

The Two Great Commandments



Foundations (Day 108)
by Derek Prince

Yesterday we finished with the question: what is meant by this phrase, "the righteous requirement of the law"? The answer is given most clearly by Jesus Himself in response to a Jewish lawyer's question concerning the law.

Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 22:35-40).

In these words Jesus defines the righteous requirement of the law to which Paul refers. The law of Moses was only given at a certain period in human history to a small section of the human race. But behind this complete system of law there stand the two great, eternal, unchanging laws of God for the whole human race: "You shall love the Lord your God" and "You shall love your neighbour as yourself."

The system of law given through Moses was merely a detailed application and outworking of these two great commands – love for God and love for our neighbour. These two commandments were the basis of the whole legal system of Moses and the entire ministry and message of all the Old Testament prophets. Here, then, is "the righteous requirement of the law" summed up in two all-inclusive commandments: "love God" and "love your neighbour."

This same truth is taught by Paul in 1 Timothy 1:5-7.

> "Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith, from which some, having strayed, have turned aside to idle talk, desiring to be teachers of the law, understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm."

Notice that illuminating statement: "the purpose of the commandment is love..."

The supreme purpose and object for which the whole law was given was to inculcate love – love for God and love for man. Paul goes on to say that all who seek to teach or interpret the law of Moses without understanding this basic purpose of the whole law "have turned aside to idle talk... understanding neither what they say nor the things which they affirm."

In other words, such interpreters have completely missed the main point of the law, which is love. This law of love – love for God and man – is the law behind all other laws.

Devotional

Transcript: WD-B052-108-ENG
Last Updated: 03 Feb 2025
Website: derekprince.com



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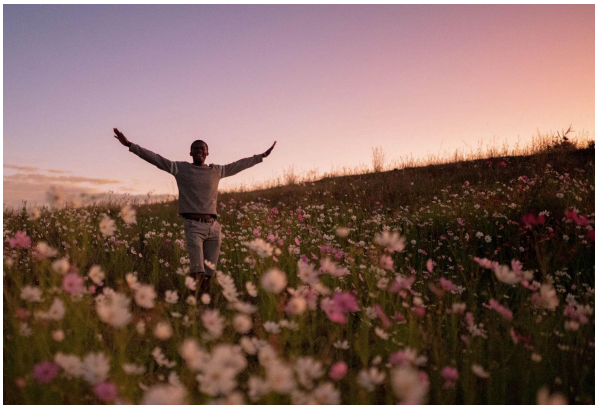

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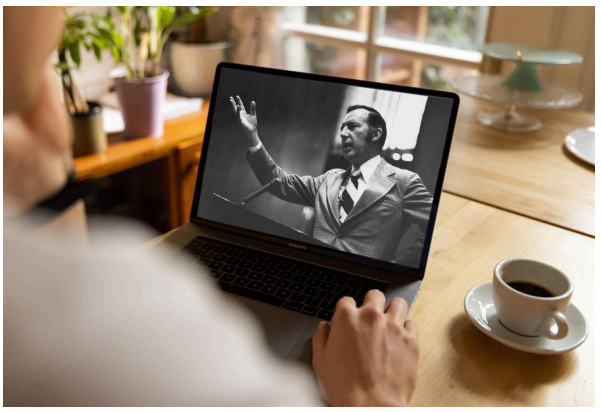

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