



Are you reading your Bibles?! There is no substitute for spending time with Jesus. Not even working for Him can substitute for being with Him. Are you making time for Him? He's the One who loves you most. And He can heal you and deliver you. I just want to remind you about Him. I don't want us to forget Him. You see the point isn't obedience... it's loyalty to Him! You know what I mean. We've got to get passed ourselves just a bit, and remember this is all for Him and to Him. All for Jesus! We love Him because He's so wonderful. We are loyal to Him because He's just so good! Jesus is so good. When we remember the who and why, we often remember the what and even the how. You know what I mean? The what and how are much easier when we remember the surpassing worth of who and why.

I'm so happy to get back to our series. It's simple. And it's clear. And sometimes isn't that just what we need? I know for certain that there is nothing Jesus is asking, commanding of us, that He hasn't provided grace for us to fulfill. His commands are life. Following Jesus is life.

Matthew 28

[19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, [20] teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

Disciples disciple. That's what we do and who we are. Discipleship is more than a teaching ministry... it's really a demonstration ministry. If we are living for Jesus, following Him, obeying Him... then we are fulfilling this command. We don't primarily teach obedience through pie charts, or sermon even, rather we instruct with our lives. We disciple over dinner. In every conversation. It's mostly subtle. It's more than words. It's fragrance. We just need to smell like God.

"The sense of smell is by far the most powerful of all our senses - our most underrated sense. When a baby it is our only way of communicating with the world. We can identify our parents by their smell and that's how a new born find it's mother. No one really understands fully how our sense of smell works. The nerve receptors are linked directly to the brain. There is nothing between them and the brain, unlike other senses." (BBC, Inside Out: The Power of Smell)

2 Corinthians 2

[14] But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. [15] For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing, [16] to one a fragrance from death to death, to the other a fragrance from life to life. Who is sufficient for these things? [17] For we are not, like so many, peddlers of God's word, but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

Maybe you just need to smell God again. You need a direct encounter with the One who loves you most. Our God is someone to be experienced. He's so much more than a theory. He's a person. He's alive and He loves you.

1 John 1

[1:1] That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we looked upon and have touched with our hands, concerning the word of life—[2] the life was made



manifest, and we have seen it, and testify to it and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us—[3] that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son Jesus Christ.

I. #26-TAKE MY YOKE

Matthew 11

[28] Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. [29] Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. [30] For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

- A. There is something profoundly subtle about God. He could overwhelm us, unravel us... but most of the time He doesn't. He waits for us to take notice of Him. He waits for our hearts to awaken to love. He's always inviting. He's always vulnerable. Always open.

Subtle- Adjective

1. So delicate or precise as to be difficult to analyze or describe.
2. Delicately complex and understated.

- B. There is only one place of rest. Rest is subtle. Isn't it? Because it's more than just not working. Jesus opens up an invitation for us to come into this experience.

Genesis 2

[2:1] Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. [2] And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. [3] So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

- C. I've heard it said that man was the crown jewel of all creation. And I understand that. But this week, as I read through the first chapters of Genesis again, what stood out was that really the Sabbath, rest, is the goal. Man was made for rest. But we chose labor.

- D. Jesus reinstates the invitation for us. Surrender is nothing more and nothing less than rest.

Hebrews 4

[9] So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, [10] for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

[11] Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. [12] For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. [13] And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.



II. #27-HONOR YOUR PARENTS

Matthew 15

[15:1] Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, [2] "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands when they eat." [3] He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? [4] For God commanded, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.' [5] But you say, 'If anyone tells his father or his mother, "What you would have gained from me is given to God," [6] he need not honor his father.' So for the sake of your tradition you have made void the word of God. [7] You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said:

*[8] "This people honors me with their lips,
but their heart is far from me;
[9] in vain do they worship me,
teaching as doctrines the commandments of men."*

Exodus 20:12

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Deut. 5:16

Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Exodus 21:17

Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.

Lev. 20:9

If anyone curses his father or mother, he must be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother, and his blood will be on his own head.

- A. According to Jewish law there are requirements involved in honoring our parents. These are the requirements:
- B. *Obedience*: The commandment requires one to obey one's parents when the command given by a parent is reasonable and permissible under Jewish law. For example, if a parent asks a child to bring him/her water, s/he must obey. Because honoring God is above all mitzvot, if a parent asks a child to break a law of the Torah, s/he must refuse to obey.
- C. A child is not required to obey if a parent says that s/he must marry a particular person, or must not marry a person s/he wishes to marry, provided the marriage is permissible by Jewish law.
- D. *Letting parents know s/he is safe*: A child who is traveling has an obligation to communicate with his/her parents to let them know s/he is safe in order to prevent them from worrying.



- E. *After the parent's death:* A child must continue to honor his/her parent after their deaths. This can be done by reciting kaddish for 11 months and on the yarzeit (anniversary of the parent's death), and by donating charity in the memory of the parent. The study of Torah is also considered to be reverence toward a parent, for it shows that a parent raised a worthy child.
- F. *Other requirements:* A child must never put a parent to shame, or speak arrogantly toward one's parent.
- G. A person who is told to do something by his/her mother for which his father does not like the result is not permitted to tell his/her father that his/her mother said to do that. This is because this could lead to his/her father cursing his/her mother.
- H. A child is not permitted to interrupt or contradict a parent, or to disturb a parent's sleep.

