

What Commandments Must We Keep to Enter Life?

Introduction

In Matthew 19:17, Jesus states, '...if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.' (LSB). When asked which ones, He listed several from the Ten Commandments and the command to love your neighbor. Does this imply only a partial obedience is required? Or does Jesus, elsewhere in Scripture, call us to keep all of God's commandments? Let us explore His words and their broader meaning.

1. Jesus Upheld the Full Law of God

Matthew 5:17–19 (LSB):

“Do not think that I came to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I did not come to abolish but to fulfill. For truly I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, not the smallest letter or stroke shall pass from the Law until all is accomplished. Whoever then annuls one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever keeps and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

Jesus affirms that the Law remains intact and binding. He calls us to both keep and teach all the commandments.

2. Jesus Summarized the Law With Two Great Commandments

Matthew 22:36–40 (LSB):

“Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” And He 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 foremost commandment. The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang the whole Law and the Prophets.”

Jesus did not cancel the commandments but showed that all are fulfilled in love for God and neighbor.

3. Jesus Commands Obedience to All His Teachings

John 14:15 (LSB): “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments.”

John 15:10 (LSB): “If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I

have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.”

Jesus' commandments are not separate from the Father's—they are in perfect unity. Keeping His words demonstrates our love for Him.

4. Faith in Jesus Is Also a Commandment

1 John 3:23 (LSB): “And this is His commandment, that we believe in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, just as He gave a commandment to us.”

To enter life, one must not only obey moral commands but also respond to the gospel by believing in Jesus.

Conclusion

The commandments Jesus calls us to keep include:

- The Ten Commandments (all ten)
- The summary of the Law: love God and love neighbor
- His full teachings (e.g., Sermon on the Mount)
- The gospel command to believe and follow Christ

Keeping the commandments is not about earning salvation, but evidence of genuine faith. Obedience flows from a transformed heart.

To God Be the Glory

Ephesians 2:10 (LSB): “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.”