

Teach - Matthew 28:20
Fall in Line Behind Jesus

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This is our fifth message in the “Becoming a Disciple” series. Today we move on to... **Teach – The New Disciples**. We’re starting every one of these messages with a core truth and a question from the book “Essential Guide to Becoming a Disciple” by Greg Ogden.

So, continuing line-by-line in the Great Commission, our core truth today comes from Matthew 28:20.

Matthew 28:20 (NLT)

20 Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you . . . (THAT is our CORE TRUTH Today)

Here is the question we want to answer today.

What is the ultimate sign of our love for Jesus?

Does that seem like an odd question to go with that core truth? The core truth is – *TEACH new Disciples to OBEY all the commands of Jesus* and yet the question we want to answer is – *What is the ultimate SIGN of our LOVE for Jesus?*

If we can make *that* connection between the core truth and *that* question by the end of our time today, then we will have done well.

So, again, the core truth is – *Teach new disciples to obey all the commands Jesus has given them.*

And the question is – *What is the ultimate sign of our love for Jesus?*

Turn over to John Chapter 14. This is the second chapter of the “Upper Room Discourse” which is the most condensed, power-packed teaching Jesus downloaded to his disciples during the entire three years they were with him. It was the night of the arrest in the Garden. The cross loomed just hours in front of Jesus and in this section, Jesus is telling it as straight as it can be told to his disciples.

We’ll pick it up in John 14:15-17.

John 14:15–17 (NLT)

15 “If you love me, obey my commandments.

That is both our core truth *and* our question. But notice carefully, Jesus does not stop there.

16 And (2 translations write ‘then’) ***I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you.***

17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth . . . “

And not only does the Holy Spirit ***lead into all truth*** but he also empowers us to *obey all truth*. And so, Jesus isn’t asking us to just try really, really hard to obey a list of to-do’s and to-don’ts – because that’s just religion.

Notice first, Jesus says ***IF you love me***. Guys, all following Jesus starts here. ***IF you love me***. Following Jesus doesn’t start with religion. It doesn’t start with trying to “clean up your life.”

It starts with you loving Jesus – because

Jesus first *loved you*,

Jesus *died for you*, in your place

Jesus *paid the full penalty* for your sin, on your behalf

And *if you love* him for *who he is* and for *what he has done*, then... you will *obey him*.

There are two ways a child obeys his parents or two motivations for a child obeying his parents. One is out of *fear of the consequences*. The other is out of *love for the parent*. Jesus says – ***IF you LOVE ME, Obey my commandments***.

And actually, eight of the twelve translations I use say ***“IF you LOVE ME, you WILL keep my commandments”*** which makes this a *condition*, a *test* of whether we love Jesus or not.

And can I tell you please, this is one of the things I respect most about my own kids. With all three of our kids – even through their teenage years – I knew how much they loved me and I knew how much genuine respect they had for me because they *did* what I asked them to *do*. Even David, when I asked him directly.

I promise you, the motivation of love and respect for them doing what I asked them to do meant a million times more to me than them doing what I asked out of some other motivation. And I think that’s a small picture of how Jesus feels when we *obey* his commands out of a *motivation of love* for him.

And here's *how* we *know* this is a *very big deal* to the Lord. Because in 10 verses here in John 14 (verses 15-24), Jesus addresses this truth – four times - 3 times in a positive sense - and once in a negative sense.

So, when Jesus says the *same thing* four times in ten verses, that's when we know he is really trying to get this truth across to us.

So, look down just four verses in this same section to John 14:21.

John 14:21 (NLT)

21 Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me (see the connection), my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.”

Whoa! Can this be true? Those who *accept* his commands and *obey* Jesus are the ones who *love him*. And because they love him – by obeying him – the Father will *love* them and Jesus will *love* them *and* will *reveal* himself to each of them. Wow!

Haven't we kind of taken this part out of the Gospel message? Don't we tend to focus on the Father *loving us* and Jesus *loving us* and *doing things* for us? While at the same time shying away from that whole “**ACCEPT His commands and OBEY Him**” thing.

But – WHAT IF – Obeying the LORD – is what ENABLES HIM to LOVE us - and REVEAL Himself to us?

Have you ever asked yourself why Jesus *doesn't seem* to reveal himself to you? Is there a chance that it's because of what Jesus says in this verse? Again, John 14:21.

John 14:21 (NLT)

21 Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me (in this way), my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.”

Listen, please. If you are calling your own shots and if you are living your life your own way, don't blame Jesus for *not* revealing himself to you. We can't *earn* Jesus revealing himself to us *by our obedience* – but – *our obedience opens the door* for Jesus to reveal himself to us.

