

How Can We Love the Lord and Walk in His Path?

We all might have needs and petitions before God and want our problems to be solved. God has promised that He will help us when we go to Him with faith and the right attitude. But what is one of the requirements when talking about that attitude? It is to walk in His path and to practice His word. How can we do that and please Him? We know that, especially when we go for the first time sincerely in repentance, we don't have much to offer, and we only need to repent. Still, walking in His path is something He requires from us once we know clearly the truth.

We will reflect on a passage found in [John 14:22-24](#)

²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, "Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?"

²³ Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴ He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

Here, Jesus declares that those who love Him keep His word. We all know that one of the conditions of following God and walking into Christianity is to keep His word. For many who hear it the first time, it might seem like something forced, as something heavy at times. There are people who even understand the purpose of doing that and know that Christianity's precepts are good for leading a good and

sound life, but still, they find some of its teachings heavy to bear. This is not as the Bible represents it though. Jesus said that His yoke is easy, and His burden is light to bear, and that we will find rest in Him ([Matthew 11:28](#)). The Bible even rebukes those who always find God's word as a burden ([Jeremiah 23:33-38](#)). It is natural for us at our first impact with God's word to find it heavy, and also while we go through a trial, but the point is to find rest in Him. This is His desire for us.

Here in [John 14:23](#), Jesus relates loving Him with keeping His commandments. He said that these things need to go together. He even put it in a way that Christians cannot observe His commandments if they don't love Him. To love somebody or something means that you desire that thing all-heartedly, and you do it willingly. This means that believers will desire to follow God and to observe His words. It will not be a heavy burden for them. Obviously, there will be hard moments, as also the Bible says, but they will desire and love doing that. They are not compelled to do it. In the beginning, someone might feel compelled and also some moments in His life, but when that person starts knowing and experiencing the love of God, He will know clearly the reason for observing those commandments. It won't be any more just because they are good and might help him but because he loves the person who established them and wants to please Him. This is what our love toward Him is based on – on His love. His love is greater than all and is like the engine of Christianity and the reason to walk in it. There will be some moments in the life of the believers when they are entangled in the doings of everyday life, and that love might be quenched, but then they will need to find restoration and renew their minds. So, we understand that Christians are not forced to follow God. They do it because they desire it. They have understood the love of the One who gave His life for them. This is the accomplishment of the prophecy in Jeremiah, saying that He will put His law in our minds and write it in our hearts ([Jeremiah 31:33](#)). This is how He wants people who follow Him and believe in Him to be. They are not following Him because they just know it is right. They do it because they have it in their hearts.

There might be times when this love might be quenched, as we said. God, in many places in His word, has compared His relationship with us as a church and also on a personal level as the relationship of a bridegroom with His bride. That's why He gives an example of a wedding when we get to heaven ([Revelation 19:9](#)). He talks of the wedding of the Lamb with His bride, the church. In a way, we fall in love

with God at the moment we are approached by His love and when we believe and comprehend His sacrifice. Still, even after comprehending this perfect love he has for us, we might still get to a moment when we will fall short in our love toward Him.

There is a passage in [Revelation 2:1-5](#) that talks on the topic:

¹ “To the angel of the church of Ephesus write,

‘These things says He who holds the seven stars in His right hand, who walks in the midst of the seven golden lampstands: ² “I know your works, your labor, your patience, and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are apostles and are not, and have found them liars; ³ and you have persevered and have patience, and have labored for My name’s sake and have not become weary. ⁴ Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. ⁵ Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place— unless you repent.”

We see this passage talking about a church and its attitude. Still, we can apply it to ourselves and see what our attitude toward God is. We see that this church was rebuked for the lack of its first love. The first love is an experience the believer has when he accepts God's love in His heart. He all of a sudden begins to comprehend what Christ had done for him on the cross and feels extremely grateful about it. This is something the believer will have to experience and learn about all of his life, but at the beginning, this is new to him, and he feels excited about it. On his side, he feels gratitude and begins loving God. This is his first love. I remember that at the moment of my first love, I was ready to do things for God that today could be unthinkable for me sometimes. Obviously, with time, a person also acquires wisdom, but in the beginning, he just wants to do things for God because of his gratefulness. One thing is for sure: despite the lack of experience and wisdom, things that, with time and the right growth, come, the believer loves God. This is what Christ meant when talking to the church of Ephesus. They needed to get back to their first love. Not in terms of not having experienced or

doing things with little knowledge as a newly converted believer might do, but in terms that they had to love Him. This is one of the foundations of our relationship with God – love. He wants to have a live relationship with us. This is the way we can be passionate about Him and not just automatically do things for Him. To be that way, we need to experience His love, which will help us to love Him. He requires us to love Him not only at the beginning, when someone is just saved, but also after that, throughout our entire life as believers. What could happen in someone’s life is that he can stop loving God the way he used to. That love could be quenched. In that case, God tells us to repent.

