



### What It Is To Truly Follow The Lord

This past Monday morning, the Lord asked me, “what did Abram do when he had no written word to follow, or Isaac, Jacob or Moses before given to Him my Word? What did the disciples Peter, John, James and the others, including Paul do when they had no written NT, but that which was Given to them by God in the Flesh? Stay with me, because we’re going to address this question in a way that may seem a little unorthodox, but will make all sense to us. Let’s begin with **Isa. 29:13**:

*Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honour me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:*

I know that many of us believe we know this passage, we even quote it to ourselves and others. But have you ever wondered why the passage says, “*this people draw near me...*” The Lord acknowledges they draw near or (**נָגַשׁ** *nagash (naw-gash')*; meaning they do approach or come close to Him. Now, don't be dismissive of that, by just saying, “yea, but they didn't really believe or something in that manner.” No, they believed or they wouldn't draw close to Him at all. Only those who believe will approach God at all. If you don't believe, you don't even make any attempts or efforts to appear before God. So, don't be dismissive of God saying, “*this people draw near me....*” 

However, as we know, He says they draw near with their mouth and with their lips, *but their hearts* or their (**לֵב** *leb (labe)* – meaning the inner man: our affections and will – the secret man of the heart) *are far from Him*. Let's examine this passage.

First, dispel any the notion that these people were unbelievers. They couldn't have been, because they came before the Lord, they even offered worship and praise. Unbelievers, simply don't believe; and therefore, to them there is not to come before or draw near to. They did believe in the Lord. But, God says, they only drew near or came before Him with their mouth or (**פִּה** *peh (peh)*); which means not only the external organ for speaking, eating and drinking, but means according to the command of or spoken command. What does this mean? It's like you train a dog to respond to your spoken command. Come, he comes, set, he sets. Role over, he roles over. The dog responds in obedience to the command of their master, whether he fully understands why or not, he's obedient to what command was spoken. 

The phrase “*with their lips*” is the Hebrew word: **סָפָה** **שָׂפָה** *saphah* (*saw-faw'*); which means speech, language, and **edge**. Now what does **edge**? In it’s context is defined by Webster’s dictionary as “a sharpness or keenness of language”. This simply means being able to speak the right things, knowing the right things to say, the appropriate vernacular for the setting. The right etiquette of speech or talk. To even being versed on or in a particular speech or language. Did you get that! It is one who knows the right way to speak and what to say! I can quote scripture, I know to call the Lord God Almighty, Yahweh, Jehovah, or Jesus by His Hebrew name Jeshua. I know how to say Amen, Hallelujah, Praise the Lord, God is good all the time, and all the time God is good, Jesus is Lord of my life, and on and on and on. And all of this should be and is wonderful, blessed, needed and required. 

Nevertheless, the Lord says, that’s only “mouth and lips” or obedience to a command, and a knowing the things to say appropriately. I command my dog to talk, my dog starts barking. He’s obedient and he speaks, but it doesn’t make his obedience or speech from his heart or out of love. It just makes him obedient and responds to command.

The Lord says, *but their hearts (לֵב leib (labe) inner m an: affections and will – secrets of the heart) are far from Him.* 

I remember about 13 or so years ago, my dog Max, we had trained to set, speak come and go on command. We trained him to do things, mainly by bribing him with food or being stern and seeming judgment. So, one night me and Max was out on a walk, and he got off the leash and took off. I called to him to come back, but he kept running. So, I decided to see if this dog had

affection for me. Max was at least close to 200 yards away from me down the street. I laid down on the ground and shouted “help me max”. Max heard me. I saw him stop. He turned around and saw me laying on the ground. He ran back to me in a full sprint, came over to me and licked me with a look on his face of concern. I got up and hugged that dog, and said, you love me Max. I love you too. I knew he approached me with his heart and not out of command or obedience. From that day, we knew our bound. That was my dog!

