

John 14:15

If you love Me, keep My commandments.

We read today's verse and know it by heart, yet how many of us do it backwards? Jesus said that *"If you love Me, keep My commandments."* Yet we think that, "if I keep God's commandments, then God will love me", which is backwards of what Jesus said. We know it's true, yet we still do it anyway. We try and earn God's love by being good and doing what He says, thinking that if we don't that God will stop loving us, or at least love us less.

But the truth is that God loved us before we loved Him, or even tried to keep just one of His commandments. The bible says that: *But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Romans 5:8* and we know Jesus died for us, even though we were still sinners, because He loves us. If you think about it, if Jesus had to wait for us to not sin before He would die for us, He would have to wait an eternity, plus that would not be love.

There is no earning God's love, in fact, the opposite is true, God had to earn your love, and the way He earned your love was paying the price for your sins by going to the cross. And since we know that Jesus died for us, therefore, *"We love Him because He first loved us."* **1 John 4:19**

So, why do we try to earn God's love or afraid that He will stop loving us? Now the answer is going to shock you. You ready for it.... Here it comes..... Just a little longer and the answer is that, it's because we are human. Yep, that's it, we are imperfect humans and can not love with that perfect love that God can. If we could, then Jesus would not have had to die for us, because if we could love like He does, we wouldn't sin against God or against each other.

But since we are dirt (literally), human and sinners, we can stop loving others, and even stop loving God, even if it's for a short time. That's called backsliding, because when you backslide, you are rejecting God's love and wanting to please yourself, because you love yourself more than you love God. So, you feed your flesh, because you make it more important than God to you, which is not love.

I know that does not sound encouraging, but it's still the truth. We have all done it, even one of Jesus' closest friends did it to Jesus when Jesus needed him the most; and that was Peter, when he denied that he even knew Jesus. But, Peter also repented of what he did, and he ending up dying for Jesus, rather than denying that he knew Jesus.

Jesus even addressed what would happen if we do deny Him when He said, *"But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven."* **Matthew 10:33** So, did Jesus tell God that He didn't know Peter, because Peter denied that he knew Jesus? No, once again, because Peter repented of his sin. So you may have denied that you knew Jesus to others. I think we all have done it at one time or another, even if that denying was

keeping silent when we knew we should have proclaimed Jesus to others. But I believe what Jesus is saying is that this is a continual denying of Him. It would be those who hear about Jesus, yet deny Him by wanting nothing to do with Him.

Read today's verse again, and see if you can see something else that it's "not" saying, ***"If you love Me, keep My commandments."***

Don't see it? Notice Jesus doesn't say, If you really want to "impress" me, keep my commandments. But so many times we say we love the Lord, yet in reality, we are trying to impress Him more than show Him how much we love Him.

I know when I married my wife, I didn't marry her to try and impress her, I married her because I loved her, and I knew that she loved me. When I gave my life to Jesus, it wasn't to try and impress Him, but it was because I knew that He loved me, and I wanted to return that love by giving my life to Him, because He gave His life for me. And when we love Jesus back, that is keeping the greatest commandment of all. ***"If you love Me, keep My commandments."***

† **Matthew 22:36-38** *"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.*

† **Isaiah 58:3 (NLT2)** *'We have fasted before you!' they say. 'Why aren't you impressed? We have been very hard on ourselves, and you don't even notice it!' "I will tell you why!" I respond. "It's because you are fasting to please yourselves. Even while you fast, you keep oppressing your workers.*