

An Unloving Family is a Bigger Problem than You Realize

I. How Can God Command Us to Love?

- I Corinthians 16:13-14
- God can command us to love because of the nature of love.
 - But I will say this. God created love. He created humans to love. God knows how it's supposed to work.
 - If you're feeling like it's weird or impossible to command someone to love someone else, please understand that it probably means you don't really know what love is.
 - And that's okay. That's why we're here. At one point or another in all of our lives, we've been confused about love. It's possible even mom and dad, right now, don't have a biblical understanding of love.
 - So, for now, please accept that God can command us to love each other simply because He knows that's how it's supposed to work.
- God can command us to love because He is love.
 - I John 4:8 says, "*Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.*"
- God can command us to love because He's powerful.
 - Job 42:2 says, "*I know that you can do all things, and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.*"
 - And that's why Paul can say in Philippians 4:13: "*I can do all things through him who strengthens me.*"
 - Romans 5:3-5: "*We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.*"
- God can command us to love because we're forgiven . . . or at least, we should be.
 - Luke 7:41-50
 - Luke 16:13 says, "*No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and money.*" This is an example of the fact that we will naturally love whatever we value. If we value God for His awesomeness, we will find it easy to love.
 - John 8:42, "*Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love me, for I came from God and I am here.'*" God can command us to love because He knows that being born again will make it possible for us to love.
 - Romans 8:7-8 says, "*For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.*" No one who lives according to the flesh — that is as an unbeliever — can do anything that pleases God, including genuinely loving people.
 - I John 4:7 says, "*Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love.*" Not being able to truly love people is an evidence of not being born again.

II. Who Does God Command Us to Love?

- God commands us to love Him.

- Matthew 22:37-38 tells us, "And [Jesus] said to him, *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment."*
- The following verses also command us to love God or assumes that we should:
 - Psalm 31:23
 - Psalm 91:14-15
 - Proverbs 8:17
- How do we know if we're loving God the way we should?
 - Our love for God is shown by our implicit trust in the Lord. I Thessalonians 5:8 gives us a glimpse into the relationship between faith and love.
 - Our love for God is shown by our devotion to the person of Christ. Please read Matthew 10:37 and John 14:21.
 - Our love for God is shown by our hatred of evil. Psalm 97:10, Psalm 119:104, and I Corinthians 13:6 all teach us this truth.
 - Our love for God is shown by our gratitude for God's blessings. You can Psalm 116:1, Psalm 116:17, and I John 4:19 for instruction.
 - Our love for God is shown by our love for God's Word. I love that the longest chapter in the entire Bible is all about the Bible. It would do you well to read the entire chapter, but Psalm 119:47-48 illustrate this truth well.
 - Our love for God is shown by the amount of time spent in prayer and fellowship with the Lord. Colossians 3:1-3 and I Thessalonians 5:17 teach us about this, and so does the example of our Lord. All throughout the Gospels we see how Jesus took deliberate time to commune with His Father.
 - Our love for God is shown by our desire to vindicate the Lord before the world. Please read Psalm 5:11 and Psalm 115:1.
 - Our love for God is shown by our obedience to God's Word. I John 5:3 and II John 6 are both powerful testaments to this.
 - Our love for God is shown by our desire to become like the Lord. I John 3:2-3 says, "Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared; but we know that when he appears we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is. 3 And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure."
 - Our love for God is shown by our love and respect for other Christians. For further reading, please check out Ephesians 4:32 and I John 4:20.
 - Our love for God is shown by our effort to reach the lost with the Gospel. II Corinthians 5:11-16 is a powerful passage that starts, *"Therefore, knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade others."*
 - And lastly, our love for God is shown by our longing for Christ's return. II Timothy 4:8 sums up the heart of the believer when it refers to us as those who *"love his appearing."*

- God commands us to love our neighbors.

- Matthew 22:39-40 says, ". . . And [the second commandment] is like [the first]: *You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.*"
- But who is our neighbor? Read Luke 10:25-37.

- I John 4:20: *"If anyone says, 'I love God,' and hates his brother, he is a liar; for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen cannot love God whom he has not seen."*
- John 13:34-35 gives us the positive side of this command: *"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*
- Romans 12:9-10 also tells us to *"Let love be genuine. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good. Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor."*
- Romans 13:8-10 says, *"Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,' and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law."*
- **God commands us to love our enemies.**
 - Matthew 5:43-48, Jesus says, *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be sons of your Father who is in heaven. For he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? You therefore must be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."*
 - Luke 6:27-36, Jesus also says, *"But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them. 'If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful."*
 - Do you know who God's worst enemy is? All mankind, you, your other family members, and me. Unsaved humanity is God's greatest enemy, and yet He had a plan from day one to sacrifice Himself for us.
 - I John 4:19 tells us, *"We love because he first loved us."*
 - I John 4:10 tells us, *"In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins."*
 - Ephesians 2:4-5 says, *"But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved."*
 - Even though Romans 8 tells us that unbelievers are enemies of God — they're hostile to God — God still loves them and died to provide a way for them to have a relationship with Him.

How on earth could we ever try to justify not loving someone?!