

commands might avoid swallowing camels, but they're choking on gnats!

Christ said, *"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 neighbor as yourself"* (Matthew 22:37-39). Twisting this scripture to their own destruction (2nd Peter 3:16), many assume that so long as a feeling of love is maintained, the greatest commandments have been met with no further need to obey. However, Jesus emphasized the importance of these edicts when He continued, *"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets"* (Matthew 22:40), which is to say that no command was issued, either through the Law or the Prophets, which did not meet the criteria of either love of God or man. Love does not eliminate the need to obey the rest of God's law; on the contrary, love should motivate an individual to fulfill every one of God's commands, for each of them may be classified as one type of love or the other. A failure to obey God's commands only demonstrates a lack of love.

The ordinances of God are not optional, *"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all"* (James 2:10).

"The Assembling Of Ourselves Together"

Hebrews 10:24-25

Sunday

10:15 am.....Worship
Las Vegas Library
833 Las Vegas Boulevard North

Monday

7:00 pm.....Acts Study
On hiatus.

Tuesday

7:00 pm.....Ladies' Study
Rachel Dockens residence

Wednesday

7:00 pm.....Various Studies
Jerry & Beverly Dockens residence

"Give Attention To Reading"

1st Timothy 4:13

Your reading assignments for this week are as follows:

Sunday.....Deuteronomy 31-32

Monday.....Deuteronomy 33-34

Tuesday.....Joshua 1-2

Wednesday.....Joshua 3-5

Thursday.....Joshua 6-8

Friday.....Joshua 9-11

Saturday.....Joshua 12-14

"Sound Doctrine"

Titus 2:1

"WITHOUT LEAVING THE OTHERS UNDONE"

Bryan Matthew Dockens

In an effort to escape the unmistakable precepts of God, the idea is voiced that not every command in scripture is essential to salvation. To validate this concept, some appeal to Jesus' words, *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith"* (Matthew 23:23). Supposedly, adherence to justice, mercy, and faith, being *"the weightier matters"*, precluded any need for those under the law to actually have paid the tithes of grain required by God (Deuteronomy 14:22).

However, in arguing this, one overlooks a critical statement of the Lord. He said, *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone"* (Matthew 23:23). Christ criticized those who would execute precision in weighing out a tenth of the tiniest herbs in the garden, in order to give exactly what was necessary to God, but neglect to practice justice, mercy, and faith. By identifying these qualities as *"the weightier matters"*, Jesus did not excuse us from our obligations to the lesser things; He simply brought to our attention that they are meaningless without these qualities. The Lord concluded these remarks with the accusation: *"Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!"* (Matthew 23:24). Those who would argue that the scriptures contain extraneous

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“IN TOIL”

Bryan Matthew Dockens

Work is the common lot of all men. When Adam and Eve were expelled from the garden of Eden, the Lord God told the man, *“Curse is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field. In the sweat of your face you shall eat bread till you return to the ground, for out of it you were taken; for dust you are, and to dust you shall return... therefore the Lord God sent him out of the garden of Eden to till the ground from which he was taken”* (Genesis 3:17-19, 23). Although the burden increased due to sin, it had always been God’s will for man to work, having initially placed Adam in the garden *“to tend and keep it”* (Genesis 2:15).

Those who refuse to work are unworthy of assistance. Whether the welfare junkie, the off-ramp beggar, the trust fund dependent, or the laid-off professional who prefers the ease of an unemployment check over the humility of flipping burgers, God’s command is the same: *“If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat”* (2nd Thessalonians 3:10).

Here’s what the word of God teaches about working.

Do not be jealous of co-workers’ wages. Jesus used the parable of day laborers to illustrate impartiality in the kingdom of God (Matthew 20:1-16). Although a greater spiritual truth is under consideration, the analogy is pointless unless the literal is also true. In the story, a landowner pays the same wage to day laborers who toiled in his vineyard for one, three, six, nine, and twelve hours. Those who worked longest resented those who worked least, yet what they received was a fair wage they had previously agreed to. There was nothing unjust about the generosity of the landowner toward the eleventh hour laborers.

Follow orders, and do so sincerely. Paul wrote, *“Bondservants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart”* (Ephesians 6:5-6). These instructions do not apply exclusively to those under bondage; they are relevant *“whether... slave*

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or free” (Ephesians 6:8). Workers who don’t do as they’re told will not only lose their jobs, but also dishonor the name of Christ in the process. And it isn’t enough to simply obey since obedience can be offered grudgingly. Obedience must be rendered *“in sincerity of heart”* (Ephesians 6:5).

Refrain from back talk. Paul wrote that the behavior of servants should include *“not answering back”* (Titus 2:9). An undisciplined generation has not been taught to respect those in authority and therefore thinks nothing of telling off a superior in the workplace. This is contrary to the command *“to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things”* (Titus 2:9). Such submission is demanded even toward those who are harsh (1st Peter 2:18-21).

Refrain from theft. The apostle wrote further that servants’ behavior must include *“not pilfering”* (Titus 2:10). Work is intended as the righteous alternative to stealing (Ephesians 4:28); every worker is placed in a position of trust and therefore must *“show all good fidelity”* (Titus 2:10). Such trust is violated when employees embezzle company funds, pilfer merchandise, or help themselves to office supplies and the like.

Maintain appropriate priorities. Jesus taught, *“Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life”* (John 6:27). Working for the needs of this life should never take precedence over the pursuit for eternal life. The godly will forfeit a promotion or forego overtime if such a schedule conflicts with the assembling of the saints. The godly will likewise abstain from working in industries that promote immoral behavior like gambling, drinking, or fornication.

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Romans 16:16

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