



**General Topics :: Love God. THEN do what you want.**

**Love God. THEN do what you want. - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/4/26 8:48**

" Love God, then do what you want." I heard this somewhere once.

Is this foolish advice or wise counsel?

Whad'ya think? Why?

Diane

**Re: Love God, then do what you want - posted by DomSpencer (), on: 2006/4/26 8:59**

23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home 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.

John 14:22-24 (New King James Version)

If I love Him, I will, as a matter of course, do what He wants. He will make His home in me, and will lead me into all He wants me to do.

Nice one, Diane! This should be a go-er!

I just put your e-book about Entering God's Rest on my favourites.

The River's flowing from your heart, that's for sure!

Dom

**Re: - posted by habakkuk3 (), on: 2006/4/26 10:26**

" Love God, then do what you want." :-D

1John 5:2,3 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

Was this really a serious question? Wow, that's scary...

**Re: serious/scary/what else? - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/4/26 10:43**

Quote:

-----Was this really a serious question? Wow, that's scary...  
-----

It is an actual quote (I don't know the source) - that I feel deserves our thoughts.

Why is the question scary?

Diane

**Re:, on: 2006/4/26 11:42**

I think this one is scarier you all ~

([https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic\\_id6655&forum36&post\\_id&refreshGo](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?viewmodeflat&order0&topic_id6655&forum36&post_id&refreshGo)) Will you lose your salvation if you don't ~

:-D

**Re: - posted by roaringlamb (), on: 2006/4/26 11:42**

I believe it was Saint Augustine, but I don't know what work of his it was in. Maybe "confessions" I'm not a big Augustine reader though.

**Re: - posted by DomSpencer (), on: 2006/4/26 11:57**

I don't think this question is scary - I think it's essential. It's so easy to slip into legalism - and legalism brings a curse! NO THANK YOU.

I think it's vital to have tender hearts toward the Lord in our experience of His Presence, and from that experience will flow an obedience that is born of LIFE not just our own effort. Jesus is the centre of our lives, not just the written Word. Of course His Word is perfect, but His Word expresses Him, and we have a relationship with Him, not the Bible. He brings light to our hearts through the Word, but those words can also be a tool for darkness.

So it's not quite as simple as just quoting Jesus saying love for God is keeping His commandments - we need to know HOW. That's why He gave us the Apostle Paul and John - there was more to say....about the Law, the Holy Spirit and the nature of God's love for us, and ours for Him.

I could talk about this for months and years, and never exhaust it. Lord give me revelation of what it means to love you, and how much You love me. Amen.

Dom

**Re: - posted by DomSpencer (), on: 2006/4/26 12:00**

Quote:

-----I think this one is scarier you all ~ Will you lose your salvation if you don't ~  
-----

That's just mischievous!!!!!!

Dom

**Re: - posted by habakkuk3 (), on: 2006/4/26 12:01**

Quote:

-----Why is the question "Love God, then do what you want." scary?  
-----

I saw this Diane as a way to have Jesus and have it my own way too but the more I think about it, if I love Jesus, I will want His way (not my will but thy will be done). I will want whatever He wants because my life will not be separate from His. I will want to deny myself take up my cross and follow Jesus simply because I love Him.

There's much more wisdom in this statement, then I initially saw. My apologies Diane. :-)

**Re: Love God, then do what you want - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/4/26 13:01**

Great question Diane,

We live in a cynical age and it is easy to read the question you posted with quotation marks around the word "Love"...as if we are winking at each other about a secret loophole for lawlessness.

However if we take the statement literally and without irony it is rather brilliant I think. It is putting the horse before the cart so to speak. Perhaps it can even be used as a commentary on "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength; and love your neighbor as yourself."

So many scriptures point out the supremacy of loving God first in our hearts. Why? Because this is the supreme duty and requirement for salvation? No. I think such a conclusion seems like a rather stiff-necked response...instead loving God is the surrender of our wills, the trust of our futures, and the sanctification or devotion of our lives for his pleasure and benefit. It is not to be a chore...in fact the words duty and law imply self-effort when in fact love can be quite spontaneous and unconscious.

Regarding the pure impulse of love verses mere outward conforming to the 10 commandments I have always found it fascinating that Jesus told his disciples in the upper room "A new commandment I give unto you, That you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another." This was an incredibly important moment for the infant Church. Jesus was separating his people under a new commandment and one that I believe is vitally linked to the new birth according to the Spirit as opposed to the old man striving under the law.

Put the horse in front of the cart, and the cart will follow.

MC

**Re:, on: 2006/4/26 13:13**

Quote:

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DomSpencer wrote:

Quote:

-----I think this one is scarier you all ~ Will you lose your salvation if you don't ~

-----

That's just mischievous!!!!!!

Dom

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You may think or say so Dom, but did you read the whole thread ?

I posted that last year. Nothing mischievous about it ... but just bouncing off of some of the same responses that came up top of this thread to get maybe some serious thinking going by anyone who 'read' that whole thread that I linked to Dom.

Did you read that thread ?

I just finished reading it again for the - I don't know how many times now.

His Love to you.

Annie

**Re: - posted by PreachParsly (), on: 2006/4/26 14:43**

Sure, love God and do what you want.

If you love God you will do what He wants.

So, love God and do what you want, if doing what you want is what He wants.

:-P

**Re: - posted by Warrior4Jah (), on: 2006/4/26 15:01**

Sounds solid to me PreachParsly! :-)

I can think up one exception:

If one would change the definition of love to suit his/her own interrests/motives.

Now I think of this, even though this quote would do no harm people could easiliy misunderstand it.

One could easily put his/her own interpretation on it that is either biblically or unbiblically. Personally I think its a bad idea to use this quote without any explanation.

**Re: Love God, then do what you want - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2006/4/26 15:26**

When I hear the phrase "do what you want" I immediately think of our relativistic society and that whole moral wasteland. However, I guess this quote taken as a whole from a Christian perspective could fit in with the following...

Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

(Psa 37:4)

I believe the giving of the desires of the heart there refers not just to requests being granted but to the willingness that God gives us to do His will.

In Christ,

Ron

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/4/26 15:44**

Quote:

-----Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.  
-----

Isn't it intriguing how this scripture appears to us one way when we first look at it...but upon further reflection it completely inverts.

First we notice that the desires of our hearts will be affected and influenced simply by 'delighting thyself also in the Lord.'

But more subtly, and perhaps more importantly, we notice that the emphasis is not so much on the object "desires of our hearts" but on the process "he shall give thee the desires..." In the end it's not so much about the desires we started out with...but the new desires he has given...placed in our hearts.

And so the verse ends where it began. Jesus is really the deepest desire of our hearts.

MC

**Re: - posted by Scroggins (), on: 2006/4/26 16:08**

WOW MC Bro... Just WOW... Amen, enough said.

**Re: "want to" or "ought to" - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/4/26 16:54**

Quote:  
-----Isn't it intriguing how this scripture appears to us one way when we first look at it...but upon further reflection it completely inverts.  
-----

Most, I suspect, when they read scripture are seeing this:

love God and do what you are OBLIGATED to do.

Is God thrilled with that kind of life? Is that not the way the pharisees made choices?

Is worship not the expression our deepest DESIRES? I'm not talking about stuff that happens in the church service. I'm talking about our entire lives.

This thread topic sprang out of a discussion I'm having with Rahman about creative expression of art/music/writing etc. I believe that authentic creativity comes from our "want to" not an "ought to".

Apply this to everything we do in life - and how do you think it would work?

Diane

**Re: - posted by seekup, on: 2006/4/26 17:21**

Now I think of this, even though this quote would do no harm people could easily misunderstand it.

One could easily put his/her own interpretation on it that is either biblically or unbiblically. Personally I think its a bad idea to use this quote without any explanation.

Warrior4jah,

Great point, I think this speaks to the original post, best. There are a lot of very strong Christians posting great and thoughtful stuff here. But, consider how this would effect a new Christian or a person who is still deciding. I've heard variation of this statement taken to extremes.

Love God, then do what you want.

To a Christian it would mean the same as what all of the other post are saying, but to a someone else it could mean that as long as they think they love God, they can do what ever their heart desires (of the flesh) and everything will be groovy. To one who lacks a supportive body of faithful friends and teachers to help them better understand this statement, it could be dangerous and destructive. I pray that the Lord will send, to those who will consider this statement, faithful teachers like the brothers and sisters posting here. God Bless you all!

Chris

**Re: - posted by seekup, on: 2006/4/26 17:23**

oops.. sorry about the double post. I had a page loading problem. Commentator could you delete one for me. thanks Chris. p.s. can I delete my own post if this happens again?

Re: An example in Bach - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/4/26 18:46

Quote:  
-----I believe that authentic creativity comes from our "want to" not an "ought to"...Apply this to everything we do in life - and how do you think it would work?  
-----

Hopefully I understand your direction here...

I suppose we could consider J S Bach's example of both art and life. Here was a man whose life was not characterized by a desire for fame or stardom but instead by a deep, personal belief in the gospel of grace. In fact his drive to create a musico-theological art form might even seem mystical measured by modern academic protestantism. So when he could have been dishing out merely technically proficient music with the appropriate religious text, or seeking the patronage of kings by writing dazzling Baroque showpieces he instead created a body of worship music so profound in its technical and spiritual expression that he altered the course of western music.

I bring Bach up because he is an example of a Christian whose life's priorities were organized along the great theme: Glorifying God. Today we are suspicious of achievement because we associate it with vanity but Bach's "greatness" was not inspired by the hope of fame or fortune in his day. In all likelihood he was not counting on the average Christian at his church to understand the musical allegories he built into his compositions. Indeed, it is doubtful any of the churchgoers who first heard music like St. Matthews Passion really assimilated all they were hearing that day. To paraphrase a modern song title, Bach was writing music for "an audience of one."

Perhaps, of all of the gifts and genius Bach demonstrated, none was as important as his humble belief in excellence and hard work. He once told a student, "Just practice diligently, and it will go very well."

Even at age 65, he didn't seem to want to rest on his laurels. Not long after being hired as the high profile "Kapellmeister" of the court of Prince Leopold; he soon resigned because he found the regal environment distracting to him. He accepted a lowly position as cantor at a church in Leipzig, where he could continue creating worship music without fanfare from the world. Bach reminded me of the quote from "Chariots of Fire..." "When I run I can feel God's pleasure." Bach said, "Music's only purpose should be the glory of God and the recreation of the human spirit."

As he was dying from infirmity, his children were complaining that his church was already busy replacing him with the next music minister. He was forgotten for over a hundred years until Mendelssohn dusted off a Bach composition for a concert. Today Bach is accepted widely as the benchmark of supreme excellence for polyphony and counterpoint studies, whether you want to be a church organist or a jazz saxophonist. I believe his counterpoint was more than mere technical mastery...he was weaving the radical new tenants of Lutheran theology into not only the text of his cantatas, but also the construction of his music. (There is an interesting scholarly book called Analyzing Bach Cantatas that explores how Bach's musicology was ultimately driven by his theology.)

Bach was famous for signing his music scores with the epitaph "For the glory of God." If I am a businessman, could I, in my heart, sign my business plan accordingly? Jonathan Edwards once challenged businessmen to manage their business affairs for the benevolence of others, and not for what he called "commercial justice." Strange words indeed! In whatever I do, could I "sign" it for the Glory of God?

This is how I am trying to understand loving God in relation to how we think, create, and act in all areas of this life..."secular" or "Christian."

MC

Re: - posted by lastblast (), on: 2006/4/26 19:23

Quote:  
-----Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.  
  
I believe the giving of the desires of the heart there refers not just to requests being granted but to the willingness that God gives us to do His will.  
-----

Amen!! That is EXACTLY what came to my mind when I read the opening post. Blessings in Him, Cindy

Re: What is love? - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2006/4/26 19:34

Quote:  
-----  
Warrior4Jah wrote:  
If one would change the definition of love to suit his/her own interrests/motives.  
  
-----

Q. Does a rose by another name smell as sweet?  
A. Not if it's a cabbage:-)

If we "redefine" the "word" love to mean something other than it's not, then it's no longer love.

\*Edit\* Love is best defined as "I **want** you to have what you **want** more than I **want** what I **want**, to the point that I might miss out on what I **want**". This definition of the word that defines the first statement, brings the second into a place of safety. \*Edit\*

Quote:  
-----One could easily put his/her own interpretation on it that is either biblically or unbiblically. Personally I think its a bad idea to use this quote without any explanation.  
-----

I do agree with this, although I also think that sometimes we have to trust that God is better with His explanations than we are.

This quote cuts to the heart of ever "safety net" that we can tend to set up to "protect ourselves" from God's commandments. Consider 1 John 1:8-10. This could be interpreted as "Come clean and let God clean you up. What, do you think you can do a better job?"

Consider Eve add "neither touch" to God's commandment to not "eat" the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and evil. Sounds wise. If you don't touch, how can you eat? However if the touch doesn't kill you, you might think that you can get away with eating.

Re: About the quote... - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2006/4/26 19:50

Quote:  
-----  
roadsign wrote:  
It is an actual quote (I don't know the source) - that I feel deserves our thoughts.  
  
-----

May I recommend the following sermon series by Norman Grubb that, I feel adequately explains this quote (it's actually quoted in it)?

#### **Meaning of life**

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid4996>) 1. God Only

(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid4997>) 2. Where We Begin  
(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid5120>) 3. Free To Be Ourselves  
(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid5121>) 4. From Negative To Positive Believing  
(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid5122>) 5. From Romans 7 to Romans 8  
(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid5123>) 6. I Will Do It Through You

I ask that you withhold your opinion until you finish hearing the series, as there are many potentially volatile statements that he makes (if you can understand him:-)) but he does clarify as he goes, leaving you with a deep understanding of what it is to "Love God and do what you like."

**Re: What is love... - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2006/4/26 20:01**

Quote:

-----  
roadsign wrote:

It is an actual quote (I don't know the source) - that I feel deserves our thoughts.

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May I recommend the following sermon series by Norman Grubb that, I feel adequately explains this quote (it's actually quoted in it)?

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(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid5120>) 3. Free To Be Ourselves  
(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid5121>) 4. From Negative To Positive Believing  
(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid5122>) 5. From Romans 7 to Romans 8  
(<https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/mydownloads/visit.php?lid5123>) 6. I Will Do It Through You

I ask that you withhold your opinion until you finish hearing the series, as there are many potentially volatile statements that he makes (if you can understand him:-)) but he does clarify as he goes, leaving you with a deep understanding of what it is to "Love God and do what you like."

**Re: choice and desire - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/4/26 22:16**

Quote:

-----There is an interesting scholarly book called Analyzing Bach Cantatas that explores how Bach's musicology was ultimately driven by his theology.  
-----

This is of great interest to me.

