

"KEEPING THE COMMANDMENTS OF GOD"

1 Corinthians 7:19

INTRODUCTION

1. The idea of "commandment-keeping" is not a popular one among many people today
 - a. Some equate it with what they call "legalism"
 - b. Others look at keeping any kind of commandment as an unpleasant task
 - 1) Perhaps a carry-over from childhood?
 - 2) Where they feel like they were constantly being "commanded" to do things?
2. Yet keeping the commandments of God should not be looked upon by Christians in this way - cf. **1 Co 7:19**
3. In this lesson . . .
 - a. I want us to consider some things about keeping the commandments of God
 - b. Which I hope will change any adverse feelings we may have towards doing so

I. WHAT IS THE PROPER ATTITUDE TOWARD "COMMANDMENT-KEEPING"?

A. IT SHOULD NOT BE ONE OF "LEGALISM"...

1. Legalism is that idea that one earns or merits salvation by their obedience
2. Such an attitude would be wrong on the part of Christians - **Ti 3:3-7**
3. Unfortunately, many in reaction to legalism have gone to the extreme of saying "commandment-keeping" is not important
4. Yet Paul, whom no one could ever accuse of being a legalist, is the one who penned the words of our text!

[I would like to offer a different perspective, based upon two verses that start out like our text, but end differently . . .]

B. THINK OF IT AS "FAITH WORKING THROUGH LOVE"...

1. Compare **1 Co 7:19** with **Ga 5:6**
2. Cannot keeping the commandments of God be an expression of "faith working through love"?
 - a. By keeping the commandments I demonstrate my FAITH - **Ja 2:14-18**
 - b. By keeping the commandments I show my LOVE
 - 1) To Jesus - **Jn 14:15; 15:14**
 - 2) To God - **1 Jn 5:3**
 - 3) To the children of God - **1 Jn 5:2**
3. Thought of in this way, keeping the commandments of God is very important!

C. THINK OF IT AS PRODUCING "A NEW CREATION"...

1. Compare **1 Co 7:19** with **Ga 6:15**
2. Cannot keeping the commandments of God be thought of as helping to produce a "new creation"?
 - a. Becoming a new creation is a blessing we enjoy by being in Christ - **2 Co 5:17**

- b. But to enjoy this blessing involves keeping certain commandments...
 - 1) For example, baptism to receive Christ - cf. **Ga 3:27**
 - 2) Also, putting off and putting on certain qualities to become like Christ - cf. **Co 3:5-17**
- 3. Again, when we think of keeping the commandments of God as necessary to become a new creation in Christ, then it becomes very important!

[This I believe is the proper attitude toward "commandment-keeping":

- A demonstration of our faith and love!
- Part of the process by which we can become a new creation in Christ!

But is "commandment-keeping" hard, laborious? Is it something unpleasant?]

II. IS "COMMANDMENT-KEEPING" A DIFFICULT TASK?

A. NOT ACCORDING TO THOSE WHO HAVE DONE IT LONGEST!

- 1. Like the apostle John - **1 Jn 5:3**
- 2. I strongly suspect that if you were to ask some of our elderly saints, that they would concur with both John and the psalmist - **Ps 119:129-136**

B. THE HARDEST PART IS DECIDING TO DO IT!

- 1. Laboring over whether to make a decision is often harder than carrying it out
- 2. For example, keeping commandments given by parents to children
 - a. E.g., to clean the room, take out the garbage
 - b. The hardest part is making the decision to do it willingly
 - c. Once that is done, the "chore" really isn't one!
- 3. The same is true with keeping the commandments of God (e.g., baptism)

C. IT IS MADE EASY FOR US WITH THE HELP OF GOD AND CHRIST!

- 1. God will protect and provide as we try to keep His commandments - **1 Co 10:13**
 - a. Protect you from what you are unable to overcome
 - b. Provide you with ways of escape for that which you do face
- 2. Yes, we are not alone as we try to keep the commandments of God - **Ph 2:12-13; 4:13**
- 3. Even if we are forsaken by all others in times of greatest need, God is still there! - **2 Ti 4:16-18**

CONCLUSION

- 1. But such blessings, and such assurance of faith, comes only to those who like Paul live as though **"keeping the commandments of God is what matters"**!
- 2. How important is keeping the commandments of God?
 - a. It is essential to receiving MERCY from God - **Ps 103:15-18; Mt 7:21-23**
 - b. It is essential to receiving the LOVE & ABIDING PRESENCE of God - **Jn 14:21,23**
 - c. It is essential to having our PRAYERS ANSWERED - **1 Jn 3:22**

Dear friends and brethren, are you keeping the commandments of God?