And... I'm afraid we're not done with this yet because Jesus is not done with this yet. I have to return to this because Jesus returns to it. Remember I said Jesus addresses this same truth four times. We've seen two of them, so let's address the other two together,

okay? Let me read just the first line of verse 23 along with the first line of verse 24 together.

John 14:23(A) (NLT)

23 Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say . . .

John 14:24(A) (NLT)

24 Anyone who doesn’t love me will not obey me . . .”

(that one kind of stings, doesn’t it?)

This makes four times that Jesus forces us to face this truth, that *if we truly love him then we will truly do what he says.*

Does it bother you – that actually DOING what Jesus says (*Obeying His Commands*) is the SIGN (*that Jesus himself keeps bringing up*) that Determines whether we LOVE HIM OR NOT?

Love is a huge part of this section of scripture (in John 14) and remember our question today is *What is the ultimate sign of our love for Jesus?*

Well, in ten verses here, the word *love* is used eight times. If you know a few Greek words, who thinks this word (for love) is AGAPE?

Sorry, it’s close, but it’s *not AGAPE*.

Every time the word *love* is used in this section the Greek word is AGAPAO. The difference is – this love is a *verb* and a verb is an *action word* and so this love *does* something. This love, it doesn’t just *say something* – this love *does something*.

Possibly the greatest Christian band ever – D.C. Talk – convinced an entire generation of Christians of the significance of this word in their timeless rock-rap song Luv is a Verb.

Let me read you just a few lines of this song.

Words come easy but don't mean much
When the words they're sayin' we can't put trust in
We're talkin' 'bout love in a different light

I don't care what they say
I don't care what ya heard
The word luv, luv is a verb

Guys, when did we start implying that all we had to do was to *believe* that Jesus IS who he say he IS and then we could live *however we want*? This love for Jesus *is a verb* and that means this love *does something*.

And **Jesus says** here – (**4 times in 10 verses**) that **WHAT** this **Love DOES** – **is OBEY His Commands**

Okay, just one more truth from these verses.

Have you ever struggled with NOT FEELING

Like Jesus is **TRULY Living** inside of you?

Like HIS life is **REALLY Alive** in your life?

Is there a requirement for Jesus to truly “make his home” inside of us? We only read the first line of John 14:23. Let’s read the entire verse.

John 14:23 (NLT)

23 Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say. (and - most other versions) My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them.

Is Jesus saying this love *that SHOWS itself in our OBEYING him* is a requirement for he and the Father to “***Make their HOME with each of us?***” Guys, we’ve got to come to grips with this truth!

In his book, “*The Making of a Disciple*” Keith Phillips calls this the “Dip and Skip” method of following Jesus.

We love to DIP into the promises – and We love to SKIP over the commands

But listen, please. Jesus is not calling us to obey his commands – *for himself*. Jesus is calling us to obey his commands – *for our good*. Jesus loves us enough to command us to *choose his way* over the *options of the world*.

Because the highway to hell is much more than a rock song by a nerdy guy in short pants.

Matthew 7:13–14 (NLT)

13 “You can enter God’s Kingdom only through the narrow gate. The highway to hell is broad, and its gate is wide for the many who choose that way.

14 But the gateway to life is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a few ever find it.

What if that's why Jesus commissions us to teach new disciples to *obey all* of his commands? Guys, that IS WHY Jesus commissions us to teach new disciples to *obey all* of his commands! *It's because of his great love for us!*

When Jesus stood before the Disciples giving them the Great Commission, he bore the scars in his hands and in his feet and he bore the scar of the wound on his side. And Revelation makes it clear Jesus will *always bear* the scars of the *depth of his love* for us.

The Lord of all Creation will forever bear the scars *of his love for you.*

CAN a God – who loves you to THAT Extreme Be Trusted to GUIDE YOU - into an Abundant and Eternal Life?

Listen to what Romans 8:31-32 says.

Romans 8:31–32 (NLT)

31 What shall we say about such wonderful things as these? If God is for us, who can ever be against us?

32 Since he did not spare even his own Son but gave him up for us all, won't he also give us everything else?

What if this is why Jesus calls us to obey his commands. What if it's so that Jesus can give us everything else through our obedience to him? Guys, *that is the reason and that is the why!*

One last verse. Listen carefully, because it says it all. From the same conversation as John Chapter 14 we read this in John 15:9-11.

John 15:9–11 (NLT)

9 "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain (abide) in my love. (how do we do that?)

10 When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

(why are you telling us this, Jesus?)

11 I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow!

Guys, we are commissioned to teach new disciples to obey all the commands Jesus gave us *so that we will be filled with HIS joy and so that OUR joy will overflow.*