I wish to add a comment: Bach's theology as expressed in music has worldwide implications. Think of the African songs, like Kumbaya, and the central American gospel songs, like Halle Halle Halle - they are all built on the same harmonic and scale structures that Bach developed. When missionaries went into these remote areas years ago, they brought their music to them: the very system developed by Bach. Thanks to Bach, we can say that music is a universal language.

-----  
Whether we want to admit it or not, we do what we want to all the time. We own our choices. neither God, nor others make us do anything. We choose more than we realize.

Love God and then do what you want - in other words: then make any choices that you desire.

Consider this:

The more we love God, the freer we are to make good choices and have good desires.

It is our diminished view of God that causes us to restrict ourselves to a small parameter of choices and desires. Legalism puts the freedom of choice into bondage. It also squelches good desires.



Does that make any sense to anyone?

Diane

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/4/27 0:10**

Quote:

-----The more we love God, the freer we are to make good choices and have good desires.

Diane, I think your statement here is analagous to Paul's words in Romans 8. "the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death....the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit."

I feel like what we are talking about is sanctifying ourselves to the Lord first and foremost. I know many like to entangle sanctification with a type of objective human perfection, but I think this is a legalistic (and therefore carnal) understanding of the matter.

Tonight my little daughter gave me a great picture of loving God...

I was working a little late in our home office to meet a deadline when she brought me in a plate of hot food. I complimented her on how kind she was being and she acted pleasantly surprised. She gave me a hug and told me "I love serving you daddy!" (Wow...)

Now my little girl is technically "immature" in that she has a lot of growing to do...yet her love is not partial or calculating in the fashion of many adults who are more mature and sophisticated. For instance with some children, including my own, you have to "lay down the law" constantly around the house to get them to obey. Yet, my daughter will exhibit a desire to please her mom and I without always being told. (Well, maybe now and then!) This is how I see loving God and sanctification as being linked...mere legalists may know the fine details of the law but those who live sanctified according to the Spirit are seeking to become familiar with their Father's heart.

If I may be so bold, I have seen that a hallmark characteristic of those who love God, is how loving God is what satisfies their hearts. This love is their "soul security" so to speak. In contrast we know many who profess love and spiritual inspiration, but their minds are continually on other objectives. Michael Card wrote a song that spoke so deeply to me a few years ago. Speaking in the Lord's voice he wrote, "Trust in Me. Keep your life free, from what the love of money will do. Am I not enough for you?"

Now recently I saw a Christian book with an absurd paradoxical title: "Humility---the Pathway to Power." I think this book represents much of our thinking today. Many talk about loving God as the pathway to blessing...which in my experience leads to all kinds of disillusionment. People tithe to receive favor from God, they serve the church to receive spiritual promotion,...well we all know the drill because we were saved from this thinking ourselves. The understanding is that loving God is a lever that you pull to get what you really love. We want to know what our duty is so that we can finally find favor with God...

If we could only encourage each other to live according to the spontaneous and selfless love of the Spirit we would probably have to spend less time arguing over the fine minutia of doctrine or testing the tolerable limits of the legal code.

Great line of inquiry Diane...very challenging to me.

MC

**Re: Let God love you - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/4/27 8:27**

Quote:

-----I saw a Christian book with an absurd paradoxial title: "Humility---the Pathway to Power.  
-----

It's just as absurd as the title of this thread! It all depends on the grid we think through: God-centered, or me-centered. It's hard to know the author's intent without reading the book. That is the risk of such titles.

Then again, that is the risk of the entire Bible. It can be used as a foundation of very selfish ends, if the reader doesn't know the intent of the Author.

God's love is risky and vulnerable because it meant giving us freedom to choose. Thus God risked being rejected and misunderstood.

We are FREE to respond to him in love, or try to earn divine favor (legal-centered thinking) Why does almost everyone choose the later?

Why does the freedom to do whatever you want seem so scary?

Why is there such a fear of authentic creativity among God's people? People just copy the religious trends. Really they want to do what everybody else is doing.... even while praying for God's will. Is this because God refuses to turn anyone into automatons?

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MC, the tender story of your daughter's exercise of her free will can't be complete without adding one comment: She KNEW the love of her father. (Could I be right?)

We need to learn to let God love us. That takes trust.

Diane

**Re: - posted by DomSpencer (), on: 2006/4/27 8:32**

Compton wrote:

Quote:

-----This is how I see loving God and sanctification as being linked...mere legalists may know the fine details of the law but those who live sanctified according to the Spirit are seeking to become familiar with their Father's heart.  
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Quote:

-----If I may be so bold, I have seen that a hallmark characteristic of those who love God, is how loving God is what satisfies their hearts  
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-----

Quote:

-----Many talk about loving God as the pathway to blessing.....

....The understanding is that loving God is a lever that you pull to get what you really love. We want to know what our duty is so that we can finally find favor with God...

Me, oh my! What a rich few words! Thank you.

A couple of years ago I was looking out over the River Humber here in England, on my way to work. I had many things on my mind, not least the constant conundrum that rattles around my heart: "How can I please God in my life? What does God want from me?" I may not have actually been thinking that at that exact moment, but God surely knew these things were a constant trouble to me. Then, in an instant, I saw a small flock of water birds that made a low sweep over the water, and God spoke to me - to the deepest recesses of my heart. I did not hear a voice, but it would have had no less impact had I done so. He said to me "All you need to do is love Me". And when He put that thought in my heart, I knew that what He meant was **ALL** I need to do.

That's it.  
In every walk of life.  
In every thing I do or say.  
In every plan I make.  
Every thought I entertain.  
Every relationship I have.  
My present and my future, and for all eternity.

**ALL**.....

I need to do.....

is love Him.

(And know as a reality His love for me - my words)

All I need to know now is how to do that in practice!!!

Dom

**Re: Love God, and do what He who sent me wants - posted by Josiah777 (), on: 2006/4/27 9:19**

Diane,

This was an interesting post and I have enjoyed hearing the dialog that has stemmed from it. I think it's safe to say that "Love God then do what you want" is not a good standalone statement, but needs to be wrapped up with a lot of context to make sense of it in a God-pleasing way.

One habit that has greatly helped me with statements is to line it up against the life and teaching of the Lord Jesus Himself. Is this something I can hear Him saying? Is this something I see in His life? The heartbeat of Jesus that stands out to me, anyway, was His frequent statements, "I have not come to do My will but the will of He that sent Me," or "I always do those things that please Him," or "The words I speak are not Mine but He who sent Me" or "I can do nothing of Myself." All that Jesus said and did was "tethered" to the One who sent Him--the Father. They pointed to a restful dependence upon His heavenly Father. It left its clear stamp on everything He was about. I think that's why we don't have any Gospel sayings of His where He said, "I do what I want" or something to that effect.

I hear your point of doing out of "ought to" versus "get to"...but Jesus delighted to do the will of the Father (Ps. 40:8). When we're in Jesus and our hearts are one, we'll have the same attitude towards doing God's will joyfully and cheerfully. His commandments won't be grievous and burdensome.

If I was to revise your statement a bit in light of Jesus' life and words, I would recommend: "Love God, and do what He who sent me wants." How's 'dat? :-)

**Re: Why redefine? - posted by CJaKfOrEsT (), on: 2006/4/27 9:35**

Quote:

-----  
Josiah777 wrote:

This was an interesting post and I have enjoyed hearing the dialog that has stemmed from it. I think it's safe to say that "Love God then do what you want" is not a good standalone statement, but needs to be wrapped up with a lot of context to make sense of it in a God-pleasing way.

.....  
If I was to revise your statement a bit in light of Jesus' life and words, I would recommend: "Love God, and do what He who sent me wants." How's 'dat? :-)  
-----

The only problem with this revision of the original quote is that there is an implied "begrudgingness" (is that a word) ar

ound it. A kind of a "He wants me to do it...not me", going on.

Consider the initial lack of context given, how many would have been as impacted by the statement after contending with it, only to realise that they agreed with it. There have been times in my walk that God has offended my sense of "how things should be done" in order to show me "how they are" (anyone who has spent any time with or listening to Art Katz, for example, would be acquainted with this feeling).

Diane,

Thank you for raising this. It needs to be stated, because I for one, forget it often. And to those who object to the wording of the initial quote, consider the fact that no one seems to have taken it as an opportunity to excuse licentiousness (did I spell that right). The danger isn't so much in the second half being misunderstood, but the first. And let's face it, there are many who believe that they "Love God" who when push comes to shove "hate Him" in reality.

**Re: a risky quote - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/4/27 10:53**

Aaron said:

Quote:

----- there are many who believe that they "Love God" who when push comes to shove "hate Him" in reality.

How do we know where we stand until we discover our "want-to" - what we would really do if we were free to do what we wanted.

What would happen if at the front of our church sanctuaries we put a big sign:

"Love God and then do what you want" and then tell everyone to go and do it.

The results would reveal the true hearts, wouldn't it - hot or cold.

Should we take the risk?

Would it be worth it?

Diane

**Re: Trusting God's love... - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/4/27 16:42**

Brothers and sisters, I am really enjoying this conversation!

Diane,

You are so right about the loving context that has encouraged my daughters "free-will" towards her mom and I. You were also keen to observe that the book title I mentioned suffers more from my subjective projection upon it rather than any objective flaw.

That got me thinking about your next line of questions...

Quote:

-----We are FREE to respond to him in love, or try to earn divine favor (legal-centered thinking) Why does almost everyone choose the latter?

Why does the freedom to do whatever you want seem so scary?

Why is there such a fear of authentic creativity among God's people? People just copy the religious trends. Really they want to do what everybody else is doing.... even while praying for God's will. Is this because God refuses to turn anyone into automatons?

-----

I suppose there would be several ways to answer this. Today, as I was having lunch with my wife talking about these very things I came to a realization how much my "theology" is really a critique of past experiences...a critique of people.

We focus on subject matters like sin, heresy, doctrine, the flesh, abuse, wolves, and ad nausea because these things seem so much more real to us than the love of God. Over time, in light of our own failures or disappointments with each other we adopt such a low estimation of God's people that it affects our theology.

We become afraid of grace.

Once mistrustful of grace, our own humanity seems unrestorable and unclean despite the celebrated cathedral arches of imputed righteousness theology. The fact of the matter is that many of us don't believe anything has been given to us. Legal forgiveness is a stretch at best, but God loving us, (or liking us) is beyond the visible spectrum of our theological eyesight. Thus there seems to be no purpose in a Christian artist writing a symphony because such things seem to celebrate humanity and our theology is rooted in a vicious critique and rejection of humanity. Unless someone could write a symphony that reminds men of their sin and failure we will see no spiritual value to it.

How sad this must make our Father. I think of my own children...when my older son improves on his Clarinet I find deep satisfaction. When my youngest son comes running to me holding a little beetle he just discovered under a rock, there is a little spontaneous joy that takes over the moment. And when my daughter unconsciously practices her helpful disposition and kindness to her friends I feel like the richest father on Earth.

Now my love for my children is a faint spark compared to the warm light that shines down on us from God's face...and yet I couldn't imagine how sad I would feel as an earthly father if my children found no pleasure in their personalities or gifts and abilities. If their hearts were always preoccupied with their own ugliness I would conclude that my part in bringing them into this world was meaningless vanity and sorrow. If God's love for humanity is a vast exponential of any affection I feel for my own children...how much more must his grief be that we despise our humanity to such a degree that even in our restored condition we place little spiritual value on the gifts of creativity and intellect.

The New Man in centuries past was capable of great creative and intellectual achievements but such a notion seems heretical to us today. Isaac Watts, Isaac Newton, JS Bach, Handel, Sir Frances Bacon, Johannes Kepler, Robert Boyle, Louis Pasteur and many more were all Christians whose service to God was their diligence and integrity to the gifts and opportunities entrusted to them. Surely such Christians are living today, but sadly our evangelical spheres seem to place little value on their "secular" achievements. I believe this is because our anemic view of God's love for human beings has reduced the Church or the New Man, to the agency of homo religiosus...the religious man.

Here is the difference between the two...at least as I see it. The New Man smiles when hungry people are being fed or are being cured of disease even if by a secular agency, while the religious man can't stand the hungry being fed unless it's under the banner of the church. The New Man marvels at the God given creativity of even an unredeemed man's ability to write a string quartet, but the religious man disdains any art or science that lacks utilitarian value for his religion. The New Man identifies with suffering humanity, while the religious man feels suspicious and elevated towards the sinful masses.

In short religious cups never are running over...when it comes to God's love we act as stingy as we think God is being towards us. (I'm speaking in generalities for the sake of time...please add a sense of proportion to my blanket statements!)

Quote:

-----We need to learn to let God love us. That takes trust.  
-----

For me this trust towards God you mention is not real until it is extended to our fellow humanity... This may sound unspiritual or even "humanistic" (hide the women and children!) but I rather think it is intercessory spirituality. After all... the love, the mercy, the righteousness we have been given in Christ is not a gathering pool or lake...it is a river. As a river it must flow outward! If we cannot release its flow outwardly then why should we expect to experience its flow inwardly? (Any hydraulic engineers in the forum?) And so not all the love of God that flows through us must be channeled into narrow religious pipes...not all a man or woman does for God must have religious value, though few of us dare to accept such a fully restored human without some measure of suspicion.

Like you said Diane, we must risk being rejected and misunderstood...often by homo religiosi! That is part of our precious fellowship with Jesus.

MC

**Re:, on: 2006/4/28 5:10**

Quote:

-----  
roadsign wrote:

Aaron said:

Quote:

----- there are many who believe that they "Love God" who when push comes to shove "hate Him" in reality.

-----  
How do we know where we stand until we discover our "want-to" - what we would really do if we were free to do what we wanted.

What would happen if at the front of our church sanctuaries we put a big sign:

"Love God and then do what you want" and then tell everyone to go and do it.

The results would reveal the true hearts, wouldn't it - hot or cold.

Should we take the risk?

Would it be worth it?

Diane

-----  
Diane, I mean you no harm in this post and feel I should say that first as paranoia is running high from my end and others at present... but the title and theme of this thread has caught my eye from the moment you posted it, being the crazy person who is always "checking into everything for all these years ... blah, blah"

As soon as I saw the title, only one "Quote" rang through in my head and then a second Quote.

I'll give the latter first .... "Hath God said ?"

Spoken in the Garden, I'm sure all know that one.

But the very first Quote that blared at me as soon as the title came up was this quote....

"Do What Thou Wilt Shall Be The Whole Of The Law." and with this same exact quote many times and from the same person, will be quoted "Love is the law, love under will."

I won't beat around the bush with the "who said this ?" Or is this a Christian quote stuff, but it is from -- Aleister Crowley, The Book of the Law, 1909

If you copy and paste " Do What Thou Wilt Shall Be The Whole Of The Law. " into Google, you'll understand why this Quote does bother me and also because it is not what we'd find in the Bible. But the reason this quote had come to mind first, is because that quote is more well known as just "do what you want" now. {someone's saying black eyed peas right now too}.

No more "thou wilts" for the younger crowd ... Ha ... maybe they don't like King James English neither.

