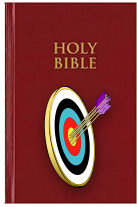


Spot On

Restoring the Hebraic foundational emphasis on the processes of how you live your life:



- the responsive actions our Lord commands all of His followers,*
- and their responsibility to deferentially obey by grace the One they love.*

Spot 10. The Depth Of Love Our Lord Jesus Commands

You've probably recognized that many Christians today think (or have been erroneously taught) that the God of the Older Testament (the Hebrew Scriptures) was pretty harsh when it came to His interaction with the children of Israel. Yet, His wondrous love and grace overflow the pages of *both* testaments — and even more so when you consider that the same God who commanded His “treasured possession” to **“Be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy”** (Leviticus 19:1) also made a way for them to survive their sinful, *unholy* propensities by offering up a bloody sacrificial substitute for the death which their unholiness merited. That's love and grace in a BIG way!

What is often overlooked in Christianity today is that a huge proportion of the commands, statutes and laws in the Hebrew text are wrapped around **interpersonal relationships** — relationships among family members, neighbors, kinsmen, fellow Israelites — and with the foreigners/strangers among them. Our compassionate God made sure that the people He called out as His own recognized *His love for them* as well as their need to *extend that love* to their *neighbors* in precise and practical ways:

“Do not hate your brother in your heart, but rebuke your neighbor frankly, so that you won't carry sin because of him. Don't take vengeance on or bear a grudge against any of your people; rather, love your neighbor as yourself; I am the LORD.” (Leviticus 19:17,18).

Time and again within Leviticus chapter 19 our God personalizes His relationship to Israel by citing, *“I am the LORD your God.”* The **“vertical” dimension** of relationship with God most of us understand, since God has the undeniable right to be “God”. But then as now, it's the troublesome **“horizontal” dimension** of human relationships which seem to cause us such grief and irritation. That's where your “brother” and your “neighbor” come into play in this particular “love” command.

All too often Christians who haven't pursued our Lord's truth in the Older Testament view all those commands and laws from God as burdensome and undoable. They think that “it's all Jewish Law” and that “I'm a Christian under grace.” So, many in Christianity remain comfortable with a hazy sort of **general kindness** toward other people. They fail to grasp the *biblically defined and explained* interrelational responsibilities *to love by upholding justice* which permeates the teachings and instructions of both Testaments.

That *intimate vertical relationship* was fully extended to us when Jesus laid down His life as the only acceptable Substitute Sacrifice. Using relationally intimate words, Jesus referred to God as **“My Father”** and **“your Father”** (John 20:17), repeating from the Hebrew Scriptures the relational essence of *God's Fatherhood* to us.

Jesus laid down His life for others, personifying the very definition of love for our neighbors, our brothers, and even the *strangers and foreigners* in our midst. The first two categories are acceptable to most Christians, but to love *foreigners*? Aliens? Strangers? Really?!! Yet that's what our Father of all compassion commands both Israel and us who are His adopted sons and daughters. Our Lord Jesus goes even further and hammers home the full extent of the love He requires of His own:

“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you” (Luke 6:27,28).

If you possess this depth of love which only our Lord Jesus can give you, it will safeguard you from bitterness, hatred, racism and bigotry. To our Lord Jesus the **general kindness** that makes you acceptable in society just won't do. You must cry out to our Lord for His indwelling Spirit to enable you to **love** your enemies and those who hate you, curse you, and mistreat you!

What To Take Away From This Discussion:



All around you intolerance thrives by despising anyone who “isn't like me.” Anyone who doesn't “act like me, look like me, worship like me, live like me — they're *all foreigners* to me!” This hate-filled atmosphere of *virulent words* which produce *virulent actions* is filling our society with relational strife, from the White House to houses of worship. Ask yourself:

“Am I a living example of our Lord Jesus' command to love ALL people?”

If your answer to this question is “No!”, we'd like to share a demonically inspired trap you may have fallen into — an *evil attitude* of unrighteous sinfulness which is running rampant throughout society and Christianity, and has snuffed out love.

There's an appropriate response to sin for those who belong to Jesus: **righteous indignation** — an emotion of sorrowful anger which reacts against mistreatment, insult, or malice against others. This heartfelt Spirit-compelled burden confronts the sin and injustice of someone doing to others what they don't want done to themselves. This holy call for **righteous indignation** was emphasized in a 2019 study from *Back To The Bible* (founded in 1939):

“Today there is a need for God's people to display righteous indignation. May we never complacently accept babies being aborted, the poor being exploited and politicians breaking the law. God does not want people in authority to use their authority for themselves. A true statesman uses his authority to build people and his country.”

The **righteous indignation** which is in line with God's Word distinguishes between the *sinful and unjust actions* of an individual and the *person himself*. **Righteous indignation** focuses on the *sinful or unjust attitude or action*, and refuses to *attack the human dignity of someone* who was made in God's image and for whom Jesus shed His blood.

Righteous indignation has the goal of redeeming a person by confronting their sin and their injustice so they might repent. And, **righteous indignation** often is a means of rallying others to take a stand against sin and injustice through movements such as “Pro-life”, “Equal Rights”, and “Black Lives Matter”.

Today, however, an **unrighteous indignation** is being preached by many religious leaders as a deceptive veneer to propagate hatred, racism and bigotry. An indignation which was meant to be a biblically-supported attitude against sin and injustice has been totally reversed in meaning. *Unrighteous anger and disdain* is being used to breed hatred toward aliens, the poor, and people of different religions, races and cultures.

And consider this. Many so-called **“Christian Conservatives”** are defaming our Lord’s holy name by branding as “liberals” His followers who take a stand against sin and injustice. It’s grievous that the underlying motto of much of **Christian Conservatism** is that **“UNLESS YOU HATE THOSE WHO AREN’T LIKE US, YOU CAN’T BE ONE OF US!”** If you investigate who’s backing the Christian Conservatives who propagate **unrighteous indignation**, you’ll find a number of millionaires and multi-millionaires.

These “conservative” leaders appear to have allied themselves with the president as this nation’s political head. However, they’ve actually aligned their attitudes and agendas with his UNChristike despising of other human beings and with the greed which brought him such public success and power by worldly standards. By backing his policies and his dismissal of anyone who protests his actions, the wealthy are able to maintain their own personal prosperity, positions of influence and economic success.

Sin is sin in our Father’s eyes. Christian conservatives having unrighteous indignation toward individuals who are made in His image and for whom Jesus died are no more righteous in His sight than people who support abortions, sexual perversion, and unlimited welfare for able-bodied people who refuse to work.

BE VERY DISCERNING! *In 2020 you need 20/20 spiritual insight*. Please, prayerfully scrutinize your own inner feelings and attitudes toward other human beings. Is your “indignation” because of their sin or unjust treatment of others, or because of their human condition — being poor and needy, living here as an alien, or their race or ethnic heritage? The *self-sacrificial love* which our Lord Jesus requires of you is the prime evidence that you do belong to Him. It is presumptuous misrepresentation of His Person if you claim to believe in Him but refuse to allow His love to penetrate you beyond words in the Bible.

Paul makes plain to you your *prime motive*, the only motive of heart that is acceptable to our Lord Jesus and sets forth your love-based responsibilities toward others:

- **“For in Christ Jesus... The only thing that counts is trust expressing itself through love ... For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself’”** (Galatians 5:6,14).
- **“Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous, love does not brag, and is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres”** (1 Corinthians 13:4-7).