as plain as day: **"We love, because he first loved us."**

So, our love for Him is the response of His love for us, and seeing our love for Him He goes on loving us and loving us more and more in response to our response to Him.

- **How genuine is your love for Christ in light of these truths?**
 - **Are there any specific commands of God you are finding 'difficult' to obey?**
 - **Do you ever struggle with seeking to earn the love of God or your fellow believers?**
 - **What does it mean to love the Lord with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength?**
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