Again, I may be sounding like the bad guy or maybe anathema to some or disbanded from the "group" for saying "Sola Scriptura" ... but I fear "Hath God Said ?" in both contexts of how that can be asked more than any other threats.

'Avoid even the appearance of evil' and with today's culture delving into Crowley at unprecedented numbers ... they'd recognize that saying faster than any Christian and relate it to his teachings faster than to yours.

As I kept seeing the title pop up on the Homepage, I prayed over this thread from the day it was posted and wanted to post what I just have ... but just having come from another, where I came out just a bit fatigued, did not have the strength.

I believe you recall from past discussions that I am neither a legalist nor an adherent of antinomianism. I've been accused of both though - Ha. I can quote without an ounce of "Legalism" attached to it - Phi 2:12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

We're always "safe" when quoting His Words, but leave ourselves, our meanings and the imaginations of others, wide open if we try to re-word things for Him.

I will leave it at that and hope you may be able to see through all I've fumbled through here, that again I mean no harm to you, nor any other poster to this thread, but just some insight that this quote I gave above is quite popular now-a-days and increasingly so, especially in our high-schools, just for starts.

To quote from Compton as to my feelings toward what I've posted here and elsewhere .... "Like you said Diane, we must risk being rejected and misunderstood...often by homo religioso! That is part of our precious fellowship with Jesus."

Thank you in advance for your forbearance.

Annie

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/4/28 7:58**

Annie, Thanks for your comments. Indeed, it is risky to give people the free use of their "want to". Is that not the risk God took with the human race?

I share a bit from an O'Neill sermon that I heard yesterday.

In his home country, Ireland, rugby is the national sport. At the universities all kinds of eager students show up to join the team at the beginning of the school year - fat ones, skinny ones, weak ones, and strong ones. Everyone wants to play. Then by the second practice some are turned off by the weather, and decide to join the chess club instead. At the next practice more leave because they don't like the 6 am strenuous work out. And on it goes until finally only those who really WANT to play, and are WILLING to endure remain on the team. And they form a winning team.

God says to humanity: "Anyone who wants to be on my team, come along. You just have to love me with all your heart, soul, mind and strength." And then God gives a lot of space for man to do what he wants. Lots of people show up to be on his team. But as time goes on various hardships reveal that they really don't WANT this. Loving God is not their principle desire.

Are your objections to the quote based on a weak understanding of God's requirement to love him - loving God is simply not enough to transform a person's "want to" and liberate it from fleshly desire? I ask, Would anyone who truly loves God also prefer live according to the flesh? I think scripture teaches that this is impossible. It is hypocritical.

In our zealous efforts to evangelize and build the church I suspect that we're trying to make a huge safety net to include and keep as many as possible? We replace loving God with a behavior code. You can bring in and keep a lot more people that way.

If we mounted this: "Love God and then do what you want" we might see a mass exodus from the church - all those who are glad to see the second half. I wonder how many observe religious commitments because they feel obligated rather than because it is what they REALLY WANT to do.

Which would you rather have? - and God?

Diane

**Re:, on: 2006/4/28 8:08**

Hia Diane, I fully understood "your" meaning and stated so in my first post and knew you also meant no harm, it was just the title.

but as far as your question, if I object to God's requirement to Love Him, I think I answered this well enough on here and got in enough trouble for all that I posted on the first two pages. Unless you hadn't read those posts, They are saying about the exact same things you just questioned me on.

[https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic\\_id=10449&forum=35&9](https://www.sermonindex.net/modules/newbb/viewtopic.php?topic_id=10449&forum=35&9)

Still I'm glad my post brought out more clearly "your" meaning, so that if a teen falls on to this thread, it is a lot more evident now, what your meaning is by this title.

Thank you.

Annie

**Re: free use of our will - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/4/28 8:56**

Annie, I empathize with your concern. The church has been placing emphasis on pleasing fleshly desires in order to keep adherents by providing pleasing forms of worship - music, padded pews, air-conditioning, etc, and it has placed little emphasis on the implications of loving God. So we shouldn't be surprised if worshippers filter this statement, "Love God and then do what you want" through the grid of their me-centric reality. That's all they know.

I think that many people really DON'T want to have the free use of their will. It is scary. It's too much responsibility. What if they choose wrong? Will God abandon them? Most would rather let another have control of their will - even the church, society, their heritage, etc.

Even a teen does not always do what he really wants, even though he thinks he does. He actually often follows the expectations of his peers. One day I met a youth who was about to get a body piercing. I asked him why he was doing that. He hesitated, then said, "My friend wants me to." I again asked, "Is this what YOU want to do?" I was trying to help him take ownership of his own choices.

Each person must first take hold of his own will, before he can even begin to choose God. I think that the church should allow their adherents the use and exercise of their free will - and then nurture it to maturity - rather than suppress it into a weak, dormant, impotent state.

Perhaps this is a risk, but then it also allows the freedom to love God in whatever way one is bent - whether it be showing care, resisting false prophets, or creating, or even starting a mission work. (you can't do a lot of that these days unless you go through all the "proper" hoops.) - and, oh, I almost forgot - even pour out an entire bottle of expensive perfume on the head of our Lord. (figuratively)

Diane

**Re: fear of grace - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/4/28 12:21**

Compton said,

Quote:

-----We become afraid of grace.  
-----

Compton, this statement, along with other comments are portrayed in a testimony by one of my 3-D friends, sent to me after I emailed her the quote. She has given me permission to add her thoughts here. I sense that this person is really se



arching to know God's love, and separate out faulty thinking.

I bet that takes a lot of explaining for some people! When you're brought up to believe that you can only be a good person if you feel guilty about something, it's tricky to understand that - assuming a reasonable amount of thoughtfulness - you won't go out and do awful things just because you've quit feeling like an awful person. I bet you could get kicked out of some churches for preaching that. But it's important! God made us and this planet so we can enjoy what He gave us. I know the bible says explicitly in Ecclesiastes, and I can't remember where else: our purpose is to enjoy life and praise God. He wants us to feel good!

Of course, that doesn't mean you pass by a person lying in the gutter because it might be a downer, it means you want to help the person in the gutter because it feels so good to help someone else feel good. And it really helps you feel true compassion when you aren't so busy feeling guilty.

I don't remember a lot of my "church education," mostly just the stuff that made sense - I have trouble following words if they don't match what's in the heart. One of the mostly-unspoken messages was that it is a sin to enjoy yourself. They \*said\* that you could only be "saved" through God's grace, but they \*showed\* that you have to be busy all the time, working and struggling, so maybe you'd eventually deserve God's grace. Even with all the things I've learned since then, it still feels like a sin to stop and enjoy the sun on my face. Fortunately, God is patient with me, and I'm slowly getting the picture.

Diane

**Re: - posted by Josiah777 (), on: 2006/4/28 12:41**

Quote:  
-----They \*said\* that you could only be "saved" through God's grace, but they \*showed\* that you have to be busy all the time, working and struggling, so maybe you'd eventually deserve God's grace.  
-----

A book I found very helpful to diffuse that kind of thinking was Jerry Bridges' *Transforming Grace*. He showed how Christians start off being saved by grace but then trust in performance (not grace) for daily living. It's very subtle. I can relate to the quote above, and it's really awesome to walk in the grace of the Lord Jesus, not an endless list of do's and don'ts to somehow try to keep me holy.

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/4/28 12:53**

Quote:  
-----We're are always "safe" when quoting His Words, but leave ourselves, our meanings and the imaginations of others, wide open if we try to re-word things for Him....Thank you in advance for your forbearance.  
-----

Annie,

Thanks. I appreciated the dept and sincerity behind your thoughts. I would agree with you that the title of this thread could make for a poor or even disastrous evangelistic track to a group of lost people waiting in line outside a nightclub.

With that context in mind, this thread, at least for me, has been simply a dialogue...in fact most of these threads are. I never imagine that SI is a teachers forum nor do I imagine these threads to be a collection of formal teachings. If that were the case I would never post anything at all.

Instead I have always hoped our discussions to be conversation between well meaning but growing brothers and sisters. As such it is permissible to, as you say, "fumble" through a topic in safety and forbearance.

Diane, you asked why Christians "parrot" each other both in thought and deed...well perhaps it's because our human natures tend to organize church communities around sameness like various flocks of birds. Crows don't like to get wet like the ducks do, Herons look down killdeer, and hawks might just eat baby sparrows. In short we are quick to misunderstand one another so we align ourselves with those people who are least likely to do so and once there we try to confront

m further.

Now let me readily state, I am not talking as a victim here...but as the villain. I am so quick to judge other people! Why is that? Have I not received an abundance of mercy and understanding myself? These errors in others that I perceive are not always due to a lack of lofty scriptural correctness...often they are simply contextual misunderstandings. The other day a friend made a comment about the singer Andrea Bocelli...this person thought Bocelli was arrogant because he never seemed to look a television reporter in the eye when talking to them. What they did not know is that Mr. Bocelli is physically blind...but perhaps passing hasty judgements on one another is a form of self-blindness. This self-blindness is so much a part of human nature we hardly notice it anymore. The single Christian judges the married with kids Christian for needing a bigger house. The married Christian judges the single mother for having fears and worries married people have forgotten about. The republican Christian judges his brother who votes democratic. The poor Christian judges the well-off business owner who gives to missions in secret...

All of these examples relate to this discussion about "loving God." We affirm "sola scriptura" and even use scripture to question the veracity of one another's love for God...but in the end have we missed the forest through the various trees of our creeds and confessions if we constantly mistrust each other? Do I really love God and his Word when I misunderstand people...or am I simply being partial to my own small existence?

My own conclusion is that this mistrust of each other is why we secretly cling to the law, even in our relationship with Christ. (I appreciated Josiah's comment on this tendency.) Without trying to play a melodramatic note here, I think clinging to the law is an affront to God who has asked us to cling to His Son. Why is that? Because if we were honest with ourselves we would admit we don't cling to the whole law...just various fragments of it. And then we are likely to become hypocrites if we assume others are poor Christians simply because they don't cling to the fragment of the law that we cling to. This is why I believe so firmly that truly loving God and His Word will lead us to the task of clinging to one another in Christ and not our isolated and individual fragmented truths. (I understand how even this can be distorted to say something I never intended it to say...but I trust well meaning people will take my meaning well. ;-))

I find James wonderfully frustrating to those religious schemes I keep plotting for my brothers and sisters. His epistle is an uncompromising exhortation for me to obey the whole law while at the same time giving freedom and mercy to others. James obviously didn't have to deal with the Christians I know...surely he's not suggesting that I trust my brothers and sisters with freedom and mercy! If I loved them I would not spare my righteous judgements upon their hearts! (I call that one the "love loophole.")

"If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself,' you are doing right. But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers. For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it...Speak and act as those who are going to be judged by the law that gives freedom, because judgment without mercy will be shown to anyone who has not been merciful."

And then James says a statement that could be just as misapplied and misunderstood as the title of this thread.

"Mercy triumphs over judgment!"

I am so glad it has. Praise God.

Blessings all!

MC

**Re:, on: 2006/4/28 19:07**

I made it clear in my posts to Diane that it was only the title that could mis-lead Comptom. I 'think' she saw that.

I'll just sit back and watch how threads like this one and others go on, about "others".

I also see parroting, that I call plagiarism posts.

You post something one day, and hours later there's another thread with what was just posted by the other, just in "different words".

I said we should be "others minded only" but I didn't mean this way. Sit back and read your own posts and see how many times you are discussing "others". Most of the "polite" posters do this, but only see it in the more outspoken ones.

Just because we sit back and discuss "others" in a way that's politely done and with an occasional, "oh, but I do mean me too here" .... that's alright.

(Edited: easier to remove linked posts, they're on my profile anyhow. ;-)

These posts can give more flavor, meat and content to discussing and analyzing "ad nauseum" (another stolen quote from MikeC) why I for one, do what I do and then have another fruit contest and show how big your fruits are by condescending (or not MikeB) to a trouble making maniac like that GrannieAnnie was, when she was here ....

Three brothers who are scientists and renowned in this country and their sister speaks like a "country cornball". Well, my Missionary training was for the streets of America, so in my learned foreign tongue ...

Hasta la vista baby. :-D

#### Re: letting off the restraints - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/4/28 21:12

Quote:

----- the title of this thread could make for a poor or even disastrous evangelistic track to a group of lost people waiting in line outside a nightclub.  
-----

Compton, I would love to see your hypotheses tested. I don't have any to try this on, being rather sheltered, and not hanging out in nightclubs. I will, however, try this statement of some unchurched folk -- and see how they respond.

I have a hunch, that the most dangerous audience to present this quote to is the churched -- those who equate their religious dedication with loving God, those who live according to a code imposed on them externally (legal) rather than one they freely adopt from their own heart. These are the ones who may very well go wild if the restraints are taken away -- you know, like the first year students in university who recently left home, along with parental restraints.

When I was in the CRC as a kid, I remember some very naughty things the kids would do when they weren't under the careful watch of their superiors -- like smoking behind the building. Some would get in trouble with the law. They were living by a code of ethics that was imposed on their will from outside of them, not by an internal code. So they behaved well when they had to. But they didn't love God, because it was never one of the requirements, as it was foreign to their religious subculture. So when they had the chance, they went wild -- probably because they were eager to break away from the controlling legalistic confines.

Diane

#### Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/4/29 6:03

Quote:

-----I have a hunch, that the most dangerous audience to present this quote to is the churched  
-----

Oh my...looking at how messed up my own thinking is I wouldn't doubt that.

To your point about the legal code Diane...my growing conclusion is that these walls we build to keep people behaving themselves are the same walls that keep us isolated from each other.

I sometimes suspect that much of my problem is simply a result of my nagging doubt of my position in Christ. It is worth noting that in most Christians I personally know, their great spiritual quest in life is not to reach out to the world, but instead

ad their spiritual journey is an ever tightening inward spiral to finally find that elusive physiological relief that should be theirs as a forgiven and redeemed child of God. Oh I hope this doesn't sound "judgemental"...I mean it quite sorrowfully... if I were to be honest with people the burdens of sin I have laid down at the cross when I was a young man have been replaced with even heavier religious ones.

I can not blame the "church" for my plight...I know my own prideful desire to improve upon the simplicity of the gospel all too well. So heavy are some of my secret burdens that the slightest offense crumbles me to the ground.

And yet I do not know how to lay these things down without further offending those who expect me to carry them. Everytime someone suggests a new concern or sin in the church I groan under the weight of one more way I fail our Father. I'm not wagging the accusatory finger at others here...

Any wagging you see is really my flailing. I'm a turtle flipped on it's back, unable to move forward into rest, or backwards to innocence. And even in this desperate state, people are stumbling over me and being offended. It is enough to make me want to withdraw into my shell.

Well, this thread has caught me in a rare moment of honesty. Everyone can trust that by tomorrow morning I'll be better rested and ready to resume my self-assured semblance so as not to attract new burdens from others.