“Nevertheless I have *this* against you, that you have left your first love. Remember therefore from where you have fallen; **repent** and do the first works, or else I will come to you quickly and remove your lampstand from its place—unless you repent.” (Revelation 2:4, 5, emphasis added)

We see here that a believer also needs to repent, not only from specific sins but because he doesn’t love God as He deserves. Each person needs to repent in order to live in that gratitude and first love the Bible talks about. This is for people who never knew God’s grace before then and also for believers, as we already said. After exhorting the church to repent, He tells her to do the first works. What are these first works if we see that church being zealous for God, laboring, having patience, and not bearing those who are evil? He even said to her: “I know your works...” (Revelation 2:2)

Here, we can see the difference between the works accomplished by our own strength and way, which, even having a zeal for God, cannot please Him, and the works that please Him. Why those ones cannot do that? Because even those works look apparently religious, they are done by our own strength and way. Ephesians 2:8-10 talks of something similar. It says that we are not saved by works, but we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which are prepared beforehand by God. That’s why, even having all that zeal and having done so many things, it was said to the church that she had to do the “first works” (Revelation 2:5). These are the works that she was probably doing when she was just saved, and they were produced by faith and gratitude because of the salvation she had experienced. These are the works someone does in his first love. Remember that when talking about the attitudes the church was having, we also talk of ourselves individually as we can also have the same attitudes. A person

always needs to look for the first love, which will take him to do the “first works.” God wants us to have a relationship with Him in which we experience His love and also love Him. So, here we see the difference between the works that are even being done by zeal and some kind of desire to please God, but not actually pleasing Him, and the works that are done the way He likes. Here, we can also apply what Paul said in [1 Corinthians 13:3](#).

“And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profits me nothing.”

The key to having this kind of relationship founded on love is to repent. So, if we see that we are spiritually stagnant in our lives and we don’t love much God, we need to repent. Even though we might perform religious practices, we need to examine ourselves.

As we already mentioned, God has likened our relationship with Him to the love shared between a man and a woman, between a bride and a bridegroom. That’s why He gives plenty of examples in His word about a wedding that will take place in heaven. This is the wedding between His church and Him. We are also part of His church if we believe and we are redeemed, and this example is given also personally to us. One of the books that are more focused on this aspect is the book of Song of Solomon. If we examine this book of the Bible, we will see that it looks like a love letter between a man and his beloved. It doesn’t talk directly or mention God, but it expresses allegorically His love toward us. It also talks about the love the bride has toward her beloved because, as we said, our love toward God is also important. This is what God looks for, and this is the condition He wants to take us to – to desire Him and love Him having that perfect relationship with Him. A relationship where we don’t serve Him by force or because we are compelled.

“I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles or by the does of the field,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases.” ([Song of Solomon 3:5](#))

This is a passage from the book of Song of Solomon that talks about love, and we see that when talking about love, we are not talking about something compulsory. God has made things in such a way as not to force people to believe in Him. As He

is God and is all-powerful, He surely could have forced people to follow Him, but He wanted humankind to follow Him out of their own will and because they really wanted to do it. It is not even because of the fear of judgment or hell, even if these are things that are part of his teaching and will occur. It is because they will comprehend His love, will comprehend the way He suffered for them, and will fall in love with Him because of that. His love is the greatest, and it comes first. The Bible says that He first loved us (1 John 4:19), and Christ gave His life for us when we were still sinners (Romans 5:8). This is done purely for love, and this is the way God demonstrates it. Love does not seek its own. God did it when we weren't able to give Him anything to exchange that love.

“We love Him because He first loved us.” (1 John 4:19)

This verse shows that if we can love God or do anything for Him, it is because of His love. This is how everything started.

Jesus died for us and willingly gave His life for us. There was nothing that was forcing Him to do it.

Talking about love, we can say that one of the pains of love is that you cannot force the other person to have the same feelings for you. You can do many things to attract their attention; you can show them love, but you cannot force them to love you. This happens in the natural relationships between man and woman, and it happens between God and people. I am sure He feels the pain when someone rejects Him, and He can even cry for that person, but He knows He cannot force him. Otherwise, it wouldn't be love. He will still work in a way to bring that person to such a condition, though. He will give him one and another chance until, eventually, there won't be any more chances to give because it will be too late, or that person won't be able to respond because of the hardness of his heart (Luke 13:6-9). The fact that God keeps on giving us chances and opportunities shows that He does that because He loves us. Someone who doesn't love wouldn't give so many opportunities. He loves us, and He desires for us to be with Him. Still, we need to come to a condition to accept willingly that love. He cannot just force us.