Parents' obligations

As a child must respect his/her parents, a parent must respect his/her children in return. This gives him/her the ability to respect his/her parents. A father has the following obligations toward his children:

- To teach his children (specifically the Torah)
- To rebuke his children. A parent who fails to do so will lead his children into delinquency.
- To refrain from showing favoritism toward his children.
- To train a child according to his/her interests.
- To teach a child a trade.
- To teach a child how to swim.

Ephesians 6

[4] Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

Colossians 3

[21] Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.

- I. I'm always wary of anyone demanding submission. Submission is an invitation, and if it's not... then it won't end in love, it will end in pain. That's probably true of any form of leadership.

III. #28- BEWARE OF FALSE TEACHING

Matthew 16

[6] Jesus said to them, "Watch and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees." [7] And they began discussing it among themselves, saying, "We brought no bread." [8] But Jesus, aware of this, said, "O you of little faith, why are you discussing among yourselves the fact that you have no bread? [9] Do you not yet perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? [10] Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? [11] How is it that you fail to understand that I did not speak about bread? Beware of the leaven of the



Pharisees and Sadducees.” [12] Then they understood that he did not tell them to beware of the leaven of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

- A. Maybe what we need to look at is what the Pharisees and the Sadducees represented? Who were they and what was their religion, and why was it false?

Pharisees of Jesus' day- Were a religious and political group noted for its conservatism.

- They were strict observers of the Law of Moses
- Adopted the “Traditions of the elders”- oral laws passed down
- They made the commandments of God of no effect by their traditions (Matt: 15:12-14)
- They were hypocrites, teaching one thing and doing another (Matthew 15:7-8, 16:3, 23:1-4)
- They did their works to be seen by men (Matthew 23:5)
- They loved the attention and special treatment by others (Matthew 23:6,7)
- They wore religious titles (Matthew 23:8-10)
- They prevented others from finding the way to the kingdom of heaven (Matthew 23:13)
- They used their religion to make money and impress others (Matthew 23:14)
- They didn't make people better, they made them worse! (Matthew 23:15)
- They made distinctions where God did not (Matthew 23:16-22)
- Though sticklers for some commandments, they ignored others (Matthew 23:23-24)
- They honored men of God who went before them, but were more like those who persecuted the people of God (Matthew 23:29-31)

Sadducees of Jesus' Day- A religious and political group noted for its liberalism

- Included many powerful members of the priesthood (Acts 5:17)
- They insisted only the laws found in the Pentateuch (first five books of the OT) were binding
- They rejected "the traditions of the elders", interpretations of the Law that had been handed down
- They did not believe in the resurrection, spirits, angels (Acts 23:8, Matthew 22:23)
- They did not believe in rewards or punishment after death, nor in heaven or hell
- Jesus charged them with two faults (Matthew 22:23-29)
 - They did not know the Scriptures
 - They did not know the power of God
- The Sadducees had a partnership with the Roman government- vested interest in the status quo
- Their power was derived from this secular partnership

- B. We need to be very careful with our alliances and heart attitudes. We need to be very careful with how we position our hearts. It doesn't take much to work through our whole view. False teaching corrupts everything it touches.

IV. #29- DENY YOURSELF

Luke 9

[23] And he said to all, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. [24] For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will



save it. [25] For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?

[26] For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

A. There are really three parts to this command. And none of them are easy. And order is everything...

1. Lay something down (deny yourself)

B. The phrase “deny himself” literally means, “to completely disown, to utterly separate oneself from someone.” It is the same word used to describe Peter’s denial of Jesus outside the high priests home, Matt. 26:34! Each time he was confronted about his connection with Jesus, Peter more fervently denied knowing him.

“We think giving our all to the Lord is like taking \$1,000 bill and laying it on the table— ‘Here’s my life, Lord. I’m giving it all.’ “But the reality for most of us is that he sends us to the bank and has us cash in the \$1,000 for quarters. We go through life putting out 25 cents here and 50 cents there. Listen to the neighbor kid’s troubles instead of saying, ‘Get lost.’ Go to a committee meeting. Give a cup of water to a shaky old man in a nursing home.

“Usually giving our life to Christ isn’t glorious. It’s done in all those little acts of love, 25 cents at a time. It would be easy to go out in a flash of glory; it’s harder to live the Christian life little by little over the long haul.” (Fred Craddock)

2. Pick something up (Pick up your cross)

C. To understand what this cross Jesus refers to is we need to talk about what it isn’t. It isn’t your lost husband or wife. It isn’t your wayward children. Your cross isn’t your difficulties, your health or the bad situations you face in life. We say “that’s my cross,” but it is not! That is not what Jesus meant. The cross is not just a place of suffering... it is a place of death!

3. Live something out (follow me)

D. Here Jesus says, literally “let him follow me day by day.” To be a disciple of Christ is to be continually following after Jesus. It is a way of life. It is to be our pattern for living.

E. If a disciple is a “follower” and we are disciples of Christ, it follows that that we are willing to be lead. We are willing to be led into places that we don’t understand; even places that are dark and scary and even painful and unpleasant; because we trust and follow the Shepherd.

F. Remember, in these commands are life, rest and love. The world has a very different message. It requires no surrender on the front end, and yet at the end of the road we realize we’ve been duped into slavery. Satan never shows the fine print. The thing about God is He lays out the conditions on the front end. Some find this distasteful...but those who have been, or are being redeemed, are thankful for full disclosure.