It's not a perfect system, but it is the best one we have until that glorious day when Christ comes back and perfects love among all His people from every tribe, tongue and nation! Won't that be a wonderful time! All of our clanging cavalcades of celebration at church will give way to a real adoration. What will unity in the presence of our Savior be like? Will it be the thunder of countless saints in white singing vast and beautiful waves of shifting harmonies as they rush forwards like a great ocean towards the throne? Or will there be the first true silence of awe in the universe, as a stunned Church finally sees the face of the Lamb most worthy...her mouth agape but breathless of speech.

In any case I do not doubt that for this present age, Christ's love is resident in each and every one of us Christians. Such abundant love should make us more than able to connect with one another...where is the disconnect? I have no idea but I strongly suspect the break is somewhere in me.

MC

**Re: Love God - the path to freedom - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/4/29 9:15**

Compton, Reading your testimony has caused me to think further about my statement in my last post, about "Love God and do what you want" being a dangerous quote to present to the church. It is not merely dangerous, but terrifying! And not merely because of the second half, "Do want you want", but mostly because of the first part: "Love God". For to love God is terrifying, if we really face the core of our fleshly hearts. To love God is to become that turtle without ANY shell. It is to become totally vulnerable—exposed before our heavenly Father and everybody. To love God is to pry our fingers off of all our self-efforts and all our beloved idols and cherished addictions. It is to let go of everything that holds us together (we like to believe).

To Love God is to be honest and true to who we really are—not who we wish to be, or who we try to be before others or God. Loving God requires a complete stripping of all the "fig leaves". No wonder loving God is terrifying. We'd rather be in control and cling to some of our own efforts. We'd rather redeem ourselves, or create our own self-defence and justification.

Quote:

----- these walls we build to keep people behaving themselves are the same walls that keep us isolated from each other.

This is the outcome of our reluctance to love God and instead make for ourselves "flimsy whitewashed walls". Ez 13: 10

Quote:

-----I sometimes suspect that much of my problem is simply a result of my nagging doubt of my position in Christ.

When we unravel the legalistic springs we have wound up around ourselves, we face our fractured love for Christ, and our unwillingness to fully embrace God's mercy (ie, love God)

Quote:  
-----"... in most Christians I personally know, their great spiritual quest in life is not to reach out to the world, but instead their spiritual journey is an ever tightening inward spiral to finally find that elusive physiological relief that should be theirs as a forgiven and redeemed child of God.

And what happens when the spring finally snaps or implodes? We unravel! That is not altogether bad, for at that point we hopefully are finally ready to trust God to do the work of atonement.

Quote:  
-----the burdens of sin I have laid down at the cross when I was a young man have been replaced with even heavier religious ones.

This is a raw honesty and the path to freedom. Bless you!

Quote:  
-----I can not blame the "church" for my plight...I know my own prideful desire to improve upon the simplicity of the gospel all too well. So heavy are some of my secret burdens that the slightest offence crumbles me to the ground.

Thankfully. It is a gift of God's mercy when our faltering ways bring us down.

Quote:  
-----And yet I do not know how to lay these things down without further offending those who expect me to carry them. Everytime someone suggests a new concern or sin in the church I groan under the weight of one more way I fail our Father.

I believe that it is our lingering guilt that predisposes us to absorb this stuff. The freer we are (through Christ) from our own guilt, the less inclined we will be to carry other's unacknowledged guilt. Then we can free them up to go to the cross with their own guilt burdens. I speak to myself here. For years I unconsciously absorbed the guilt and shame of others, and they got off scott free - with not a twinge of guilt for their shameful ways of behaving. That made them feel good and me feel lousy. However, as long as I was willing to be the scapegoat, they didn't have to experience the discomfort of facing their own stuff, and I didn't have to risk rejection. They liked me. It's a payoff.

God has often had to chastise me with: You are not responsible for THEIR sins, just your own. You are not their savior. Sadly, the church can be the worst place on earth for laying guilt trips on each other. I don't think we are called to a lot of the stuff that we latch on to. Jesus said, "Come to me and I will give you rest for my burden is light!"

Quote:  
-----I'm a turtle flipped on it's back, unable to move forward into rest, or backwards to innocence. And even in this desperate state, people are stumbling over me, and being offended. It is enough to make me want to withdraw into my shell.

What a pitiful lot we are! And all the while Christ has freed us from this pathological enmeshment with others - freed us to love them, not be blown over by them or caught in their trap.

Quote:  
-----Well, this thread has caught me in a rare moment of honesty. Everyone can trust that by tomorrow morning I'll be better rested and ready to resume my self-assured semblance so as not to attract new burdens from others.

Or so one would like to think... Thankfully, God breaks in on our journey and throws some hedges in our path. How else can we get off the beaten track we've made for ourselves and turn back into the loving arms of our Father.

Quote:  
-----It's not a perfect system, but it is the best one we have until that glorious day when Christ comes back and perfects love among all His people from every tribe, tongue and nation!

When I first read this, I wanted to object. Surely God has given us something better in this life - right now. And indeed

he has! Yet, I cannot dispute your claim. For, the struggle to be free and enjoy God's rest is never fully experienced here. The struggle is ever on-going, and always somewhat elusive, always suffering with an inward groaning - longing for ultimate freedom. (Romans 8:23) I think that we have difficulty embracing that grievous reality because we still long for the Garden - as you say, go backwards to Innocence. The Old Testament prophesies never pointed us backwards, but forward to eternity through all its picture language. However humanity still looks for Utopia and would like to see the ultimate prophetic fulfilment while confined in this temporal existence. One never finds rest having that perspective. Rest is best realized when we look towards the Promised Land: Heaven. "Set your eyes on things above" Col.

Quote:  
-----All of our clanging cavalcades of celebration at church will give way to a real adoration. What will unity in the presence of our Savior be like? Will it be the thunder of countless saints in white singing vast and beautiful waves of shifting harmonies as they rush forwards like a great ocean towards the throne? Or will there be the first true silence of awe in the universe, as a stunned Church finally sees the face of the Lamb most worthy. ..her mouth agape but breathless of speech.  
-----

What creative expression!

Quote:  
-----In any case I do not doubt that for this present age, Christ's love is resident in each and every one of us Christians. Such abundant love should make us more than able to connect with one another.  
-----

"His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness." 2 Pet. 1:3 - and so we can do what we want - for our will is transformed. We have the mind of Christ! What glorious freedom!

Quote:  
-----where is the disconnect?  
-----

Might I be so bold as to suggest that the fracture point is our own reluctance to Love God?

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/4/29 13:43**

Diane,

Speaking of connection...your comments showed a wonderful and respectful understanding of where I was coming from...I often make an effort to leave familiar terminology behind in an effort to be more real about things. Sometimes that gets me into trouble with those looking to check off the right buzzwords in each other's speech patterns.

Thank you much for a really excellent return. I don't think we could've had a better exchange if we were face to face discussing these things over a cup of coffee...

Quote:  
-----I don't think we are called to a lot of the stuff that we latch on to. Jesus said, "Come to me and I will give you rest for my burden is light!"  
-----

So very very true. Oswald Chambers once offered a warning to be careful not to pick up burdens Jesus simply never intended us to carry. In contrast a friend of mine once observed how more burdens make us feel like we maturing in the Lord...how ironic it is really the opposite. One of the Lord's 'gifts' to us is His permission, his command, to live in simplicity.

Quote:  
-----What creative expression!  
-----

Thank you for being gracious with my fanciful attempts at imagining the unimaginable!

Quote:  
-----To love God is to become that turtle without ANY shell...Might I be so bold as to suggest that the fracture point is our own reluctance to Love God?  
-----

You might indeed! Obviously I don't think the mission for us is to uncover one another's nakedness under the pretense of some cynical "spiritual" gift...nor is it for us to want to be the first to get naked! After all it was God himself that covered Adam's nakedness. We are still living in a fallen world, despite my poetic yearning for the next age,...

I feel that perhaps the best posture is to allow each other to rest in the Lord...His eyes see who we are and if we come to Him earnestly shouldn't that be enough for even the most angry prophets? My wife, who is merely human has seen me at my worst, somehow continues to see the best in me. She reminds me of this scene from the movie "To End all Wars" In the movie, about a WWII Japanese prison camp, British POW's were allowed to form an ad hoc 'orchestra' for Christmas. As they began playing a squeaky squawky rendition of Beethoven's 9th, the main character offered these thoughts. "The music we played that night was not very good. In fact, it was bloody awful. But we didn't care. Because in our heart s we heard it as it could be. It was the sound of freedom."

I'm no expert on all the spiritual things I talk about. When I try to walk in Jesus' words I sound squawky and disharmious myself. And you know what...so do most of my brothers and sisters. Indeed, when we clumsily try to play the Lord's 'music' together some of us may get disgusted and decide it's time to become a soloist.

But maybe the true love of God has something to do with hearing each other with His heart. We are learning to hear the music as it can and will be and it is the sound of freedom in Christ.

Your squawky brother,

Mike

**Re: - posted by InTheLight (), on: 2006/4/29 14:40**

I was reading Oswald Chambers' My Utmost for His Highest last night before bed and I thought about this thread. I think it fits in well here so I thought I would post it...

### **What You Will Get**

I will give your life to you as a prize in all places, wherever you go &#8212;Jeremiah 45:5

This is the firm and immovable secret of the Lord to those who trust Him&#8212; "I will give your life to you . . . ." What more does a man want than his life? It is the essential thing. ". . . your life . . . as a prize . . ." means that wherever you may go, even if it is into hell, you will come out with your life and nothing can harm it. So many of us are caught up in exhibiting things for others to see, not showing off property and possessions, but our blessings. All these things that we so proudly show have to go. But there is something greater that can never go&#8212; the life that "is hidden with Christ in God" ( Colossians 3:3 ).

Are you prepared to let God take you into total oneness with Himself, paying no more attention to what you call the great things of life? Are you prepared to surrender totally and let go? The true test of abandonment or surrender is in refusing to say, "Well, what about this?" Beware of your own ideas and speculations. The moment you allow yourself to think, "What about this?" you show that you have not surrendered and that you do not really trust God. But once you do surrender , you will no longer think about what God is going to do. Abandonment means to refuse yourself the luxury of asking any questions. If you totally abandon yourself to God, He immediately says to you, "I will give your life to you as a prize . . . ." The reason people are tired of life is that God has not given them anything&#8212; they have not been given their life "as a prize." The way to get out of that condition is to abandon yourself to God. And once you do get to the point of total surrender to Him, you will be the most surprised and delighted person on earth. God will have you absolutely, without any limitations, and He will have given you your life. If you are not there, it is either because of disobedience in your life or your refusal to be simple enough.



In Christ,

Ron

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/4/30 14:07**

edit:I pulled my question here...thought I might wait before asking it.

MC

BTW, thanks Ron for the post. Oswald Chambers always seems on time.

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/5/1 10:36**

Compton wrote:

Quote:

-----your comments showed a wonderful and respectful understanding of where I was coming from  
-----

To have opportunities to express our deeper thoughts is a rare gift. To be heard and understood is an even rarer gift. Occasionally the clouds part and we see each other clearly, and then they cover over again -- and its back to the relentless drone of shoptalk cluttered with the petty issues of life.

A great deal of conversation reminds me of toddlers at play, side by side in a playpen: There is a lot of parallel monologue.

Quote:

-----Are you prepared to let God take you into total oneness with Himself, paying no more attention to what you call the great things of life?  
-----

I see these words by O. Chambers as refreshing permission to disengage from the "heavy load" of accumulated burdens. As Compton pointed out:

Quote:

-----I feel that perhaps the best posture is to allow each other to rest in the Lord..  
-----

Again -- a reference to PERMISSION. What a gift of love! -- to loosen the strings, and grant each other the freedom to discover the place of rest for themselves -- even to discover who they really are, in contrast to who everyone wants them to be or thinks they are. No one finds rest while their minds are entangled in all that stuff.

God's rest is found in his outstretched loving arms. Oh, that we may turn fully to him, love him, and fully trust him. Only then are we free to do what we want - that is, we are free to be who we really are -- and were meant to be, regardless of what anyone else says.

Quote:

-----sometimes that gets me into trouble with those looking to check off the right buzzwords in each other's speech patterns.  
-----

Yes, it doesn't take long to discover when we broke the "rules". This is the risk of being ourselves. We end up breaking a lot of rules.

I find myself easily side-tracked by the "great things in life" that O. Chambers refers to. And thus my relationship with God becomes somewhat side-by-side - as if he is beside me speaking to me and I don't really pay full attention. I am too preoccupied with extraneous thoughts.

The more we can let go of these "great things in life" which clutter up valuable headspace, the more we are free to hear others -- even their unspoken words.



Quote:

-----Â... when we clumsily try to play the Lord's 'music' together some of us may get disgusted and decide it's time to become a soloist.

Oh, yea, and then you can Â“do your own thingÂ” Â... add to that soundtracks, and we are fully alone Â– yet hardly free , because we have to follow the unbending predetermined rhythms and tempos.

Another point about corporate music-making: even when it sounds bad, it has value in that it requires a death of ego like nothing I know. Compton, IÂ’m grateful for your little allegory. I must try very hard to apply it literally in a musical Â“adventureÂ” I am in this week (in a public school).

IÂ’m beginning to see that this thread topic has just barely been touched. There is much more to cover. What about this :

Â“In his heart a man plans his course, but the Lord determines his steps.Â” Prov. 16:9  
Diane

PS Compton: You now have me very curious about this question. You are just going to have to present it.

--oh right... no pressure....

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/5/1 14:27**

Quote:

-----You now have me very curious about this question. You are just going to have to present it.

Thanks Diane. After reading your last gracious post I'm glad I waited.

Here is my question.(Actually it's more like a questionnaire ;-)

We've explored a thesis. Love God ...and do what you want.

I wanted to look at what might be considered a helpful antithesis: Obey God. I'll risk admitting I have difficulty with this as a Christian mission statementÂ...perhaps as much as some have with the face value of the statement Â“Love God, and do what you wantÂ”

Consider the incredible lengths men are willing to go to obey their god from the recent movie "United 93Â”. The film begins with an Al Quaida Muslim praying devoutly in his hotel room somewhere in Newark New Jersey the morning of 9/11. The movie ends with this same fellow praying fervently... right before he intentionally crash-lands a plane full of people, killing everyone on board.

How is the love of God, and obeying God connected to knowing God? Jesus said, Â“If youÂ’ve seen me, youÂ’ve seen the Father.Â” Does true love for God require revelation from His Spirit or is it simply born of man's human will towards God?

To avoid the appearance of this being another Â“rhetoricalÂ” question, let me offer that I believe biblical obedience to God begins with resting from workÂ...not with trying harder. I believe this rest comes from the peace that only the sufficiency of Christ can afford to the believer. Yet many of us, even in this forum, admire the zealous Muslim spiritual ethic. Why is that?