The Lord says, they draw near to Him, even in obedience to a command, with the appropriate etiquette of speech; their honor of Him with celebrated praise with their forms of devotion; yet, He denounces their formality of worship, because their hearts they *have removed or רָחַק rachaq (raw-khak')*; meaning, to be or become distant from Him. He denounces their kept up forms of religion which withheld the affections of their hearts from Him. Now, listen to the reason why their hearts were removed or distant from Him. *and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men:*

The more accurate translation reads, *and is their fear towards me by the commandment of men taught.*

Basically, the Lord is saying that we are taught by man to fear God, not reverent fear, but fear, fear. God's going to get you! He's going to punish you. He's going to strike you down. He not going to let you into heaven if you don't do what He says. Obey His commandments. Fear is a powerful motive, which can cause someone to say or do almost anything, but fear doesn't make one love. You know that saying, usually by the bad guy, “I rather be

feared than respected”. God is not the bad guy, He wants to be loved, respected, honored and obeyed from the heart of man. 

Their worship of God was out of "fear", not intimate reverence, but actual fear; what God is going to do to you for doing this or that, or not doing this or that, which He says was taught by men. Their devotion and worship was motivated by fear, fear of consequence, fear of judgment, fear of punishment. If we do not follow Him or obey Him, there will be consequences, punishment, judgement. Not worship and devotion actuated from affection, reverence or love; thus, God denounced their devotion and worship. Look at it for yourself, read it and see it! God doesn't denounce them as unbelievers, not wanting to hear or follows His Word. He actually says they draw near to Him, but their hearts were distant, far from, not with Him when they came.

Let's look at the comparison between Kings Saul and David! From the outward we see that David sinned numerous against the Lord, David even said himself, **Ps. 40:12** *“For innumerable evils have compassed me about: mine iniquities (sins) have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up; they are more than the hairs of mine head: therefore my heart faileth me. David says he got so many sins in his life that his heart faileth, his iniquities (sins) are more than the hairs of his head, and have taken hold of him.* 

Saul, on the other hand, we see he sinned against the Lord by defying Him by not obeying the direct commands of Lord. He offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings unto the Lord himself without the Prophet Samuel, which was a violation of God's command. Saul failed to slay the king of Amelikes as God

commanded. He was again impatient on waiting for the prophet Samuel to show up before He again offered burnt offerings unto the Lord; yet, God denounces Saul, strips the kingdom from him for these acts, while David, violated the Laws God written with His own hand, “*thou shall not covet thy neighbor’s wife*”; “*thou shall not commit adultery*”; “*thou shall not bear false witness against thy neighbor*”; *thou shall not kill*; etc. Seemingly, more egregious acts of disobedience towards God. He also disobeyed God when was told not to number the people; yet, David did it anyway, and other egregious sins. Though God did punish David for his sins; He did not strip the kingdom from David, but promised that David’s kingdom would be established forever.

Obviously, from an outward perspective, if it was just about an outward matter of disobedience of Saul and David, from what we know, the balance of the natural scale would greatly tip in Saul’s favor. But, what we see and know is that it had to do with hearts of the two kings. Though, David tells us that his sins are to numerous to count, he repented before the Lord for each sin he committed. David attest to, and prophesied in **Psalms 32:1-2**: “*Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, whose sin is covered. 2 Blessed is the man unto whom the Lord imputeth not iniquity, and in whose spirit there is no guile*”; which we then read in **Rom. 4:5-8**:

*However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. 6 David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: 7 “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins*

*are covered. 8 Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”* 

That David understood the doctrine of justification by faith, apart from works of the law. David understood that the Lord imputeth righteousness or treats as righteous, the one who lives by faith in Him. David, understood that faith and trust in the Lord’s grace and mercy entitles one to the Lord’s favor in a way different from conformity to the Law. A man that has faith in the Lord’s grace and mercy is admitted to His favor, though he or she sins, but by faith seeks forgiveness and repents, he or she is pardon of God and is no longer to be treated as a sinner, but as righteous before God, and as a friend of God. 

