

JOHN

Stories Related To The Last Days Of Christ

January 20, 2019

I. Introduction

- A. I am going to read **John 14:11-24** in an unusual way. I say unusual because I am going to skip over certain parts in an effort to help you see this portion in a way I believe it can be best understood. I have provided a handout so you can compare it to the full text and see what I have left out.
- B. **John 14:11-24** . . . [11] “Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me . . . [12] Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do, he will do also; and greater works than these he will do; because I go to the Father. [13] Whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son . . . [15] If you love Me, you will keep My commandments [**and**] [16] I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; [17] that is the Spirit of truth . . . He [will] abide with you and will be in you . . . [20] In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you. [21] He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him . . . [23] If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him. [24] He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me.”
- C. Today, we will focus on two related truths –
 - 1. **First**, we will look at a definition of love that will help us understand why Jesus says that loving Him invariably, or even naturally results in keeping His commandments.
 - 2. **Second**, we will look at Jesus’ description of the results of loving Him in that way that invariably compels us to keep His commandments.
- D. Pray

II. Love that invariably compels us to keep God’s commandments

- A. Three times in this short passage of scripture, Jesus treats love for Him and obedience to Him as if they are naturally and inseparably linked. Why? What is there about loving God that seems to compel us to obey Him, that is, to humbly submit to Him and live according to His Word?

- B. Before answering that directly, I want to review some of the scriptures that address this matter of loving God and keeping His commandments.
1. Let's begin by re-reading the three statements here in **John 14**.
 - a. **Vs 15** – If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.
 - b. **Vs 21** – He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me.
 - c. **Vs 23** – If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word.
 2. There is a fourth statement here in **John 14:24**, that addresses the failure to love God, and in this statement Jesus says, “He who does not love Me does not keep My words.”
 3. John not only wrote the gospel of John, he wrote three letters as well, and in two of those letters he says something very similar to what Jesus says about love and obedience here in **John 14**.
 - a. **1 John 5:2-3** . . . By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and observe His commandments. [3] For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.
 - b. **2 John 1:6a** . . . And this is love, that we walk according to His commandments.
 4. When asked what commandment is the foremost of all, Jesus said, “The foremost is, 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with **all** your heart, and with **all** your soul, and with **all** your mind, and with **all** your strength. The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor **as** yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these” (**Mark 12:28-34**).
 - a. Now remember, we are looking for the reason Jesus inextricably unites love for Him with obedience to Him – and we are looking at this in order to understand why love for Him seems to naturally compel us to obey Him.
 - b. And here in **Mark 12**, Jesus essentially says that loving God as we ought includes loving our neighbor as we ought – as if the two are inseparable.
 5. John not only says similar things in his first epistle, he adds explanations that help us understand why it is this way.
 - a. **1 John 3:16-18** . . . We know love by this (*we know what love is by this*), that He laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren (*Why? Because we are supposed to love our neighbor as ourselves, and this is what love is*). [17] But whoever has the world's goods, and sees his brother in need and closes his heart against him, how does the love of God abide in

him? [18] Little children, let us not love with word or with tongue, but in deed and truth.

b. **1 John 4:10-11** . . . In this is love (*once again, this is what love is*), not that we loved God, but that He loved us (*the prideful rebels, the unlovable*) and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins (*this is a clear example of going beyond word and tongue to love in deed and truth*). [11] Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

c. **1 John 4:20-21** . . . If someone says, "I love God," and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. [21] And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.

C. What I believe Jesus' words and these statements from John's epistle tell us is that **love – by its nature – promotes, seeks, and protects the good of others**, whether it is God's love for all mankind, or God's love for us His people, or God's love for us individually, or our love for God, or our love for one another.

1. Think about this! When we speak and sing and give thanks concerning God's love for us, we do so – most often – because we see Him as having done something good for us.

2. And when we think God is failing us in some way, it is most often because we think or feel that He is not doing enough to seek and protect what we believe to be our good?

3. My point is, we ourselves seem to naturally link God's love for us to His promoting, seeking, and protecting our good.

a. And beyond that, we judge other's love for us on the same basis.

b. When we believe someone is seeking our good, we think of him or her as loving us.

c. And when we feel they are not seeking our good, we feel unloved by them.

d. In other words, we all hold that love, by its nature, promotes, seeks, and protects the good of others.

D. And related to love seeking the good of others is the fact that Jesus linked love for Him with keeping His commandments. Why?

1. Because His commandments are so designed that in keeping them we promote, seek, and protect the good of God and the good of our fellow man.

2. In other words, in keeping God's commandments we end up seeking the good of everyone affected by our choices and behavior.

- E. Therefore, I define love as seeking the good of everyone who is in any way affected by my choices and behavior. For me, this is the most practical and applicable definition of love that I know of – especially when considering how to live out God’s commandments in daily life.
1. But beyond that, in using this definition we gain insight into what love isn’t. For example, selfishness and sin – which compel us to break God’s commandments – are the opposite of love.
 2. Therefore, in contrast to love – and even in opposition to love – selfishness and sin promote, seek, and protect **the good of self at the expense and to the harm of others** – just as Adam and Eve’s sin has done great harm to all of us.
 3. Paul supports this truth when he writes, “[8] Owe nothing to anyone except to love one another; for he who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. [10] Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law (**Romans 13:8,10**).
 4. Like Jesus, Paul clearly shows the connects between love and keeping the law of God. And why is it so important to see this connection? Because God’s commands are designed to promote, seek, and protect the good of everyone affected by our choices and behavior!
- F. Therefore, when we love God, we will keep His commandments because it is in loving God that we then want to seek His good.
1. We will seek His good in the best possible ways by living according to His will and word – that is, according to His commandments.
 2. However, seeking God’s good includes seeking the good of everyone He loves – which is why He made the commandment to love our neighbor as ourselves equal to loving Him with all our being.
 3. And this is why John wrote these words in **1 John 4:7-8**, “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. [8] The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love.”
 4. And it is why he also wrote in **1 John 4:21**, “And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.”

III. Conclusion

- A. We will stop here today because this is enough to consider, buy into, and work at living it out day by day.
- B. The **second** thing I wanted to talk about today has to do with the rewarding results that come from loving God and keeping His commandments. But we will pick that up next time.