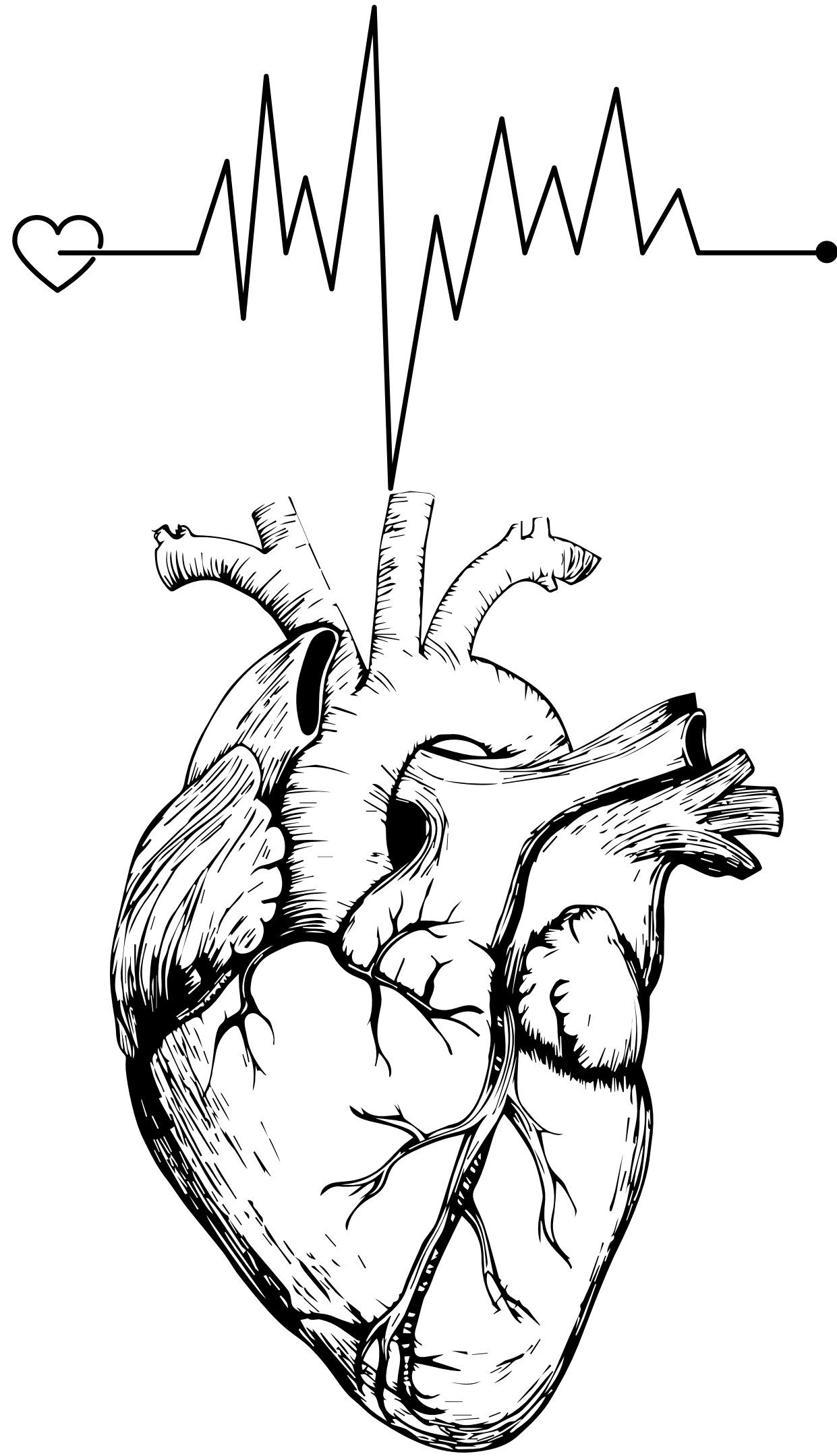


YOU CAN OBEY ***THE COMMANDMENTS***



BY MICHAEL RAY GARVIN



CIRCUMCISE HEART

6 “Moreover, the Lord your **God will circumcise your heart** and the heart of your descendants, **so that you will love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul**, in order that you may live.