My question is not so much about Â“IslamÂ”. For me the movie Â“United 93Â” was just an extreme example of how natural man has an enormous capacity for religious devotion. Even if it means killing themselves and others to obtain peace for their souls, humanity has its own strength to be very devout and pious. When we say we admire the Muslims, or the

communists or any other belief group for their zeal and fanaticism—what are we saying about the central message of the Gospel?

How does knowing God affect a Christian's love for God? All people want peace for their souls. Some try through sensual pleasures and others through religion. Yet both these pursuits lead to quarrels and hatred— even among us in the church. From whence come wars and fightings among us?

And from whence comes love among us?

MC

**Re: - posted by SeanHobson (), on: 2006/5/1 22:02**

I would seek to fellowship with my fellow brothers, but this thread seemeth too hott for me. Alas! because of such I shall opt for the quoting of what may rebuttle all arguments:

Jud 1:21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

Pro 11:23 The desire of the righteous is only good: but the expectation of the wicked is wrath.

Psa 37:4 Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Since the letter killeth, and I hold no measure of intelligence enough to rehearse all the points made and conclude a conclusion..Let me point the verses above and take my leave. ;-)

**Re: - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/5/2 18:30**

Sometimes I like to invite outsiders to read our discussion. Here is a response, that I feel is worth our attention — actually from the person I quoted earlier:

I would like to point out that Crowley doesn't mention loving God in his law. The thing is, without the bit about loving God, the rest of the quote is worse than meaningless. "Do what you want" by itself is not a wise way to live. Aleister Crowley did not know the love of God. He wanted to have power over everyone else, to rule them with fear and gobbledygook. And from what I've heard, he's had his reward on earth. His followers also get their rewards - usually they end up severely broken and unhappy, quite often insane, and surrounded by other unhappy insane people who can't honestly be called friends.

The quote goes, "Love God, THEN do what you want." If random people in a nightclub really understood the meaning of this, they couldn't just start doing what they wanted; they'd have to do some research before they started... I don't know what club people are expected to want, to beat people up and steal their cocaine and shoes? Hmmph. How can you really love God if you don't even know Him? Maybe you won't fully comprehend the greatness of God. That's fine, nobody ever will while they are limited by the flesh. But you have to have at least the general gist of Him before you can say you love Him! And then there's the question of what you really want... If you're paying any attention at all, you'll soon learn to distinguish between a fleeting fancy and a heart's desire - it's one thing getting what you want, but there are always consequences, good or bad. If you have an ongoing dialogue with God, you'll have a much better chance of knowing which desires are which.

All in all, a good discussion. Thanks for letting me in on it! I'm wondering, is that kind of "conversation" common ...?

**Re: A devoted kitty - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/5/4 8:29**

Quote:

-----How does knowing God affect a Christian's love for God?  
-----

My kitty reminds me of the incredible effect of one's love for God. She is allowed do whatever she wants —yet she con

sistently chooses to expresses her devotion to us. A few years ago my teenaged son adopted her as a tiny kitten, and then spent a lot of time nurturing her. He cuddled her, played with her, and bounced her in the air, etc. Every night she slept on his chest near his chin. She loved to lick his hair. When my son moved to downtown Toronto he decided to leave her with us because he didn't want to deprive her of her freedom to roam outdoors at will.

Ever since then she has been expressing her fondness of us. She knows us and our habits well, and moves in sync with us. She sleeps on our bed at night. She sits with us at meal times. She frequently jumps into our lap, or onto the piano bench when we are practising, or onto the desk when we are at the computer. And yet she is free to do what she wants. Sometimes she escapes to the outdoors through her cat door. She always returns. Sometimes she captures mice or birds and eagerly offers her prizes to us. She invites us to her side when she wants to eat from her bowl.

My kitty's fond attachment to us determines her moment-by-moment choices. Yet she never ponders the theology of obedience and loyalty.

You may say, but that is just the catish way. I would challenge that. Most cats are rather aloof. Our cat is different, perhaps because she has been treated with volumes of love in her formative years, and now affection and loyalty have become her habit.

I think that loving God is not unlike my kitty's relationship with her masters. If we love God we don't need to clutter our consciences with a lot of theological/religious "shoulds and oughts". God isn't impressed with that anyway ... even if we give all we possess to the poor, even if we surrender our bodies to the flames.. 1 Cor 13. Scripture seems to say quite clearly that obedience without love doesn't count.

Jesus taught God's law: "Love God, and ... and love your neighbor." The depth of our devotion and love for God is revealed in our freely-chosen responses to fellow human beings.

Any other kind of "obedience" misses the mark.

Quote:

-----Pro 11:23 The desire of the righteous is only good...

Might I suggest that it is our inability to love God and nurture love in others that gets us into trouble. And, in spite of the label "Christian", or "Christianity", without genuine love for God and fellow man, we end up no different than those of other religions.

Quote:

-----When we say we admire the Muslims, or the communists or any other belief group for their zeal and fanaticism ...what are we saying about the central message of the Gospel?

....mmmmm...

Diane

**Re: A devoted kitty - posted by Rahman, on: 2006/5/5 12:18**

Sis D,

i wasn't gonna touch this but i find myself thinking a lot about it ...

i think i get the drift of what you're driving at with your thread title but i have to admit that it unnerves me still ... The thread title just gives me that eerie sort of double entendre feeling same as i get if i slip into the "should not/ought not" of an innuendo for which Holy Spirit convicts me to repentance ... Here are a few thoughts that i have ...

#1 - i'm sure (or at least i pray) that you're not attempting to disconnect yourself from some sense of obligation to God's many "should not/ought not" because His will in this regard has somehow come into conflict with your sense of your free will ...

#2 - (Please note that i'm not accusing you of 2 Cor. 4: 1,2 per se) but am just stating that the thread title, and your subsequent use of scripture in support makes my spider senses tingle ... It makes me wonder though if perhaps as i've both wittingly, and unwittingly done in the past you're using scripture to justify a freedom in Christ we're never supposed to have ...

#3 - Or if you've learned something i have yet to learn, Lord knows that i'm after you in learning His rest, and i'm just to afraid to grant myself this kind of freedom ...

Now my latter thought really intrigues me because if in fact i don't have the freedom to love God - then do what i want, then perhaps my love for Him is sadly lacking ... One of the things that i don't like about so many of today's sermons is that they don't stomp on my toes enough to keep me ever vigilant of God's shoulds/oughts and should not/ought not ... For me i need to be constantly reminded because i know how easily i can be distracted by my flesh from obedience and loyalty to Him ...

Sis. D you wrote; ...

" My kitty's fond attachment to us determines her moment-by-moment choices. Yet she never ponders the theology of obedience and loyalty.

You may say, but that is just the catish way. I would challenge that. Most cats are rather aloof. Our cat is different, perhaps because she has been treated with volumes of love in her formative years, and now affection and loyalty have become her habit."

Hmmmm ... i wonder how devoted your kitty would be if it could "ponder the theology of obedience and loyalty" and wasn't driven solely by instinct? ... What do you think would happen if all of a sudden one day your kitty developed a "free will", and began to start figuring out ways of distancing itself from the obligation of the love it feels toward you, say perhaps because it all of a sudden realized that you expected it, and began to feel put upon by it ... Sorta like how the following scripture can get on our last nerve from time to time, because unlike your kitty's instinct we are not all the time drawn to our Lord by habitual affection and loyalty ...

1Cor.6:19,20 - "What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's."

i slid "should not/ought not" into my above post because of what you said next ...

Quote;

"I think that loving God is not unlike my kitty's relationship with her masters. If we love God we don't need to clutter our consciences with a lot of theological/religious "shoulds and oughts". God isn't impressed with that anyway ... even if we give all we possess to the poor, even if we surrender our bodies to the flames.. 1 Cor 13. Scripture seems to say quite clearly that obedience without love doesn't count."

Now i on the other hand think loving God is nothing like your kitty's relationship with you by the fact that we have the ability to "reason" which is all good when it's working toward God, but oh so ugly and detrimental to us when it isn't ... And have you ever checked how many times Holy Spirit used the words "should" and "ought" throughout scripture in reference to what we should and should not be doing as children of God ... Since God says that He's the same yesterday, today and forever i don't think that we can discount or discontinue toeing the line of His "statutes" just because He didn't use this word in the NT ... To me NT "instructions" and "commandments" are the same as OT "statutes" ... Didn't He tell us that we're to wear His "instruction"? ... Didn't He tell us that we're to meditate on His "instruction" day and night? ... Didn't He tell us to study His "instruction" to show ourselves approved? ...

i take an exact opposite tack from yours, and i do believe this thread has exposed to me that i don't trust myself to the freedom that it implies ... i think that if we truly love God we not only need to clutter our minds with His "shoulds and ought to's", but even submit and surrender to Holy Spirit's leading and teaching to the point where we don't even consider it cluttering anymore, let alone a burden (is this what you mean?) ... Now i think this would impress God! ... See i think that we humans (i know i do) have such a spiritually hard time of "walking and chewing gum at the same time" ... Case in point He's finally being able to teach me that i can rest in Him, and hold onto the promises i believe He told me so many years ago (at the same time) ... It doesn't have to be one or the other as i so selfishly once thought ... i wonder if you're battling in a similar arena here with thinking we can't truly love God if we're always fixated on what He wants from us, instead of our choosing to give it to Him? ... Has He taught you another freedom that i have yet to learn, or have you given a prominent place to free will choice that it doesn't merit? ... i pray Holy Spirit to make this plain to me because i really want to know ...

i think at best our "choice" toward God and His instructions is of the same filthy rags as if we're foolish enough to think we have some "righteousness" of our own ... Anything spiritual toward God and His instruction that we do is of Him, we can do nothing spiritually without Him, and i'm convinced this to even submitting and surrendering to Him without the work and power of His Spirit ... He is the Author and Finisher of our faith, He's the one that chose us in the first place and not vice-versa, so for me my so called free will/choice is nailed right up there on the cross along with everything else that came with my fallen self ... Does this make any sense, or am i tripping way to far here? ...

The following scripture comes to mind in this regard ...

Rom.7

For we know that the law is spiritual: but I am carnal, sold under sin.  
For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I.  
If then I do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good.  
Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.  
For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.  
For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.  
Now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.  
I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me.  
For I delight in the law of God after the inward man:  
But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.  
O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?  
I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.

Sis D you continued;

"even if we give all we possess to the poor, even if we surrender our bodies to the flames..Â" 1 Cor 13. Scripture seems to say quite clearly that obedience without love doesn't count.

Jesus taught God's law: "Love God, and ... and love your neighbor." The depth of our devotion and love for God is revealed in our freely-chosen responses to fellow human beings.

Any other kind of "obedience" misses the mark.

Quote:

Pro 11:23 The desire of the righteous is only good...

i guess the problem i'm having here is with your emphasis on "freely chosen" ... For me as a vessel of mercy Rom. 9 and pre-destination plays all kinds of havoc with me on my free will in juxtaposition to His will ... i know for a fact that God has treated me like Jonah when i decided that i'd had enough of His will and all of the obligation to Him surrendering to His will cost my will ... i think of Adam before He chose to disobey God and how in His perfection He was just as obligated to

God as when He fell, except the falling made it ever so excruciatingly more evident in a most horrible way ... Now here we are born into that ugliness of having to realize just how obligated to God we are, and in such a fallen state that it makes us want to hide from His holiness ... But thank God He sent Jesus, whose indwelling presence in us by His Spirit and our being immersed in His blood masks all that we still are in our flesh from the vision of the Father, but by my own personal belief not from the vision of Jesus and Holy Spirit ... All this to say that none of what we do "correctly" in the spiritual is of our own accord but of the workings and righteousness of Jesus within us, and by power and might of Holy Spirit, so that even our so called choice to love Him and keep His commands are not of ourselves but of Himself working in us by power of Holy Spirit ... Perhaps I'm convoluting here (if not convulsing) :-?, and if so I pray Holy Spirit will free me from such over analyzing and give me the rest in this area that you seem to have ...

Now in reference to 1 Cor 13, Prov. 11:23, and the scripture saying "obedience is better than sacrifice", all of them I see as His "statute/command/instruction" to us that I can only master and carry out by surrendering my will to His will ... To me obedience is the ultimate sacrifice ... But do we really have the power to surrender our will to His will on our own merit? ... Do we really possess the power to choose obedience/love toward God and our fellow man apart from Christ working within us? ... And if we don't then can we claim that to do so is our "choice", or is it His "choice" working within us? ... Again am I bugging here and making something more complex than it needs to be? ... Can we apart from the indwelling righteousness of Christ, which in fact is ALL the righteousness any saint has, say that by our own power of choice we desire only good? ... To this for myself I say "no" ...

About love Christ gave us a new should/ought that we love one another, Holy Spirit via Paul in 1 Cor. 13 shed further light on that new "commandment", and then the writings of John broke it down even more ...

Sis D you continued;

"Might I suggest that it is our inability to love God and nurture love in others that gets us into trouble. And, in spite of the label "Christian", or "Christianity", without genuine love for God and fellow man, we end up no different than those of other religions."

I think it's even one step further than this ... I think it's our inability to surrender to "Love God, and do what He wants" that gets in our way, for it's way to plain to me that much of His Body is already in the mode of "Love God, and do what you want" ... If that were not already the case we'd not so much resemble the world ... The key to me for showing our love to God is in scouring scripture to not only find out clearly what He wants from us, but yielding to the power of His Holy Spirit to carry it out which I'm convinced will not happen in our day and time until we come to REVIVAL ... For me "doing what God wants" (to smack with whether myself is comfortable with that or not), this obedience, is how I believe we truly show our love for God, and subsequently is the only way our fellow saint/man will ever see the love of God shine thru us ... I also think that the most important element of Christianity that separates it from all other religions is that those adherents have only themselves, their own power save for the powers of darkness, to do whatever it is they do ... But we saints have the indwelling power of Holy Spirit in which to do all things (including choosing His will) thru Christ Jesus who strengthens us! ...

Personally I think it dangerous to attempt to separate and claim anything we do spiritually for Christ, from the power of Christ to get it done, for apart from Him we can do nothing ...

Blessings in Christ ... :-D

**Re: free "want-to" - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/5/5 14:47**

Rahman,

If I had posted a thread, "What does it mean to love God?" it might have been long lost in the distant recesses of threads. (actually, I think I've done that) Yet it is a key command, and affects our entire perception of all God's requirements. So we need something that provokes thought in this issue.

Perhaps my thread title seems much like the "evangelistic" strategy of handing out tracts that look like folded \$10 bills. The recipient eagerly reaches for it with wide-eyed delight only to discover a message inside that says: Well, this isn't really money, but it's about something much better—something you'd REALLY want.

Hopefully this topic makes us wrestle with our own motives. Are we living our Christian life because we must in order to "win" God, or because we want to? "Each man should give what he has decided in his heart to give, not reluctantly

or under compulsion.Â” 2 Cor. 9:7

I suspect that your concern (legitimately) is that people see: Â”Love God and then do what YOU wantÂ” . So, in that sense, I totally agree with you. It is not a wise message to proclaim to the fleshly nature of man Â– which is the bulk of our churches.

