

The Pastor's Corner Vol. 21

September, 2010

(Revised as of May, 2014)

“A New Commandment”

GOD

- 1: Do not worship any other gods
- 2: Do not make any idols
- 3: Do not misuse the name of God
- 4: Keep the Sabbath holy

MAN

- 5: Honour your father & mother
- 6: Do not murder
- 7: Do not commit adultery
- 8: Do not steal
- 9: Do not lie
- 10: Do not covet

.... I felt I had to write and urge you to contend for the faith that was once for all entrusted to the saints. Jude 1:3 NIV

“A New Commandment”

John 13:34-35 (KJV) “³⁴*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.* ³⁵*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*”

1 John 4:7-8 (NIV) “⁷*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God.* ⁸*Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is Love.*”

Romans 5:5 (NIV) “*And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*”

1 John 3:16-18 (NIV) “¹⁶*This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.* ¹⁷*If anyone has material possessions and sees his brother in need but has no pity on him, how can the love of God be in him?* ¹⁸*Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.*”

Romans 13:8-10 (NIV) “⁸*Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to love one another, for he who loves his fellowman has fulfilled the law.* ⁹*The commandments, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ ‘Do not murder,’ ‘Do not steal,’ ‘Do not covet,’ and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’* ¹⁰*Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.*”

Most, if not all of the people we encounter in our daily lives have, at the very least, heard of the Ten Commandments. I’m even surprised at times to hear non-Christians quote one of the Ten Commandments whenever convenient. The Ten Commandments are ten laws or rules to live by that God gave to Moses to give to the Israelites three months after leaving Egypt where they were in bondage. The first four commandments were designed to tell them how to behave towards God, the next six to tell them how to behave towards man. (See **Exodus 20:1-17**)

Although the Ten Commandments were given to the Israelites, it is expected that all of God’s children live by them also. It should be understood that following the Ten Commandments does not get anyone into heaven. Nor will anyone make peace with God by following them to the letter alone. The only way we make peace with God and gain entrance into heaven is through faith in Jesus Christ alone and nothing else. One’s salvation has nothing to do with his or her “works” of righteousness. In **Ephesians 2:8-9** (NIV) we read, “⁸*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith— and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—* ⁹*not by works, so that no one can boast.*”

Obedying the Ten Commandments to obtain salvation or right standing with God is a system of “works” that cannot and does not save us. However, we should obey the Ten Commandments because we are Gods children and it pleases him, even though it cannot save us.

Many Christians today are identified by the world and other Christians by at least one of the following characteristics:

- The World** {
 - Wearing church clothes on a Sunday morning, they must be a Christian
 - Carrying a Bible, they must be a Christian
 - Quoting a few scriptures, they must be a Christian

- Other Christians** {
 - Attending church every Sunday
 - Speaking in tongues
 - Gifting (singing, teaching, etc.)

These characteristics can and may identify Christians at times; however, Jesus gave us his identifier, he said his disciples or Christians would be identified by the “**love**” they have for one to another. I’m amazed at how few Christians actually know and practice this. It’s not always the superficial stuff folks do that identify them as Christians as some suppose, according to Jesus, it’s the “**love**” they demonstrate towards everyone that says they are truly his disciples/Christians. Even with all the gifting some may possess, love is the “*most excellent way*” And the unmistakable identifier of the true child of God (**1 Corinthians 13:1-8**).

There are four (4) Greek words that are translated into our English word “**love**.” They are as follows:

- **Storage**
- **Phileo**
- **Eros**
- **Agape**

In the Bible we only find three of the four (4) Greek words translated into our English word “**love**.” They are: “**Storage**,” “**Phileo**,” and “**Agape**.” For some reason “**Eros**” is left out.

Although each of these Greek words is translated into English as “**love**,” they each have a different meaning. In order for us to understand and obey “*The New Commandment*” to love one another found in **John 13:34**, we need to know exactly what Greek word Jesus used for “**love**” and what it actually meant. With that said, consider the following definitions of the four (4) Greek words:

- **Storage** – This is the type of love and affection that occurs between family members, like sisters and brothers. The biblical usage is found in **Romans 12:10** (NIV), “*Be devoted to one another in brotherly love.*” Christians are to love one another as members of their own biological family. Furthermore, Paul tells us that when one part of the body (Christian) suffers, every part (Christians or the Church) suffers with it. When one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. (**1 Corinthians 12:26**)

- **Phileo** – This type of love occurs between friends. The biblical usage is found in **John 20:2** (NIV), “*So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved...*” “Phileo” is a love that causes us to take a special interest in others that we consider our friends.