DEUTERONOMY 30:6 NRSV



LOVE THE FATHER & SON

21 They **who have my commandments** and **keep them** *are those who love me*, and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and *reveal myself to them.*”

23 Jesus answered him, “*Those who love me will keep my word*, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. 24 **Whoever does not love me does not keep my words**, and the word that you hear is not mine but is from the Father who sent me.

JOHN 14:21, 23 NRSV



ENDURANCE & KEEP THE COMMANDS

12 Here is a call for the **endurance of the saints**, *those who keep the commandments of God* and hold fast to the faith of Jesus.

REVELATION 14:12 NRSV

14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the **tree of life**, and may enter in through the gates **into the city**.

REVELATION 22:14 NRSV



SHEPHERD OF HERMAS

The Shepherd of Hermas is a document attributed to Hermas, a Roman freedperson, who flourished during the first half of the 2nd century CE. The writing identifies a Clement who has the responsibility of sending writings on behalf of a Roman church to believers in other cities (Vis. 2.4.3), a reference many regard as a direct allusion to the author of the 1st-century letter, 1 Clement. Hermas learns from his heavenly messengers that because believers have sinned following their baptism God is offering them an opportunity before a coming judgment for a “second repentance.” **In some parts of the early church the Shepherd was treated as canonical:** the *Greek Codex Sinaiticus (4th century)* and the *Greek-Latin Codex Claromontanus (6th century)* include it as part of the New Testament; **Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria quote it as Scripture.** **The Shepherd was one of the most widely read writings in the early church;** numerous authors (for example, Tertullian, Origen, Augustine, Jerome, Athanasius, to name only a few) cited it even if they did not regard it as canonical. Its popularity is also attested by numerous depictions of scenes in Christian iconography.

13 If one gives answer before hearing, it is folly and shame. **Proverbs 18:13 NRSV**

CHAPTER 12: COMMANDS ARE NOT IMPOSSIBLE

AGAIN he said unto me; remove from thee all evil desires, and **put on good and holy desires**. For having put on a good desire, **thou shalt hate that which is evil**, and **bridle** (control) it as thou wilt. But an evil desire is dreadful and hard to be tamed.

2 It is very horrible and wild: and by its wildness consumes men. And especially if a servant of God shall chance to fall into it, **except he be very wise**, he is ruined by it. For it destroys those who have not the garment of a good desire: and are engaged in the affairs of this present world; and **delivers them unto death**.

3 Sir, said I, what are the works of an evil desire, which bring men unto death? Shew them to me, that I may depart from them. Hear said he, **by what works an evil desire bringeth the servants of God unto death**.

4 First of all, it is **an evil desire to covet another man's wife**; or **for a woman to covet another's husband**; as also **to desire the dainties of riches**: and multitude of **superfluous** (surplus, unnecessary) **meats**; and **drunkenness**; and **many delights**.

5 For in much delicacy (luxury) there is folly (foolishness); and **many pleasures are needless to the servants of God.** Such lusting therefore is evil and pernicious (harmful), which brings to death the servants of God. For all such lusting is from the devil.

6 **Whosoever therefore shall depart from all evil desires, shall live unto God;** but they that are **subject** (submit, obey) unto them shall die for ever. For this evil lusting is deadly. Do thou therefore put on the *desire of righteousness*, and being **armed with the fear of the Lord, resist all** wicked lusting.

7 For **this fear dwelleth in good desires;** and when evil coveting shall see thee armed with the fear of the Lord, and resisting it, it will fly far from thee, and not appearing before thee, but be afraid of **thy armour.**

8 And thou shalt have the victory, and be crowned for it; and shalt attain to that desire which is good; and shalt give the victory which thou hast obtained unto God, and shalt serve him in doing what thou thyself wouldest do.

9 For **if** thou shalt **serve good desires**, and **be subject to them**; thou shalt be able to get the dominion over thy wicked lustings; and they shall be subject to thee as thou wilt.

10 ¶ And I said, Sir, I would know how to serve that desire which is good? Hearken, saith he, **Fear God** and **put thy trust in him**, and **love truth**, and **righteousness**, and **do that which is good**.

11 If thou shalt do these things, thou shalt be an approved servant of God; and shalt serve him: and all others who shall in like manner serve a good desire shall live unto God.

12 ¶ And when he had fulfilled these twelve commands, he said unto me, Thou hast now these commands, **walk in them**; and **exhort (encourage) those that hear them that repent**, and that they **keep their repentance pure all the remaining days of their life**.