But consider why many refuse God. To them they view the Christian life as a prison Â– you canÂ’t do this, and you canÂ’t do that, or you must do this or must do that. TheyÂ’d prefer to keep their cherished Â”freedomÂ” ie their sense of autonomy. I can’t blame them. But they are deluded Â– perhaps by the false message that Christians typically emit, or by their deluded sense of their own free will. They are not free at all! They are not doing what they want. They are doing what THEIR god wants Â– whether that be other humans, religious convictions, materialism, addictions, lower nature, etc. There is no such thing as freedom to do what you really want, as far as IÂ’m concerned. Because no matter who you are, you belong to the object of your worship. You obey that Â”powerÂ”, ie your first love.

Quote:  
----- i'm sure (or at least i pray) that you're not attempting to disconnect yourself from some sense of obligation to God's many "should n  
ots/ought nots"  
-----

You are absolutely correct. It is not the requirements that are in question, but the REASON for obeying the requirement  
s.

Another motive for posting this is my concern about the passivity in the church. Loving God becomes a form of passivity.  
I canÂ’t help myself Â– I am just doing what the Spirit is moving me to do. In other words, itÂ’s what God is programmi  
ng me to do.

Jessie Penn Lewis addresses this in Â”War on the SaintsÂ” I think that same problem that stunted the Welsh revival un  
der Evan Roberts is very real today. Weak-willed people are opened up to the control of false spirits and influences. Thi  
s trend also causes people to absolve themselves of responsibility for their choices. Ex, Â”Well, I really couldnÂ’t help it,  
so donÂ’tÂ’ hold me accountable. They are weak willed saints with "feeble arms" and weak kneesÂ” Heb. 12:12

I can see Luther's point: IF you're going to sin, sin big. I say that to my piano students: "If you're going to make a mistak  
e, make it big." It's easier to fix than a wishy-washy flimsy sort-of- mistake.

Quote:  
-----i think it's even one step further than this ... i think it's our inability to surrender to "Love God, and do what He wants" that gets in our  
way,  
-----

True. But go further yet: One's will must become HIS will. When we donÂ’t see exemplarity Christian living which end o  
f the formula do we try to fix first: Love God or Do his will. I fear that the emphasis tends to be only on the later, and it is  
nÂ’t working.

Quote:  
----- Â… much of His Body is already in the mode of "Love God, and do what you want" ... If that were not already the case we'd not so  
much resemble the world ...  
-----

Well, this is a delusion isnÂ’t it? Because you canÂ’t love the world and love God at the same time. As I said, oneÂ’s wil  
l is obedient to oneÂ’s god.

Quote:  
-----i know for a fact that God has treated me like Jonah when i decided that i'd had enough of His will and all of the obligation to Him su  
rrendering to His will cost my will .  
-----

IÂ’ve had my share of Jonah experiences too for various reasons. But each time God Â”caught upÂ” with me, as painful  
and humiliating as it was, I loved him more, and amazingly, my WILL became more and more eager to follow his way. G

od shapes my want-to" through the times I don't "want-to".

Jonah chose to run because he couldn't accept God's love – ie his mercy and long-suffering. What I like about his story is how God shaped his will through his experiences. Consider this: Who decided to have Jonah thrown overboard? Who made him say, "Yet I WILL look again to your holy temple... with a song of thanksgiving I WILL sacrifice to you." This was all free will (heavily influenced by circumstance), yet also the will of God. – amazing, I'd say.

I don't know if I adequately addressed your concerns, Rahman. If not, feel free to hammer at this some more. It can take me a while.

Diane

Yes, my dear kitty, is far from an ideal illustration. For the WILL of animals is moved by the lower instincts. We operate under a higher authority – divine law – the Spirit – well ... at least we ought to. That's the point.

**Re: - posted by Rahman, on: 2006/5/5 15:36**

Sis. D you said,

"There is no such thing as freedom to do what you really want, as far as I'm concerned."

Amen ... as my Dad used to say "we're either servant to God or to the devil" ...

Sis D you also said;

"I've had my share of Jonah experiences too for various reasons. But each time God "caught up" with me, as painful and humiliating as it was, I loved him more, and amazingly, my WILL became more and more eager to follow his way. God shapes my want-to" through the times I don't "want-to."

Aaaaaa-men! ... isn't this just mind blowing ... i know i love Him more for this because of as bro. Ironman says "He suffers with the likes of us to conform us to Himself and His will" ... As David said, amazing that He's even mindful of us ...

Sis D you also said regarding Jonah;

"This was all the exercise of free will (heavily influenced by circumstance), yet also the will of God. – amazing, I'd say."

Amen ... especially the (heavily influenced by circumstance) part :-P ... Hmmmm, in our will we can either stay (and eventually excruciatingly die) in our whale's belly or we can cry out amen to His will and be set free to do it :-? ... Somehow i still can't get that excited about my free will choice in light of such a harsh ultimatum ...

Sis D you finished;

"I don't know if I adequately addressed your concerns, Rahman. If not, feel free to hammer at this some more. It can take me a while."

No this is good, i'm of better understanding especially from your opening expansion of your thread title, so i'm done ... i believe that anyone who is directed to this thread and read our two posts will totally understand just what you meant and intended for this thread ...

Bless Him for the beauty of this fellowship! ...

God bless you sis D, and all you whom He brings to this thread ...



**Re: New looking title - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/5/5 15:43**

Quote:

-----i'm of better understanding especially from your opening expansion of your thread title  
-----

I don't know if I'm breaking any rules here, but I slightly changed the thread title - the look, that is. Perhaps it makes an eternal difference.

Thanks for the inspiration to change the title, Rahman.... In other words, If I get into trouble for it, I can say, Rahman made me think it. ... So much for owning my "want-to".

Edit: I just remember, I got this idea from the friend I quoted earlier. (Actually this "friend" whom I've been including in this discussion is my daughter, so I should give her the credit:

Quote:

-----The quote goes, "Love God, THEN do what you want."  
-----

Diane

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/5/5 17:34**

Nah...I liked the first version better. :-)

I'm just kidding...actually I think people understand what you were aiming for; "If we Love God we'll want to live accordingly." We might fear that "do what you want" is really a synonym for "pleasure yourself" in which case, your meaning is obscured.

However Diane, your most subtle observation is perhaps the most overlooked one. We do what we want anyways...

When I was 19 I asked a good friend what were the physical limits within Christian dating. He said, "Why are you asking me? In the end you are going to do what you can live with."

His answer both surprised me and scared me...because I realized he had a point. For all of my profession of love for God and sound doctrine to him, it's was going to be my inner relationship with God that affected character and behavior. Certainly others may preach and bring us into conviction but in the end, our rebellion and self-love is ultimately conquered by the sweet and bitter life of loving God.

I have come to believe, that all of the written law is alot like the fossil imprint of God's heart. We used to have to learn about the shape of God's heart through studying these impressions...but now we can actually touch the life itself. That is not to say that the law is primitive, extinct, or false!(Or that my analogy is perfect...) Indeed, the law is more important then ever in this age. However, like footprints across stone, God's Word reveals that He was not standing still on a static fixed law or moral ethic...we can trace his perplexing path of righteous steps through the bloody wars of Canaan, the military victories of king David, the worldly blessings of King Solomon, the lamentations of Jeremiah, to the present Gospel of Peace. These footprints reveal many details, but if we chain ourselves to this one or that one we end up arguing like scientists who can't agree on whether dinosaurs were hot or cold-blooded! With the person of the Holy Spirit we can finally know who left those footprints...yes we should continue to study the detailed impressions but now we can also touch the living heart of God.

Perhaps this is what it means to be released from the chain of the law and grafted into the living vine of Jesus Christ. Though we are no longer bound to principles we are not our own free moral agents floating like dust in the universe...we are bound to a person.

I think we generally agree on these mysteries...perhaps our discussion is on how best to say them. It may be that the tired of familiar religious language has become so rubbery and adaptive that occasionally we need to test to see what our vocabulary means. Perhaps Diane was testing what we mean when we say we "love God." Because, according to many scriptures in the bible, if we love God with all our hearts, there should be a chain reaction starting in our own heart that cascades throughout our character, removing the need for stiffnecked conforming to the law under threat of punishment.

MC

Re: Love God, THEN do what you want, on: 2006/5/6 8:18

Quote:  
-----However, like footprints across stone, God's Word reveals that He was not standing still on a static fixed law or moral ethic...we can trace his perplexing path of righteous steps through the bloody wars of Canaan, the military victories of king David, the worldly blessings of King Solomon, the lamentations of Jeremiah, to the present Gospel of Peace.  
-----

I think I can say this amongst friends... I hate that phrase 'moral ethic'. And I really don't think you can suggest that with God it has any elasticity at all.

Someone suggested to me yesterday, a thought which has never crossed my mind: after the Fall, why didn't God ask Adam and Eve to repent? Well, why didn't He? I said it was because they knew they would die, and once dead, there is no repenting.... and that's what's so marvellous about the gospel, that we do have the opportunity to repent, because Jesus has died FOR us. In other words, with reference to morality - there is no 'morality' without God. Morality is *not* the relative concept which it has been made by true atheists and anti-Christians. And we, as Christians, need to be completely clear that it is non-negotiable with God..... MC, please don't take this personally. You gave me a platform to say something which is very relevant to understanding the mindset in the world, which we must counter, and we must not entertain within ourselves, once Christians.

Quote:  
-----Though we are no longer bound to principles **we are not our own free moral agents** floating like dust in the universe...we are bound to a person.  
-----

I think the truth is, we never were and never will be. It is a total delusion that we are (or were, or would be) capable of setting standards which in any way match up to that which God requires from our heart's allegiance.

It is the biggest relief, I think, to find out that God can replace all our sin and sins with righteousness in Christ, and impute to us His purity and holiness, and plant His heart in our beings, and write His laws in our minds. Amen. (1 Cor 1:30, 31, Heb 8:10 - 12)

I don't mean to dampen the discussion, at all. Perhaps these points have been made already? What MC says here, is something I'm beginning to explore with new enthusiasm, and to trust His empowering to switch off when I'm out of sync with Him.

Quote:  
-----Perhaps this is what it means to be released from the chain of the law and grafted into the living vine of Jesus Christ.  
-----

This IS life eternal, but, it is also its own form of willing servitude. As a CofE formal prayer puts it 'in whose service is perfect liberty'.

Re: just checking - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/5/6 10:07

Quote:  
----- after the Fall, why didn't God ask Adam and Eve to repent? Well, why didn't He? I said it was because they knew they would die, and once dead, there is no repenting...  
-----

Are you saying, Dorcas, that God never offered the couple the opportunity to return to the pre-fall Garden Utopia state – as an act of mercy – in order to preserve their lives from judgment and enable them an opportunity to later accept his grace (symbolized in the goat skins), including eternal life?

If so, then I wonder if there is a better word to use here than "repent" ex: return.

Quote:

-----..plant His heart in our beings, and write His laws in our minds.  
-----

Are you saying that God's morality is really CHRIST within us, through his Spirit? and that outside of him, nothing can be moral?

Quote:

-----'in whose service is perfect liberty'.  
-----

... the perfect liberty that every heart yearns for.

Diane

**Re: Love God THEN do what you want, on: 2006/5/7 11:40**

Quote:

-----in order to preserve their lives from judgment  
-----

Diane,

I'm not sure if you meant this as a trick question, or, to make sure I knew what I meant... :-)

When Adam and Eve died spiritually in the Garden of Eden, that was God's judgment on them.

The only way we could be retrieved as a human race, was by the 'representative Man' Jesus Christ, overcoming spiritual death with His life, and destroying the power of sin in our flesh, thereby. The whole of human nature (and creation) was in waiting for Him, until this had been accomplished. Nothing which Adam and Eve (or us, as Rahman kept saying) could do, including 'repent' could make any difference at that point in time.

Quote:

-----Are you saying that God's morality is really CHRIST within us, through his Spirit? and that outside of him, nothing can be moral?  
-----

Well, that wasn't quite what I meant.... more, that the unchanging nature of God, provides an all-time standard on which we can depend, and, which we also have accepted as 'right'.

It takes a while for some people to realise that our opinions just don't count, when compared to His word. And He is not going to take them into account when He judges us. If anyone's opinion about anything is going to change, it is ours, not His.

Anyone could pluck a set of rules out of the air - many do - but adherence to such rules are simply a passtime. They will not bring us close to God. I suppose that's what's wonderful about the Old Testament Laws ... they had the power to show us our sinfulness, and make us interested in turning repentantly to Christ, who, as you say, is the only One with power to 'be' 'moral'.

I think the word 'moral' is secular, and that's why I don't like it. 'Moral' speaks to me of the characteristic of *compromise*, which imbues it to its core, and that, within a framework of complete Godlessness. It cannot be tinkered with from outside or inside, to make it mean something in God's vocabulary.... and so, I suppose I'm saying, using it is misleading, at least.

Compton, I don't think you meant it that way, but, it struck me as a useful point to discuss, to help Christians think more clearly, especially as 'morality' has been introduced to our children, in place of 'obedience' and an understanding of God's word.

Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/5/8 0:29

Hi Dorcas,

I couldn't agree more with you concern.

Quote:  
-----I think the word 'moral' is secular, and that's why I don't like it. 'Moral' speaks to me of the characteristic of compromise, which imbues it to its core, and that, within a framework of complete Godlessness....I'm saying, using it is misleading, at least...'morality' has been introduced to our children, in place of 'obedience' and an understanding of God's word.  
-----

If I'm not mistaken we might be headed to the same destination from different points on the map...I come from a place where the word "moral" is quite a religious word, contrary to your hope that it be regarded as a secular word. It has become quite a centerpiece of religion in America these days. (Remember the Moral Majority?)

So I use the word to offend the same sensibilities you speak of as wrong. I certainly agree with you that the positive word "obedience"...or at least the passive concept "brokenness" should be the plumbline to measure ourselves with...not morality per se. Yet do we convey this in our preaching and witnessing? I'm of the opinion, based on my experience, that we don't. We often rebuke the unsaved public not because they are disobedient to the person of Christ, but because they are non-conforming to our principles and values.

The message is that people are sinning not because they walk their own way, but because they are breaking laws. Repentance is not always portrayed as dying to self and following the person of Christ...but instead the emphasis is on behavioral change from law breaking to law following.

So I heartily agree with you Dorcas...we paint ourselves in a corner when we use this word "morality" or "ethic". Yet we cannot abandon the concept of "morality" in favor of "obedience" quite yet. I think this might create a vacuum in the short term! I grew up learning how to be moral and I won't appreciate evangelical Christianity getting off the hook so easily as to change its fundamental message over night. Even now, we readily preach that it's the law that determines blessing and security. The implication is, that if we were a moral people, we could stay prosperous and secure indefinitely.

