

Genesis 2:15-17

Then the LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to tend and keep it. And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

In my devotional time in the word, I just finished reading the book of Leviticus. Hopefully you have read it and will continue to read it and the rest of the bible. If you have read it, then you know that the book of Leviticus is full of God's laws and instructions for the children of Israel and us. But if you have read the Old Testament, you know that the laws are also in Exodus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.

Yep, law after law, instruction after instruction. Not that they are bad things, but they are good things, because if we could keep all those laws, we would actually live a much better life. But all those laws, it's hard to keep track of them all, let alone try to follow them all. So let's try and make it a little easier and just narrow it down from hundreds to just ten laws, or what we know as the Ten Commandments. But when you start reading them, it seems we can't even keep ten commands or instructions from God.

Okay, how about just two commandments, I mean come on, two commandments, surely we could keep two commandments, but which two?

Jesus has the answer for that.

† **Matthew 22:36-40** *"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, **"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'** On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."*

You may have just read that and you are thinking, *"I don't really care about my neighbor, at least not enough to love them like I love myself. And the first one, I fail at that one all the time"* Yeah, I'm the same way, I can't even keep two commandments myself.

So, how about one simple rule, yeah only ONE. I'm sure we could do that, right? What rule would that be? Well it's the first rule that God gave man, and it's in today's devotional verses.

And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die."

Only one rule, not Ten Commandments, not hundreds of laws and instructions, (which I believe were written in man's heart when he was created). Yet one simple rule and that was *of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*

And not only did God give one simple instruction to Adam and Eve, but He also told them what would happen if they did not follow that one instruction: *for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.*

It would be like going into a store that had anything and everything you could imagine to drink. Everything in the store is good for you, and tastes good. Hundreds of thousands of choices that you can make. But of all the choices that are there in the store, there is only one bottle that you cannot drink from, because it clearly says in BIG BOLD letters “**DO NOT DRINK OR YOU WILL DIE**” So, what do you do, yep you would drink from it. It’s an example of what Adam and Eve had in the garden.

I know it sounds crazy, but that’s the truth about sin. As hard as we try, we simply can’t keep God’s laws and commandments. When you think about it, it seems like there is no hope, even Paul knew that he and others would think that way, and so he wrote about it.

† **Romans 7:14-20 & 24-25 (NLT)** *So the trouble is not with the law, for it is spiritual and good. The trouble is with me, for I am all too human, a slave to sin. I don’t really understand myself, for I want to do what is right, but I don’t do it. Instead, I do what I hate. But if I know that what I am doing is wrong, this shows that I agree that the law is good. So I am not the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. And I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. I want to do what is right, but I can’t. I want to do what is good, but I don’t. I don’t want to do what is wrong, but I do it anyway. But if I do what I don’t want to do, I am not really the one doing wrong; it is sin living in me that does it. Oh, what a miserable person I am! Who will free me from this life that is dominated by sin and death? Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord. So you see how it is: In my mind I really want to obey God’s law, but because of my sinful nature I am a slave to sin.*

Come on, how many of you can relate? I know I can, big time. But I can also relate to the answer as well: **Thank God! The answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.**

Can you relate too? If not, today is the day to realize that Jesus is the One and Only answer to our sinful nature, just as Paul said, **the answer is in Jesus Christ our Lord.**