

The Commands of Yeshua ~ Part 4

"If you keep My commands, you will stay in My love - just as I have kept My Father's commands and stay in His love. I have said this to you so that My joy may be in you, and your joy be complete." (Yochanan 15:10-11)

In my last post we began digging into the actual commands of Yeshua. We looked at the first part by how we are to approach God through repentance and coming to Him as a child. In this post, we will look at loving God and our neighbor in addition to receiving the Ruach HaKodesh.

Approaching God ~ B

"He told him, 'You are to love Adonai your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.' This is the greatest and most important mitzvah. (Deuteronomy 6:5) And a second is similar to it, 'You are to love your neighbor as yourself.' All of the Torah and the Prophets are dependent on these two mitzvot." (Leviticus 19:18) (Matthew 22:37-40)

Love God and Your Neighbor

These two commands are foundational upon which all others are based. If you do not know how to love God first, any other command will be burdensome and seem oppressive. In all truth, these two commands are probably the most difficult commands to obey because so many other things vie for our attention and our loyalty.

Yeshua was not the first to give these two commands; His Father was (as noted above). Of course, we should understand the Father, the Son, and the Ruach of God were always together from before the beginning so whatever One did, they all did together. Notice the command was not to fear, sacrifice, worship, serve, work hard for, praise, or give; it was to love. It is instructive to us to realize that the "greatest" of all commands found in both the Tanakh and Brit Hadashah directs us to love.

Yeshua knows that for us to strive to love God first - before anything or anyone else - will keep our priorities in the right place. Once we put first things first in our life, the other things follow in the right order. Only a God of love would require love in return.

Our God wants us to reflect on what is in His heart: He is love. Once love is shared, then it is a joy to obey, sacrifice, worship, and praise our God because He first loved us. ***"We ourselves love now because He loved us first."*** (1 John 4:19)

The Bible tells us that ***"love covers many sins"*** (1 Kefa 4:8) and certainly this is true when God looks at us. So naturally, when we look at others (the second greatest commandment), we too should offer forgiveness to those who sin against us. As we love others in the same sacrificial way in which God has loved us, we please Him. We also demonstrate to others that God is in control of our lives. Only a person who has known the love of God can truly share it with others.

If you are having trouble loving others, then you probably need to look at your heart toward God. A heart that is resentful, angry, proud, or self-centered has allowed sin to compromise your relationship with God. When our heart is right before God, then we will have healthy relationships with others and demonstrate selfless love to those who enter our lives.

Have you fallen in love with God? Has He captured your heart? Have you been overwhelmed by His great love for you, His sacrifice, that you might live? God desires relationship. He desires our love more than blind obedience. He always has. Don't just go through the motions in your Messianic life; live as one who is in love. If you find your love for God has grown cold, ask Him now to fan the flame once again in your heart.

"Having said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Ruach HaKodesh!" (John 20:22)

"At one of these gatherings, he instructed them not to leave Yerushalayim but to 'wait for what the Father promised, which you heard about from me. For Yochanan used to immerse people in water; but in a few days, you will be immersed in the Ruach HaKodesh!'" (Acts 1:4-5)

Receive the Ruach

Prior to this the Ruach only came upon select individuals empowered and set apart by God for a special purpose. Those anointed and filled with the Ruach received great revelation from God, were led by God, accomplished incredible things, and experienced an intimacy with God that others could not. But now every one of us who accepts Yeshua also accepts the Ruach, and we too are set apart, empowered, led, and can be used of God in amazing ways.

Although this command was certainly meant to be instructive for His closest talmidim, the application is universal for all Believers. The Ruach is to us today as Yeshua was to the talmidim. Yeshua sent them out in His power to accomplish His will. He taught them truths about the kingdom of God and served as their Model and Guide, navigating their way through difficult situations. This is the role of the Ruach for us today. He also reveals truth to us: ***"When the Spirit of Truth comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on his own initiative but will say only what He hears. He will also announce to you the events of the future."*** (John 16:13)

The Ruach serves much like a personal advisor, counselor, protector, enabler, guide, and moral compass to all who commit their life to Yeshua. Those who are not Believers cannot understand the concept or the person of the Ruach (see John 14:17).

Our relationship with the Ruach is greatly dependent on our willingness to allow Him control and influence over our hearts, minds, and actions. As we obey the will of God, as revealed to us by the Ruach, our relationship with the Ruach is deepened and enriched. As we disobey what we understand God's will to be for us or ignore the Ruach's promptings, we strain our relationship with the Ruach.

In Ephesians 4:25-32, Sha'ul describes for us what it looks like when the Ruach is in charge of our lives.

"Therefore, stripping off falsehood let everyone speak truth with his neighbor, because we are intimately related to each other as parts of a body. Be angry, but don't sin - don't let the sun go down before you have dealt with the cause of your anger; otherwise you leave room for the Adversary. The thief must stop stealing; instead, he should make an honest living by his own efforts. This way he will be able to share with those in need. Let no harmful language come from your mouth, only good words that are helpful in meeting the need, words that will benefit those who hear them. Don't cause grief to God's Ruach HaKodesh, for he has stamped you as his property until the day of final redemption. Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, violent assertiveness and slander, along with all spitefulness. Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted; and forgive each other, just as in the Messiah God has also forgiven you."

When the Ruach is in control and expressed through our lives, we will display more and more of His fruit, the character of Yeshua (see Galatians 5:22-23). When Yeshua said, ***"Receive the Ruach HaKodesh,"*** He was saying, ***"Receive My life in you."*** The command to ***"receive the Ruach HaKodesh"*** is not something we *obey*; it is someone we *accept* from God when we surrender our lives to Him. When we are ***"born again"*** (see John 3:3, 7 and 1 Kefa 1:23), the Ruach of God takes up residence in our heart and begins the transformation process in our lives, helping us become like Yeshua in our attitudes, thoughts, and actions.

Are you aware of the presence of the Ruach in your life? Can you tell when He is leading you and guiding you, teaching you from God's Word, protecting you, and empowering you to accomplish things God has asked you to do? Take a moment to thank the Ruach for His work in your life and allow Him to continue to mold and shape your life, character, actions, and mind so that you are increasingly conformed to the image of Yeshua.

In my next post, we will continue to examine additional commands of Yeshua in approaching God.