ETHAN TEMPLE MINISTRIES

TOOLS FOR LIFE

SENIOR PASTOR JOHN A. TRUSTY, D.MIN.

**Christ’s Commandments and Abiding in Christ**

Obedience to God’s commandments and abiding in Christ go hand-in-hand. You cannot have one without the other. Jesus said: “If ye keep my commandments, ye shall abide in my love; even as I have kept my Father’s commandments, and abide in his love” (John 15:10).

Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and God’s law are inseparable. When we abide in Christ and He abides in us the Ten Commandments will become an integral part of our life because the Holy Spirit will be writing them on our heart:

“Forasmuch as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tables of stone, but in fleshly tables of the heart” (2 Cor. 3:3).

In fact, it was Jesus who, before His incarnation, gave Moses the Ten Commandments. The God who gave the commandments revealed Himself to Moses as the I AM:

“And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you” (Ex. 3:14).

Jesus claimed to be the I AM of the Old Testament:

“Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58).

In Paul’s letters we find many instructions concerning the attitudes and behaviors the Lord wants us to exhibit in our life. Paul gives very implicit instruction concerning behavior:

“That ye put off concerning the former conversation the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; and be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness. Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbor: for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ’s sake hath forgiven you” (Eph. 4:22-32).

Why is so much space given in the Bible to inform us of the behavior God wants us to follow? The reason is that we need to know the attitudes and behaviors He wants us to have so that we can be aware of situations when we are tempted to behave wrongly. If we didn’t know God’s will in these areas, we wouldn’t choose to let Christ manifest that aspect of His character in us. For example, if a believer doesn’t know it is wrong to hold onto anger and say something critical when someone wrongs him, he won’t turn his thoughts away from the anger and critical spirit he begins to feel. He won’t choose to let Christ manifest His “non-anger” and “non-critical spirit” in the situation because he is unaware that anger and a critical spirit are wrong. And so, he will not reflect Christ’s character in that particular situation. He has not begun developing Christ’s character within himself in that area of his life.

When Christ lives in us He will seek to live out His life in and through us. This means that He will seek to live out the Ten Commandments in our lives just as He did when He walked this earth:

“I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart” (Ps. 40:8).

Also, the Ten Commandments are inseparably connected to love. Jesus made this very clear when He taught:

“And, behold, one came and said unto him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life? And he said unto him, Why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments. He saith unto him, Which? Jesus said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Matt. 19:16-19).

“Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, Master, which is the great commandment in the law? Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matt. 22:35-40).

The apostle Paul taught that love and God’s Ten Commandments refer to the same experience in one’s life:

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:8-10).

The first four commandments reveal how we love God, and the last six tell us how we are to love each other. Hence, Christ abiding in us, the Ten Commandments, love, and intimately knowing Jesus are all closely related. You cannot have one without the others. John wrote of this close connection in his first letter:

“And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked” (1 John 2:3-6).

John clearly links intimately knowing Jesus, the Ten Commandments, love, and abiding in Him. He says that if we are abiding in Christ, we will be “walking,” or living, as He lived. Why? Because Jesus will be living out His life in us, and our lives will be lives of obedience to God’s Ten Commandments.

**Personal Reflection and Discussion**

How did Jesus connect abiding in Him with the Ten Commandments?

How did Jesus connect love with the Ten Commandments?

Who gave the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai?

Where does God write the Ten Commandments today, and through what means?

How do you plan to apply the lesson of this devotional study to your life this week?

From *40 Days: Prayers and Devotions to Prepare for the Second Coming* by Dennis Smith, 2009. Reprinted with permission.