This concept of moral leverage is pounded into every religious man's skull today: If we follow God's laws, He offers prosperity. We can avoid calamity and secure blessing through correct behavior.

Well I have no dispute with that basic approach to God. His law has not passed away! Yet I believe that he has given the Church a new law...a command that is greater than the Old Testament principle of blessing and cursing. "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

For love, Jesus, might tell an obedient son or daughter to accept suffering despite the legal rights of the law. This is the place where the compass needle swings from morality to obedience for the Christian. A moral man can still prosper while his friend suffers without much blame from the law. So while the law is good, and can help create a moral people, following its principles is not at all equal to following the person of Jesus. In many cases, it will become clear that the only law that truly rules the heart of a Christian is the law of love.

I believe this is the mystery of liberty in Christ from the law preached about in the New Testament. (There are other kinds of liberty preached for sure...) Yet, strangely, this "law of love" is hardly upheld even by those who focus on God's law. Today, in my limited experience, the law of blessing and cursing is still most often equated with gospel. I don't think it is incorrect...only terribly incomplete.

BTW...I'm beginning to feel embarrassed over my many diatribes on the subject of the love of God. I'm not sure how much more I can stand from myself on this matter! Please regard these thoughts as nothing more than some sharing over coffee...certainly not an argument or controversy. Just some thoughts to add to the conversation.

Blessings,

MC

**Re: all the talk - Why? - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/5/8 10:10**

Compton said,

Quote:  
-----BTW...I'm beginning to feel embarrassed over my many diatribes on the subject of the love of God. I'm not sure how much more I can stand from myself on this matter!  
-----

What's with this! You've barely begun.

Actually, in a sense, when I looked over this post it occurred to me that everything that needed to be said on this topic was said near the beginning.

Â... but thenÂ... maybe notÂ... Dom said:

Quote:  
-----I don't think this question is scary - I think it's essential. It's so easy to slip into legalism - and legalism brings a curse! NO THANK YOU.

I think it's vital to have tender hearts toward the Lord in our experience of His Presence, and from that experience will flow an obedience that is born of LIFE not just our own effort. Jesus is the centre of our lives, not just the written Word. Of course His Word is perfect, but His Word expresses Him, and we have a relationship with Him, not the Bible. He brings light to our hearts through the Word, but those words can also be a tool for darkness.

So it's not quite as simple as just quoting Jesus saying love for God is keeping His commandments - we need to know HOW. That's why He gave us the Apostle Paul and John - there was more to say....about the Law, the Holy Spirit and the nature of God's love for us, and ours for Him.

I could talk about this for months and years, and never exhaust it. Lord give me revelation of what it means to love you, and how much You love me. Amen.

Dom  
-----

Many thanks, Dom. Now, we all need our own turn at discovering and sharing the same thing.

Quote:  
-----Yet I believe that he has given the Church a new law...a command that is greater than the Old Testament principle of blessing and cursing. "A new command I give you: Love one another."  
-----

To me the Ten Commandments are a perfect description of Jesus' summarized "new command" The first four deal with loving God, and the next six with loving others. Jesus never changed that. Love was the ultimate requirement back then too. But the difference is the source of that love - and THAT is what must sink in - deeply.

Right now I see some clouds parting for me on this very issue. I'm not convinced that I fully "get it" or if I ever really have. Oh, I can talk about it, all right, and to some extent live it. But I see myself in a struggle to let go of threads of that deeply entrenched Old Covenant mindset - centered more on the thing that is required than on the Source of that thing (along with the outcomes).

I wonder.... If we are centered in the source, just how much talking is really necessary?

There are times, like right now, when I'd like to go back over my last 1000+ posts and delete them all, because they are just so much talk. I'm not sure I really know what I'm talking about most of the time. Maybe I am thinking: "If I talk enough about it, then it will eventually sink in." Please God, help me out here!

Quote:  
-----So while the law is good, and can help create a moral people, following its principles is not at all equal to following the person of Jesus.

us  
-----

Indeed, if we follow the Person, we don't need the law at all. Then the law becomes simply a reality by which we live – like the law of gravity. It's just there. It's altogether permeating. We don't think each morning when we get up: No w how can I observe God's law of gravity today. We don't even have to be consciously aware of its existence (think how tedious and exhausting that would be).

I wonder, Is hyper-consciousness on the matter of living in love not perhaps an indication of incomplete Christ-centeredness – that is, he is not sufficiently integrated into the fabric of our being? I would think that if he was, then even this: "Love God, and then do what you want" need not be pondered at all. Yet...

It's back to Dom's warning:

Quote:

-----this question is... essential. It's so easy to slip into legalism - and legalism brings a curse!  
-----

Diane

**Re: Love God. THEN do what you want. - posted by Rahman, on: 2006/5/8 13:00**

You know sis D this is helping me see how i get on so many peoples nerves ...

On some things i can be really dense, slow, and my tenacity makes it hard for me to let go of something once i've latched on ... So when you said, "I can say, Rahman made me think it" ... Instantly i thought, no you can say "Holy Spirit, via Rahman, made me think of this, because i believe i think as i do on this because of Him" ...

Perhaps i do attribute too much to God, and if so then i'm praying He'll recalibrate me correctly ... But even "Love God, THEN do what you want" doesn't sit well with me ... Now i see it more like this;

**"Love God? - THEN do What He Wants" ...**

Truth be told at this point in my life i can say that i love God, but i haven't the slightest idea of what i want to do anymore (unless i want to do what He wants me to do counts) ... Over the past 20 years i feel like i've been taken over by our Lord and re-directed in a way that certainly doesn't seem to make much sense all around, a way of seeking expectations that are hoped for ...

i know i'm not where you guys are on this issue so i'll just quietly keep on reading to see if He wants me to learn what you u've learned ... :-D

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/5/8 16:21**

Quote:

-----What's with this! You've barely begun.  
-----

:-P

Thanks Diane for bringing up Dom's points about legalism. I agree with Dom's, and your understanding on this issue. If we live according to the law of blessing and cursing...we might just get what we deserve!

Hey Rahman! You aren't on any nerves bro. :-P

Quote:

-----on some things I can be really dense...

-----

I realte...spiritually speaking I always feel like I'm just barely discovering fire...

I think your paraphrase would be in keeping with the theme of the original quote if it was altered slightly...

"Love God - THEN you'll want to do what He Wants" ...

Quote:

-----i haven't the slightest idea of what i want to do anymore

-----

While looking for the will of God I wouldn't want us to miss the small things that result simply from the character of God. Sometimes, so much empasis is placed on our submissive will that we might forget that simply by being conformed into the image of Christ we will spontaneously think and act more like Him. While admiring great works for God, I think we shouldn't overlook the many Christ-like interactions we have with people all day long...even in our uneventful lives. In so much as you have done it unto the least of these...

Blessings,

MC

**Re: motive - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/5/8 22:48**

Consider these words by Hannah W. Smith:

There are two men who do not steal. Outwardly their actions are equally honest, but inwardly there is a vital difference. One man had a dishonest nature that wants to steal, and is prevented from doing so only by the fear of a penalty. The other possesses an honest nature that hates thieving and could not be induced to steal even by the hope of a reward. The one is honest in the spirit. The other is honest only in the flesh. No words are needed to identify which sort the Christian life is meant to be.

from The Christian's Secret to a Happy Life

I might add: the one is honest because he knows he has to be, the other is honest because he WANTS to be.

The real heart is revealed by testings: what one chooses when all restraints are off. Could that be why in the Bible God often let rebellious people have what they want - so they could see the foolishness of their sinful desires? Or why he removes the restraints: "God gave them over to the sinful desires of their hearts." Romans 1:24

Consider our present society - restraintless - and look at the results! I ask, Why would God's people try to solve the problems by promoting the first method rather than the second. (ie law rather than grace)

\*\*\*\*

A question that should be asked more often: Is desire a bad thing?

Diane

**Re: when the outer restraints are removed - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/5/9 8:05**

Continued from last post...

Quote:

----- However Diane, your most subtle observation is perhaps the most overlooked one. We do what we want anyways...  
In the end you are going to do what you can live with."  
-----

Oh, yea, Compton, I do recall posting that comment early on:

Quote:

----- Whether we want to admit it or not, we do what we want to all the time. We own our choices. neither God, nor others make us do anything.  
-----

I think in the end no one goes beyond what THEIR conscience permits - because all want to avoid guilt. Even the bad things people do may be ways of dulling guilt and shame (ex addictions, anger problems, blame etc)

Compton said:

Quote:

-----His answer both surprised me and scared me ...because I realized he had a point.  
-----

Habakkuk3 said (initially)

Quote:

-----Was this really a serious question? Wow, that's scary. ..  
-----

I wonder if "doing what we want" seems scary because it means that we are our own "policeman". Perhaps deep down we humans know that we can't trust ourselves - esp without an outside force to "make" us keep in line? From that viewpoint doesn't legalism seem like a welcome solution? It is a humanistic way of maintaining control of our weak conscience and wavering will, of curbing our impulses and avoiding guilt. It works grandly for a while, and then eventually it destroys us. We can't keep our fleshly will under control forever. We endure shame in ever increasing degrees till it is unbearable.

But then, maybe that is the very point where one will cry out to God. It worked that way for me.

Maybe when, as judgment, God "turned them over to the desires of their hearts" he was removing their faulty restraints - which really became an idolatrous trust - a thin veneer covering their true, but evil, "want-to".

I took this thought by O Chamber from the "Liberty" thread:

We are called to present liberty for the conscience of others, not to bring them liberty for their thoughts and opinions. There is only one true liberty - the liberty of Jesus at work in our conscience enabling us to do what is right. Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free . . . - Galatians 5:1

I think deep down everyone longs for this liberty, and most don't realize God will give it to them. What is the first thing people think of when they hear that they should become a Christian. "If I do then I can't do this and I can't do that..."

Quote:

-----God loving us, (or liking us) is beyond the visible spectrum of our theological eyesight.  
-----

Don't you think that we must learn to equate loving God with trusting and receiving his love - which is really what it means to "trust Christ as our Savior"? In other words loving God is not entirely different than trusting God.

One more thought:

If we're trusting in legal restraints then how can we also trust in the inner work of the Spirit? I believe that it can only be o



ne or the other.  
Diane

**Re: - posted by Rahman, on: 2006/5/9 13:03**

Bro Mike (Compton),

i hear you but when i said "i haven't the slightest idea of what i want to do anymore", i mean what (I) want to do ...

This thread has really got me to thinking about just how "free" i feel in Christ ... i know scripture says "whom Christ has set free is free indeed (as in free from the law of sin and death)", but i wonder if the same thing applies to "whom Christ has set free is free in deed (as in to do what we want)" ... Perhaps this is just a semantic play on words but this is how i believe Holy Spirit's groomed me to think ...

When i think back i've never felt "free" to do what i wanted, early on there was always something "religious" to restrain me ... When i was younger i wanted to play football (school team instead of just neighborhood) and be involved in all kinds of school activities, but my parents were strict JW's and any unnecessary contact with "the world" was explained away via 1 Cor. 15:33 (which in the JW bible says - Bad associations spoil useful habits) ... i wanted to be an artist, which horrified my construction working father, who said, "Boy artist starve, you'll be a draftsman, that way you'll always work" ... So then i said ok i want to go to college and become an architect, at which my Dad who believed the world would end in 1975 said it was of no use because soon we'd all be sitting under our own fig trees in the New Order (you know this used to make me really angry, now i believe it was all part of His plan for my life) ... i also wanted to join the Air Force, but that certainly wasn't happening because JW's are CO's ...

By the time i got away from my parents house i was married by 19 ... i loved my first wife (in my small understanding of what love was) but i was trying my best to stay within the rules of Jehovah regarding sex, and on the good side of my parents ... But what i really wanted to do was to be as "buck-wild" as so many of my peers who seemed so free because they didn't have all those Bible rules eating away at them - but i wasn't "free" ... But eventually i did begin to do what i wanted (which was all carnal), but it always went against my grain (my biblical training) and eventually i found the best way to dull my conscience to sin was with the anesthesia of alcohol and drugs (which eventually after i got saved Holy Ghost brought to non effect) ...

All this to say that i've never felt free to do what i wanted even in the error of JW doctrine, but neither do i feel free now to do what i want under Christ ... My entire life seems to have been one of restraint and restriction which i used to detest, but over the past 20 years my sense of "self" has been broken down so much until i don't really feel much of an ego anymore (and i used to have such a prideful one before) ... The only thing i can think of now as to what i want to do is whatever He wants for me to do ... Now if you ask me what i hope that is i'd say that He has Holy Spirit promote "The Called" to the point that He'd give me a major platform in which He can speak thru me to lift up Christ, and to expose the awesomeness of the Father, to a world that doesn't even think about God, and to a Church that's somehow forgotten that we're in service to Him (and not vice-versa) ... i want to talk about God, and distribute His goodness spiritually and materially, and i want to do so to the whole world! - and i think this is what He wanted me to come to want - and i do ... To whom much is given, much (restriction/restraint/submission/surrender of self) is required ...

Bottom line is i have no more "self" wants as aspiration to what i want to do ... Spiritually i'd love to work for our Lord full time, so if i'm in error to what i believe i've heard Him say then i trust Him to straighten me out and show me where/how to move on with life ... It's not like He's not provided for my needs with gainful employment and such (tho it's not what i've ever wanted to do), so i'll not veer off into becoming someone sitting on the side of the road talking to myself ... At this point whatever our Lord reveals to me is fine with me, but i'd be lying if i didn't say that if He has in store for me what i believe i've heard ... Words cannot describe what such an awesome possibility wells up in me! ... i long to be immersed in His work!

All glory, honor and praise to our Father most high, His Lamb, and His Power!

**Re: when the outer restraints are removed - posted by Rahman, on: 2006/5/9 13:05**

Sis D you wrote;

"I might add: the one is honest because he knows he has to be, the other is honest because he WANTS to be."

--- Amen ... the former is how i started out, the latter is where Holy Spirit has groomed me to" ---

Sis D you asked;

"A question that should be asked more often: Is desire a bad thing?"

--- Not if it's in line with His desire ---

Sis D you wrote;

"I think in the end no one goes beyond what THEIR conscience permits - because all want to avoid guilt."

--- Hmmm ... i don't know about this, without the power of Holy Spirit and diligent study of His word satan can dull a conscience ... And what about that demonically inspired so called "crime of passion" which wakes the perp up to such harsh reality after the fact ... i'd say prisons and mental facilities are jammed packed with folk who've managed to by-pass their conscience ... And what of saints who in secret by-pass our conscience daily? ---

Sis D you wrote;

"I wonder if "doing what we want" seems scary because it means that we are our own "policeman". Perhaps deep down we humans know that we can't trust ourselves - esp without an outside force to "make" us keep in line? From that viewpoint doesn't legalism seem like a welcome solution?"

