

## Can I Love Him Enough?

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*Whoever 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.” John 14:21*

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This verse is a wonderful promise, not a difficult command. At first glance it may appear that Jesus is saying that we need to obey all of His commandments in order to show that we love Jesus. That would be impossible and contrary to all of New Testament Scripture. In fact, the message of the entire Bible is that we cannot, no matter how hard we try, keep all of God’s commands. Adam and Eve only had one command, and failed miserably. The Israelites had Ten Commandments, and violated all of them. The New Testament church was rebuked in Paul’s letters for adding to the Gospel and for not loving their brothers. Over and over in the Bible, we learn about our sin nature and how we cannot keep the laws of God. We cannot even love the Lord our God. So what is Jesus saying in this verse and why is it so important?

The verse is not saying that if we break Jesus’s commands we do not love him. That would imply that our salvation is based on commandment keeping and not the work of God through Jesus’ death for our sins. To better understand the verse, we need to look closely at the wording of the first part of the verse. “Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me....” This verse is not saying, “Keep my commands so that I know you love me.” This verse is also not saying, “If you keep my commands, then I will love you.” Rather it is saying that if we love Jesus, our love for Him will show itself in our keeping His commands. The key is that the **obedience** in this passage **is the evidence**, not the cause.

Jesus is telling his disciples that if they love Him, it will show up in their obeying His commandments, and that if they love him (also not contingent on their obedience) then God will love them, and He will show Himself to them. To better understand this verse we need to look for the cause and effects. This helps us to see the proper order of activities. The cause in both parts of the verse is to love Jesus, the effects are obedience, the love of the Father, and the manifestation of Jesus. So can we really love Jesus this much? Can I love Him the way that He expects me to?

Let’s take a look at another of Jesus’s teachings from Luke chapter 10.

*And behold, a lawyer stood up to put him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” He said to him, “What is written in the Law? How do you read it?” And he answered, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” And he said to him, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.” Luke 10:25-28*

Seriously? With all my heart, all my soul, and all my strength? Can I do that? I am not sure that I love anything that much. Jesus tells this lawyer that the requirement for eternal life is to love God with everything. To put God first in all things. This is not a new command, but the first of the Ten Commandments, and is also the command that Jesus calls the greatest commandment in Matthew 22:36-40

*“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.” Matthew 22:36-40*

Jesus tells this lawyer that if he Loves God correctly he will inherit eternal live. This is because to love God correctly is to put God first in all things, and the essence of sin is to put ourselves in place of God. Think of Adam and Eve’s sin – they wanted to be like God (Genesis 3:5). This is the essence of all sin – not loving God more than we love ourselves. We cannot love God in the way that He commands us to, thus Jesus says that in this command depends all of the law. The root of all sin is not loving God the way that we should.

So let’s come back to our verse this week and look at that passage again because there is a wonderful promise in there. Jesus tells his disciples in verse 15 that if they love Him (cause) they will keep his commands (effect). Then in verse 16 He tells them that He is going to send help – the Holy Spirit to be with us forever. In verse 17 and verse 19 Jesus tells them that He will dwell within them, and in verse 20 He tells them that He is in the Father the same way that He will be within his disciples. Then in verse 21 He tells his disciples that if they love Him they will obey Him and God will show them more of Him. The amazing part of this verse is that it really is more of an effect, effect, effect verse than a cause and effect verse.

### Let’s summarize:

Jesus is going to God and sending the Holy Spirit as a helper (vs.12; 16; 17; 18) – **Cause**

The Disciples are to love Jesus (vs. 15; 21) – **Effect**

Jesus’s disciples are to keep His commands (vs. 15; 21) - **Effect**

The more the disciples love Jesus, and obey, the more God will reveal Jesus to them (vs. 21) - **Effect**

The wonder of this verse is that it is a promise, not a command. Jesus is promising us a helper (vs. 16) who will help us to love Him the way we should. As that is done in us, we will obey more. As we obey more we will know Him more. I John 4:19 sums it all up for us by reminding us that, “We love him, because he first loved us.” All of our salvation is a work of Christ – even our love for Him.

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