Now, Saul on the other hand, in each account of his disobedience and defiance, he doesn’t seek the Lord’s forgiveness but makes excuses for his violations, “it was the people, I felt pressured by the people.” “It was you Samuel for being late”. “It was fear”. Saul even tried to justify himself of fulfilling the Lord’s command with half compliance to what he was told to do, **1 Sam. 15:20**, *But I did obey the Lord,” I went on the mission the Lord assigned me. I completely destroyed the Amalekites and brought back Agag their king. 21 The soldiers took sheep and cattle from the plunder, the best of what was devoted to God, in order to sacrifice them to the Lord your God at Gilgal.”* No, that’s not what God told you to do! Saul then goes on to say, vs **24-25**, *“Then Saul said to Samuel, “I have sinned. I violated the Lord’s command and your instructions. I was afraid of the men and so I gave in to them. 25 Now I beg you, forgive my sin and come back with me, so that I may worship the Lord.”* 

Saul was afraid of the men, though He violated the Lord, he seeks Samuel's forgiveness, not the Lord's, and then wants Samuel to go with him to worship the Lord.

It's the hearts of the kings, not the actions of the kings. David was a man after God's own heart, Saul was a man concerned with the people and excuses. This is what tips the balance of the scales all the way in David's favor! Because David loved God, and God loved David! David did what the Lord told Him to do, and He went where God told Him to go, but not because of outward obedience, but of a motivate to please His Father in Heaven!

When he sinned, he repented. David sinned because he at times he let selfishness and pride overtake him, but he had great love for His father, regardless of his mistakes and errors. Saul on the other hand, when he disobeyed the Lord, he made excuses, blamed it on others and had not true concern of pleasing the Lord God Almighty. He had not a heart for the Lord. 

It is God's desire that we worship Him in intimacy, with love, and not out of fear, fear of Judgment, fear of consequences, fear of punishment, fear of being left. Yes, we have to have fear for the Lord, and the the consequences of what not following His Word causes us. We are to keep a very healthy dose of respect, humility and fear of His judgment for disobedience, the fear of eternal torment. As Jesus said, "*fear not he who could kill the body, but fear Him which can destroy both soul and body in hell.*" (**Matt. 10:28**). 

However, fear is never to be the driving reason, the motive or intent to follow God's will. After all, He tells us, He did not *give*

*us the spirit of fear, but power, love and a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7).* He also tells us, “*there is no fear in love. But perfect love cast out fear. Fear involves torment, and he that fears is not made perfect in love.*” (1 John 4:18). So, if we love God, then we should not have fear of God’s judgment or punishment, but healthy reverent fear, not scared fear of God.

If we are motivated by fear to follow God, even if it drives us to follow His Word to the detail, is the intent of our heart then proper? Isn’t that but an intent of the heart which is focused on fear, which is torment, and torment is of the devil? Rather, our intent of the heart should be to love God, not be afraid of Him. 

The principle of our obedience to God should always be motivated by a desire to worship out of love and affection, and not the fear of consequences taught by man telling us God is going to get us. It should be love, that motives our heart with an intent to draw closer to Him intimately.

Slaves were obedient to their masters out of fear of punishment, retribution, consequences. A dog will be obedient to their master’s command because he’s told, and they have a fear of not being feed or left. Neither, have a motive of obedience that is spawned or actuated out of love, but fear of consequences, judgment or punishment.