13 And fulfil diligently this ministry which I commit to thee, and thou shalt receive great advantage by it; and shalt find favour with all such as shall repent, and shall believe thy words. For I am with thee, and will force them to believe.

14 And I said unto him, Sir, those commands are great and excellent, and able to cheer the heart of that man that shall be able to keep them. But, Sir, I cannot tell, whether they can be observed by any man?

15 He answered, **Thou shalt easily keep these commands**, and **they shall not be hard**: howbeit, ***if thou shalt suffer (allow) it once to enter into thy heart that they cannot be kept by any one, thou shalt not fulfil them.***

16 But now I say unto thee if thou shalt not observe these commands, but shall neglect them, **thou shalt not be saved**, nor thy children, nor thy house; because thou hast judged that these cannot be kept by man.

17 ¶ These things he spake very angrily unto me, insomuch that he greatly affrighted me. For he changed his countenance, so that a man could not bear his anger.

18 And when he saw me altogether troubled and confounded, he began to speak more moderately and cheerfully, saying, O foolish, and without understanding!

19 Unconstant, **not knowing** the majesty of God how great and wonderful he is; who created the world for man, and hath made every creature subject unto him: and given him all power, **that he should be able to fulfil all these commands.**

20 **He is able**, said he, to [note: Angel.] **fulfil all these commands, who has the Lord in his heart:** but they who have the Lord only in their mouths, and their heart is hardened, and they are far from the Lord; **to such persons these commands are hard and difficult.**

21 Put therefore, ye that are empty and light in the faith, the Lord your God in your hearts and ye shall perceive (understand) **how that nothing is more easy than these commands, nor more pleasant, nor more gentle and holy.**

22 And turn yourselves to the Lord your God, and **forsake** the devil and his pleasures, because they are evil, and bitter, and impure. And **fear not the devil**, because he has no power over you.

23 For I am with you, the messenger of repentance, who have the dominion over him. The devil doth indeed affright men; but his terror is vain. Wherefore fear him not, and he will flee from you.

24 And I said unto him; Sir, hear me speak a few words unto you. He answered, Say on: A man indeed desires to keep the commandments of God: and **there is no one but what prays unto God, that he may be able to keep his commandments.**

25 But the devil is hard, and by his power rules over the servants of God. And he said **He cannot rule over the servants of God, who trust in him with all their hearts.**

26 The devil may strive, but he cannot overcome them.

27 For **if ye resist him**, he will flee away with confusion from you. But **they that are not full in the faith, fear the devil**, as if he had some great power. For the devil tries the servants of God and if he finds them empty, he destroys them.

28 For as man, when he fills up vessels with good wine, [note: Origen. in Matt. xxiv. 42.] and among them puts a few vessels half full, and comes to try and taste of the vessels, **doth not try those that are full, because he knows that they are good; but tastes those that are half full**, lest they should grow sour; (for vessels half full soon grow sour, and lose the taste of wine:) **so the devil comes to the servants of God to try them.**

29 **They that are full of faith resist him stoutly**(*courage & determination*), and he departs from them, because he finds no place where to enter into them: then he goes to those that are not full of faith, and because he has place of entrance, he goes into them, and does what he will with them, and they become his servants.

30 ¶ But I, [note: Angel.] the messenger of repentance, say unto you, fear not the devil, for I am sent unto you, that I may be with you, as many as shall repent with your whole heart, and that I may confirm you in the faith.

31 [note: Vid. Antioch. Hom. lxxvii.] Believe therefore, ye who by reason of your transgressions have forgot God, and your own salvation; and adding to your sins have made your life very heavy.

32 That if **ye shall turn to the Lord with your whole hearts, and shall serve him according to his will**; he will heal you of your former sins, and ye shall have dominion over all the works of the devil.

33 Be not then afraid in the least of his threatenings, for they are without force, as the nerves of a dead man. But hearken unto me, and **fear the Lord Almighty**, who is able to save and to destroy you; and **keep his commands, that ye may live unto God.**

34 And I said unto him; Sir, I am now confirmed in all the commands of the Lord whilst that you are with me, and I know that you will break all the power of the devil.

35 And we also shall overcome him, if we shall be able, through the help of the Lord, to keep these commands which you have delivered.

36 Thou shalt keep them, said he, if thou shalt purify thy heart towards the Lord. And all they also shall keep them **who shall cleanse their hearts from the vain desires** of the present world, and shall live unto God.