- **Eros** – This is sexual love. From “**Eros**” we get the word “erotic” (this word is not found in the Bible). This type of love is only to be exercised in marriage between husband and wife only.
- **Agape** – This type of love is unmerited and has nothing to do with the person receiving it. It is a sacrificial love that is given to those that may not even deserve it. The biblical usage is found in **Romans 5:8** (NIV), “*But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.*”

In **John 13:34** (KJV), Jesus said to his disciples, “*A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*”

It’s interesting to note that Jesus in this text purposely uses the word “**agape**.” He does not give his disciples an option, he says it’s a “**commandment**.” With that said, Christians are also commanded to love one another with the “**agape**” kind of love, it’s not an option. Yes we are to love each other as brothers and sisters (**Storage**) and as friends in whom we take a special interest (**Phileo**), and if you’re married sexual love is encouraged (**Eros**). However, Jesus meant something else and to be sure his disciples understood exactly what kind of “**love**” he commanded them to show each other, Jesus said they were to love one another as he had loved them. What did Jesus mean? Consider the following:

- The love He showed them had nothing to do with them, it was unmerited they neither earned it or deserved it
- The love He showed them was free, there was no strings attached and it cost them nothing
- Jesus had nothing to gain by loving them
- The love He showed them was continuous, it had no end or boundaries

Most Christians can and do give reasons for not showing the “**agape**” kind of love to each other as Jesus commands us to do. When the subject of loving one another comes up, there is always the “*Yeah, but...*” from some. They’ll say, “*Yeah, but, you don’t know what so and so did to me*” or “*Yeah, but, you don’t know them like I know them.*” The list of excuses to disobey Jesus’ command to “love one another” is endless. However, nobody’s excuse(s) can justify disobeying the Lord’s clear command to love one another.

Many saints of God have forgotten the clear biblical teaching about “**agape**” love. We have forgotten or ignored at least the following regarding “**agape**” love:

- If you have truly been born again and truly love God, you must in turn love others. (See **1 John 4:7-8**). It is not possible for a born again Christian not to love others while truly loving God.
- Genuine “**agape**” love in our hearts will not allow us to see our brothers and sisters in Christ have needs while we have more than we need. “**Agape**” love

causes us to not only have pity on those less fortunate than, but to do something to help them. (See **1 John 3:16-18**)

- We owe “**agape**” love to each other. Because of our “**agape**” love, we will do no harm to anyone. True love does not allow us to tear one another down, only build each other up. (See **Romans 13:8-10**)

In closing, I must admit that some saints are harder to love than others. However, we are commanded, without options or conditions, to love them even when they don’t deserve it. It is difficult at times, but remember, we do not and cannot love with the “**agape**” kind of love from our human nature. “**Agape**” love comes from God as part of the package when we are born again. **Romans 5:5** (NIV) says, “...*God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.*” So there you have it, every born again believer possessing the Holy Spirit has the God-given capacity to love one another, if they so choose! So let us “**love one another**” as Jesus commanded us. If you really love Jesus, you will obey his commands. **John 14:15** (NIV) says, “*If you love me, you will obey what I command.*” (See also **John 15:12; 17**) Do you really love him?

It’s time the Church of the living God started being identified by the love they have one to another and not by the world’s standards. The “**agape,**” unmerited love Christians publicly show towards each other is the best example of Jesus’ love towards the sinner we can show the world. Our best sermon on “**agape**” love is our public actions towards one another.

We as Christians cannot continue to go to church every Sunday and shout, speak in tongues, pray until the walls fall down but have no “**agape**” love for the person sitting right next to us. Remember, it’s a command to love one another – not an option!!

God Bless,
Pastor D. M. Duncan

Note:

This article is the sole property of Pastor D. M. Duncan. The contents of this article may not be altered in any way. However, my name and the church name may be removed for circulation in any church or ministry. This article may be reproduced only in its entirety (with the exception of removing my name and the church name) for circulation as “freeware;” without charge. This article is not to be sold or used as an enhancement for any other product that is sold.