I want you to get this passage **Jer. 3:15-16**, this Lord says,

*And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding. 16 And it shall come to pass, when ye be multiplied and increased in the land, in those*

*days, saith the Lord, they shall say no more, The ark of the covenant of the Lord: neither shall it come to mind: neither shall they remember it; neither shall they visit it; neither shall that be done any more.*

God says, He gives pastors according to His heart, speaking of Jesus, and those who He has anointed to preach obedience to God motivated by love for God. That's God's heart. Love is reciprocity, give and receive – “For God so loved the world...He gave.... **Jer. 3:15-16** goes on to say, *no more shall there be a need for the mentioning of “the ark of the covenant of the Lord”*. This reference of The ark is specifically speaking to the Mosaic way or law. The Ark contained within it the two tablets of the Law as the condition of His covenant, and the presence of His Shekinah Glory in their midst. But "*in those days*" He says, speaking of the days we're now living in, the New Dispensation days, the way of following Him by the law would pass away, because God would now dwell in His people by the gift of the Holy Spirit **1 Corinthians 3:16**, and the terms of the covenant, would will be written on our hearts **Jeremiah 31:33**, because the tabernacle of God will be one "made without hands" Hebrews 9:11, but in the heart of His believing people. Amen! 

The obedience God seeks from us is not that of fear compliance, but that motivated and actuated by love. It is the motive and the intent of the heart that God seeks.

Bear with me as we look at another passage that speaks to intents and motives. **Luke 9:52-56**

*And sent messengers before his face: and they went, and entered into a village of the Samaritans, to make ready for him. 53 And they did not receive him, because his face was as though he would go to Jerusalem. 54 And when his disciples James and John saw this, they said, Lord, wilt thou that we command fire to come down from heaven, and consume them, even as Elias did? 55 **But he turned, and rebuked them, and said, Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of.** 56 For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. And they went to another village.*

Jesus says, **“You don’t know what manner of spirit you have”.**

Jesus was set to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers ahead that stopped in a village of the Samaritans, to get things ready for Jesus arrival, but the people in the Samaritan village were not welcoming to Jesus. So, James and John saw this and said, *“Lord, do you want us to call fire down from heaven to destroy them?”* You have to understand Jesus response: He not only “rebuked them”, but He tells them, *Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of*. Okay, okay, what do you mean Jesus by, *“what manner of spirit”*. Your motives, your intents, you may believe to be righteous, honorable, a zeal for God because of the Samaritans unbelief, or their unwillingness to receive me, but you motive and intent from your heart are of pride, revengeful and prejudice. 

James and John, you have been with me a while now, while I preached in many villages, towns and cities, where they didn’t receive me, they unwelcoming, and didn’t want to hear my Word; and, and you did once speak of calling fire to rain down from heaven on them. Heck, you never even spoke to having fire rain down on the Romans who oppressed your people. You have only heard me preach and teach the love of God, even teaching that

you should love your enemies and those who spitefully use you. But, you want to call down fire on the Samaritan village. This is motivated by your harbored prejudice and vengefulness towards Samaritans as Jews. It's common knowledge, that the Jews and Samaritans are very conscientious towards one another, as the woman at the well said, **John 4:9**: *“The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.”* 

Jesus knew their heart, and it had not the right motives or intent, had they had the right motives or intent they would have known the purpose of His coming into the world was not to rain vengeance or condemnation on anyone – **Luke 9:56** *For the Son of man is not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.* The Spirit of our Saviour was the fundamental precepts of the Gospel, which commands us to “love”, God and one another, even our very enemies.... Jesus said, *“you're of another spirit”*, your intent and motivate is of prejudice, vengeance and pride towards the Samaritans, masked as religious zeal! Their motive of the heart was not love for God..., it was of another spirit! 

Jesus looks at the heart, the Father looks at the heart, the Holy Spirit looks at the heart, not the formulated behavior or action of the person.

It is the right intentions and motives of the heart that God seeks to produce obedience and worship to Him, it is never accepted by God the other way around. He doesn't want a trained dog or compliant slave. I do right unto and by my wife, and my wife me; because we love one another and want not to violate or disappoint

the other in any manner. Our affection, love and admiration for the other steers us. It's not out of fear of leaving me that I comply. It's out of the motive of love that commands and commends me! 