--- Amen, that's my concern, i don't trust my "self", but i do trust the power of Holy Spirit to provide me the way of escape ... i also thank God that He's given me/us the understanding of what "legalism" is and why it eventually cracks and falls off, but our inside force, our indwelling power of the Holy Spirit, our restrainer, if we surrender to His comfort (rest), He'll keep us in line ---

Sis D you wrote;

"I think deep down everyone longs for this liberty, and most don't realize God will give it to them. What is the first thing people think of when they hear that they should become a Christian. "If I do then I can't do this and I can't do that..."

Precisely! ... But the non Christian has no idea of the brevity of "If I do then I can't do this and I can't do that..." ... Even after Christ we can attempt to keep on doing what we were, but our indwelling of Holy Spirit is gonna make it no more fun at all" ... Everything i initially wanted to do was "anti-God", and without the Holy Ghost empowered renewing of the spirit of our minds we'll never ever come to the realization that true liberty lies in embracing "what He wants" while discarding "what we want" ...

Sis D you wrote;

"If we're trusting in legal restraints than how can we also trust in the inner work of the Spirit? I believe that it can only be one or the other."

--- Amen, and it's funny how this statement brings you to "Love God - THEN do what you want" and me to "Love God? - Then do what He wants" with a mutual understanding" ... One thing this thread has pointed out to me is that Holy Spirit has transformed me from a "legalist" to a "loyalist" ... Thank You Jesus! ---

**Re: conscience - stony or sensitive - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/5/9 13:32**

Quote:

----- Diane said: "I think in the end no one goes beyond what THEIR conscience permits - because all want to avoid guilt."

Rahman said: -- Hmmm ... i don't know about this, without the power of Holy Spirit and diligent study of His word satan can dull a conscience ..

-----

You have made a good point: Guilt is deadened with a seered conscience. Does the devil do this? I'm not convinced. I think it is a natural consequence of sinning and denying it. However, from the account of Pharaoh, we know that God can harden the conscience (heart) in response to willful disobedience. Several references seem to indicate that God also deadens spiritual senses in response to sin (edit; ie, continual resistance to what is right).

I love this New Covenant promise:

"I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh." Ez. 11:19

One of the most fabulous benefits of the life of Christ within us is an awakened conscience - and also a cleaned conscience!  
Diane

**Re: Doing what you want... - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/5/9 21:36**

Rahman,

I appreciated your testimony. One thing I realize is that words can mean different things. The word want can be synonymous with mere like but I think it is broader. For me the word 'want' can be synonymous the verb 'purpose'.

Quote:

-----...i trust Him to straighten me out and show me where/how to move on with life

-----

For instance, when I read your testimony I felt it could be truthfully said; Rahman loves the Lord, and therefore he purposes in his heart to please the Lord in all he does.

MC

**Re: conscience - stony or sensitive - posted by Rahman, on: 2006/5/10 11:57**

Sis D you wrote;

"Guilt is deadened with a seered conscience. Does the devil do this? I'm not convinced. I think it is a natural consequence of sinning and denying it. However, from the account of Pharaoh, we know that God can harden the conscience (heart) in response to willful disobedience. Several references seem to indicate that God also deadens spiritual senses in response to sin (edit; ie, continual resistance to what is right)."

--- To this i have to say i don't know ... i don't understand Rom. 9 (predestination) at all except that i know i'm a vessel of mercy, and at this point that's all i need to know ... To be honest i've done much research and listened to countless sermons on Rom. 9 and what Tozer came up with was the best explanation i could get my feeble mind around ...

But from that point of "pre-destination" in tangent with this thread title and Jesus saying that all we that come to Him were chosen from before the setting of the foundation of the world by the Father: Can we be sure that what we think we "want" to do for God out of our love is but our doing for God what He's already predestined for us to "want" to do for Him ... i'm not posting this for another long drawn out argument about predestination and won't reply to such, but am just revealing my thoughts and why i'm so prone to "Love God - THEN do what He wants" ... i don't think to want to do for God (in it's purest sense) comes "naturally", but "super-naturally, as you so aptly quoted from Ez. 11:19 ... Who "gives"? ... Who "removes"? ... Not us, but Him ... i think i'm right in gleaned from scripture that we (saved) are His workmanship, and not

our own ... His "new" desires in me have replaced my "old" desires ---

Another blessed day in Jesus to you sis! ... :-D

**Re: Doing what you want... - posted by Rahman, on: 2006/5/10 12:02**

Bro MC you wrote;

"BroFor instance , when I read your testimony I felt it could be truthfully said; Rahman loves the Lord, and therefore he p  
urposes in his heart to please the Lord in all he does."

Amen ... it wasn't always the case with me, and yes i do now "purpose" to please our Lord in all that i do ... But i know w  
hat i "purpose" ain't diddly, and is prone to failing into the evil that i wish not to do, if my "purpose" is not powered/empo  
wered by Holy Spirit Himself ... Greater is HE that is in me ... With CHRIST i am more than a conqueror ... i can do ALL  
THINGS (only) THRU CHRIST who strengthens me ...

i remember some time back when Holy Spirit told me to refer to myself with a lower case i ... Initially it stung me, and wa  
s uncomfortable to do, now i see His point completely ... i don't think of myself as I anymore, so it's no longer "God and I"  
but "God and i" ... The enemy of God is thinking to much of our "self" ...

You know last night it came across my mind that our Lord in His infinite wisdom and mercy may have saved me from a  
whole lot worse pain and turmoil had He let me become an artist, immersed in that libertine and hedonistic life style, and  
then called me to Himself ... The guy (65 now) who i used to paint with, who also claims Christ, started in NY and contin  
ued for some time in that lifestyle and is still having a terrible time being extricated from the debauchery of drink and lust  
... For one thing he continues to be pre-occupied with the female form - nudes (which is why i used to call him Gauguin),  
which our Lord nixed in me early in my salvation ...

The mystery to me in our Lord's calling is why are some of us more obstinate than others, and why does it seem that so  
me have more to overcome than others? ... Perhaps it has something to do with "those who are forgiven much - love mu  
ch", and it's out of that redemption from a satanic beat down that our Lord can eventually raise up those to wither satan  
because we know him ...

Added strength in Christ Jesus to you bro! ... :-D

**Re: - posted by Compton (), on: 2006/5/10 12:46**

Quote:  
-----...i know what i "purpose" is diddly, and is prone to failing into the evil that i wish not to do, if my "purpose" is not powered/empower  
ed by Holy Spirit Himself ... Greater is HE that is in me ...  
-----

Amen. This is the truth.

Blessings!

MC

**Re: loving a bigger God - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/5/10 17:20**

Rahman, your testimony is deeply stirring. Yet, I can only slightly identify. I grew up CRC Â– at the time heavily into hyp  
er-Calvinism. That doctrine basically assassinated your will, or any sense of responsibility for personal choices. You wer  
e a Â“victimÂ” of God Â– or rather the religious system. Actually, I didnÂ’t think of it that way.

I took a different path than you did. At a young age I made a vow to myself that, being one of the chosen, I would never  
, ever become like those BAD BOYS! Â– (ie, the ones who threw paper airplanes from the balcony during church- those  
were destined to hell for sure) Instead I became the shiner. To maintain assurance, I surrendered my will to my authori

ties. My mom thrived on that – being able to control my life. At 8 yo I still didn't choose what I would wear. I still asked permission to go to the bathroom. At 19 I almost got expelled from nursing school because I couldn't make decisions. Thankfully God marvellously intervened and rescued me from my own self-made prison!

Really the roots of my sin were the same as yours – a sinful, fleshly response to ungodly controls - without surrendering to God.

BTW, a psychologist once said that her most frequent clientele were RC's and JW's. I suspect that religion, generally speaking, keeps the social profession in business. It keeps one in a state of dependency and guilt.

Here's a strange example:

I am presently reading a book on the life of a Russian composer and learned that at his christening the priest decided to change his name. The priest simply overruled the parent's choice! Yet, it was accepted, and life went on. I wonder, if this was considered acceptable religious practice at that time in Russia, then it shouldn't be surprising that the people so easily surrendered themselves to the state.

I think that there are times when God simply wants us to go ahead and make choices rather than wait for instructions to fall all from heaven, or doors to open automatically. We can be paralysed by a fear of making choices. Here's a silly little example:

One day I wrote an article about hypocrisy and felt that I should give it to a certain church authority. I just didn't know if it was God's timing. So I wavered till it just about drove me crazy. I sure didn't want to move outside of God's will. Finally a friend said, "God's legs aren't too short that he can't catch up with you." I realized that God is most capable of intercepting any of our moves. I delivered my message. In the end, I did what I wanted to, partly, because I knew I couldn't live with not doing it. I suspect it just got tossed in the garbage. But the important thing I needed to learn was that God's bigger purposes are in his hands, and I will not topple his program that easily. Even though I loved God, I still needed to learn the love of a far bigger God... and still do.

The bigger God is, the smaller I am. Rahman, God gave me the same message as you about the "I" - about 7 years ago in a vision of a capital "I" being knocked out and replaced by a small "i". That was cool!

diane

**Re: loving a bigger God - posted by Rahman, on: 2006/5/11 11:43**

Sis D you wrote;

"You were a "victim" of God – or rather the religious system. Actually, I didn't think of it that way."

--- Amen ... such religious systems as the RC and JW's does make one a "victim" of the religious system, but i'm not so sure that most "religious systems" today (including Protestantism) doesn't make most victims of their pomp, circumstance, form and fashion ... My tearing away (or as i now think of it His tearing me away) from the JW's was a most painful experience, and subsequently made me very wary of being sucked into man made form and fashion when scripture literally screams out against such practices (God hates Nicolaitinism and Balaamism) ... One of the first head bangs He had me do with my pastors was regarding denominationalism, and the sin they engaged in by bad mouthing and degrading saints from other denom's ... Boy was that fun :-? , His correction coming to leadership via a new convert just wet behind the ears ---

Sis D you wrote;

"To maintain assurance, I surrendered my will to my authorities. My mom thrived on that – being able to control my life. At 8 yo I still didn't choose what I would wear. I still asked permission to go to the bathroom. At 19 I almost got expelled from nursing school because I couldn't make decisions."

--- Amen - Sis do i identify with you on this ... We had to ask permission for everything ... In fact i remember my Dad bra

gging to one of his friends that if he told us the sky was orange then the sky to us was orange ... My Dad had a tremendous effect on my young life, and so did the JW religion until at age 14 i heard a voice in my spirit (whom i later attributed to Holy Spirit) tell me that the JW's were wrong in their theology ... And then in 1975 when the world did not come to an end it sent me into a pure hatred for all things JW (which praise Him He's since cured me of) ... That incident also enable d me to take my parents down off the pedestal of infallibility which they'd groomed me to worship at ... It's just amazing n ow for me to look back on my 55 years and see just how far He's brought me ---

Sis D you wrote;

"BTW, a psychologist once said that her most frequent clientele were RC's and JW's. I suspect that religion, generally speaking, keeps the social profession in business. It keeps one in a state of dependency and guilt."

--- Amen on both counts ... At one point when i was trying to explain away what i believe to be my calling i came across a program with a former JW and his shrink ... It was interesting to hear the shrink say that former JW's are still ever preoccupied with ...

- the ever presence of God's eye on us ...
- a gnawing sense of our supposing to do ...
- a strong fear of sinning and not being perfect before Him ...
- His wrath and judgment ...

After hearing this i tried to convince myself that my calling was just a reaction to the mental and emotional rigors of JW brainwashing, but our Lord soon freed me from this escape plan too ... But what he has replaced in me is that these concerns formerly birthed out of fear of Him is now birthed out of love for Him ... One of the major things that struck me soon after coming out of JW to His church was the small, or even total lack of concern for such matters ... For myself being under the law bound doctrine of JW first, has given me much more of an appreciation for grace than had i been brought up in the Church ---

Sis D you wrote;

"I think that there are times when God simply wants us to go ahead and make choices rather than wait for instructions to fall from heaven, or doors to open automatically. We can be paralysed by a fear of making choices."

--- Amen, fearful is me on the big choices which i only make after serious prayer doused in excess of Jas. 4:13-15 ... My personality trait is primary: melancholy (gifted and fear motivated) with a choleric (anger motivated) secondary ... This means i'm a real slow starter in big decision making, but once i come to conclusion of direction i go at it with a vengeance (because the fear factor has been eliminated) ... i would say that many think i'm overly dependant on God, and yes i do wait often for instruction to fall from heaven, and doors to open automatically ... i also think that because of my innate dependency on Him God does often make the latter happen for me, case in point with the purchase of the car He's given me ... Wow did he make that usually gut wrenching event a breeze ---

Sis D you wrote;

"But the important thing I needed to learn was that God's bigger purposes are in his hands, and I will not topple his program that easily. Even though I loved God, I still needed to learn the love of a far bigger God... and still do."

--- Amen on daily learning His even bigger love ... Now regarding His purpose i already knew i couldn't topple it ... My only concerns in this arena is to be sure that what i believe to be my calling is in and of help to His purpose, for the thing that i never want to be is a hindrance ... i totally fear being in God's way! ---

Sis D you finished;

"The bigger God is, the smaller I am. Rahman, God gave me the same message as you about the "i" - about 7 years ago in a vision of a capital "I" being knocked out and replaced by a small "i". That was cool!"

--- Sis D i'm not trying to be facetious here, but i have to ask if He's shown you about the small "i" then why do you still write in "I"? ... Since He instructed me regarding such i come to even visualize myself as "i" (it's done wonders for my temper reaction) ... In fact in my e-mails i've been asked by folk why i refer to myself in lowercase, especially at the start of a

sentence ... It's opened up the way to witness on more than few occasions ...

Blessings in Christ Jesus!!!

**Re: the small i - posted by roadsign (), on: 2006/5/11 12:50**

rahman asked:

Quote:

-----if He's shown you about the small "i" then why do you still write in "I"?  
-----

Good question!

It never occurred to me. DahÂ...

It violates my conscience, ie my preprogrammed internalized grammatical rules.

It feels wrong.

It looks wrong.

It looks like the writer is lazy. (Ooops Â– prejudging here, right?)

The apostle Paul didn't do that (well, at least not in the KJV)

My word documents won't let me, and that's where I do most of my writing.

God has infinitely more creative and more effective ways of decreasing the "I". Blaaaaah!:oops:

And furthermore, if I start now, I'd just be copying someone else. Â... not a good motive, right?

How's that for an answer?

Quote:

-----.. It's opened up the way to witness on more than few occasions ...  
-----

This is great! Keep it up and may God bless you! And I will continue doing my decreasing every Sunday at church when I cover myself with my robe.

Diane

**Re: - posted by Rahman, on: 2006/5/11 15:00**

Sis D you wrote;

"How's that for an answer?"

--- Yep, i can certainly identify with all the reasons you gave ... But i just can't resist this reply :-D ...

Do what you want ... :-P