### **Luk 16:15**

*He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of others, but God knows your hearts. What people value highly is detestable in God's sight.*

Jesus says, "if you love me obey my commandments" - Not, obey my commandments to proof yourselves to love me. Because, He knows that a trained animal can be obedient, a person can be obedient out of fear of reprisal, fear of consequences, fear of punishment – fear. Fear is a motive; love is a motive. What's behind our motive of obedience? Am I scared God is going to discipline me, punish me, leave me or is it because my heart want's not to disappoint my beloved? 

The Lord looks at Intentions and motives of the heart determine our true faith. He ways the heart.

### **Prov. 16:2**

*All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes; but the Lord weigheth the spirits.*

### **Prov. 21:2**

*A person may think their own ways are right, but the Lord weighs the heart.*

Listen to **1 Cor. 13:1-3**

*Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity (love), I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal. 2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity (love), I am nothing. 3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity (love), it profiteth me nothing.*

This tells me, that I can pray without seizing, meditate on the Word day and night. Attend church, shout Hallelujah and say “Amen”. Pay my tithes, participate in and give to all the church fundraisers, volunteer my time in church activities, be part of the choir or other church ministry, be obedient to the letter of the law, and the list goes on, but if I have not love in my heart for the Father, His Son Jesus and the Holy Spirit – it means nothing! 

And, here’s the daring statement made by Jesus, many of ya’ll will do exactly what was just described in the previous paragraph, and will stand before the Lord on that great day, and will recite these things to the Lord, and hear Him say, I do not know you”. What?!?!?!? No way, you have got to be kidding me Jesus!!! How can that be?? He will say, “*O’ you drew near me with devotion and worship, maintained an obedience to my spoken command. You even shouted and praised with your lips, saying all the right things. But, your heart was not opened to me*”. 

You have told me all that you have done, but not once did you say, “But, I love you Lord”. You lived in fear of judgment, concern with being condemned or punished, trying to follow the

rules, but none of it was motivated by love, affection or intimacy towards me.

We must all come to a truth, and that is, trying to make up for love by running to church more often, participating in more church rituals, knowing all these fancy Greek and Hebrew words, donating my time and money to the church, reading my Bible more often, being able to recite Bible chapter and verses by the hundreds or thousands, and on, and on, and on, still doesn't make it love for God. You can do all the right things and still not love God in your heart. 

He is our Almighty Creator, our Loving Father, our everything. And His Son, what He did for us. And then we have the Holy Spirit, working in us to keep us on track. He does so much out of His unimaginable amazing love for us. How much more love can we expect, we ought to love Him back with worship, praise and obedience from love in our hearts for Him.

So, to answer the Lord's question, what did those Patriarchs do without the written Word of God, they believed Him, developed a relationship with Him and was intimate with Him. It is with the inner-man they intimately connected with the Lord. Abraham was called God's Friend because He and God communicated with one another. Isaac followed God with his Heart, Jacob personally wrestled with the Lord and remained intimate with God. Moses spoke directly with God face to face, if you will, was intimate with God on an inward level. David Loved God as if God was His biological father, Matthew, Peter, John and James, walked with God, touched and handled Him, and developed a love for

Him. Paul met Him on the road to Damascus and spoke with Him, and from their remained in a personal relationship with Him. 

What they all had in common was intimacy with the Lord God Almighty that lead them, motivated them from the heart. Not fear of punishment, fear of judgment, fear of retribution, but a reverence, a love, an intimacy that came from their heart.

“What are the intentions and motives of your heart?” What are your motives and intentions for doing right before the Lord? It is up to you to look inside yourself and work on your relationship with your Lord. The intent of the heart for doing the right thing for each of us is very different. Is it love or fear? In both cases there is formulated intent and motive to follow God's commandments, love or fear!

Like the commercial, what's in your wallet. With the Lord, it's “what's in your heart?”