So, we understand that to describe in the most accurate way our relationship with Him, God uses the example of a relationship between a bride and her bridegroom. It is because our relationship with Him, as well as the relationship between a bride and a bridegroom, must be founded on love. This is also what Christ came to

accomplish on the earth. He came to die and to give His life for us so that we can get closer to Him and have a proper relationship with Him. It is not anymore the law and the commandments of the Old Testament, which were, of course, good but not enough to create perfect communion with God. What Christ did was to add love to that, which is the most important. That's why the Bible also talks about it in such a way, exalting it and giving it importance ([1 Corinthians 13](#), [Colossians 3:14](#), [1 John 4:7-8](#), [1 Peter 4:8](#)). That's why when the Bible talks of a marriage, it talks of the marriage of the Lamb ([Revelation 19:7-9](#)). The Lamb is Christ, and because of His sacrifice, we can enter into this covenant with God; we can be eternally accepted and united with Him. The marriage represents this covenant, and it will be established in a definitive way in heaven.

When giving an example of a relationship, the Bible shows two examples. One is the one that we already mentioned, and it is found in the book of Song of Solomon. It represents almost a perfect relationship with God. There are difficulties, but it is the better version of how God sees our relationship with Him. The other one is found in the book of Hosea, and it doesn't represent a good and sound relationship. This relationship is rather for us to see what we need to avoid in our life with God.

We can first see again how the Song of Solomon represents it by looking at some passages.

¹ By night on my bed I sought the one I love;
I sought him, but I did not find him.

² "I will rise now," *I said*,
"And go about the city;
In the streets and in the squares
I will seek the one I love."

I sought him, but I did not find him.

³ The watchmen who go about the city found me;
I said,

"Have you seen the one I love?"

⁴ Scarcely had I passed by them,
When I found the one I love.

I held him and would not let him go,
Until I had brought him to the house of my mother,
And into the chamber of her who conceived me.

⁵I charge you, O daughters of Jerusalem,
By the gazelles or by the does of the field,
Do not stir up nor awaken love
Until it pleases. (Song of Solomon 3:1-5)

Here we see how despite the difficulties, the bride kept on looking for her beloved. It is said that at first, she couldn't find him (Song of Solomon 3:2). This is a situation that believers could live in, and it represents a hard moment when, for some reason, they encounter hardships, trials and difficulties in finding their Lord even though they are seeking Him. All these situations are needed for the growth of the believer. They usually come after the period of the first love the believer experiences when he accepts Christ and starts knowing Him. This is a moment in which he needs to endure, and he learns new things. Despite these difficulties, believers carry on serving and seeking their Lord because they love Him. Love helps us to endure. This is a sound relationship we could have with the Lord. As a whole, the book of Song of Solomon represents a relationship with the Lord as it is supposed to be. It doesn't exclude difficulties or imperfections in the bride (us) while trying to live a life pleasing the bridegroom (Christ). This is how we also learn to please Him in a better way and love Him. We can see this, particularly in Chapter 5 v. 2-8, where it is said that she didn't answer him promptly when he came looking for her. Still, this imperfection is something we will learn from. All our lives, we will learn how to love the Lord more sincerely and to live a sanctified life for Him. Revelation 19:7-8 says that at the wedding that will take place in heaven, the bride will be dressed in fine linen, clean and bright. This represents the perfection that will be there. This life, though, is the place where the bride will go through difficulties and will be tested through trials. This is one of the ways in which we will be sanctified and purified. As believers, we all go through this process.

The other kind of relationship that the Bible represents, and it is not given as a positive example, is found in the book of the prophet Hosea.

Here we read about a prophet to whom God said to take as a wife an adulterous woman ([Hosea 1:20](#)). This wasn't done with the purpose of something to be literally followed, but it was done to show an example of the relationship God had with His nation Israel. They were an adulterous nation because they had committed adultery with their idols. This example could also be applied to how our relationship might be at times with the Lord. We could love other things above Him. These are our idols. Idols are not only wooden or stone-crafted images of foreign gods but also anything we exalt and worship in our hearts. This kind of relationship represented here in the book of Hosea is not a sound relationship. The Bible says that the Lord is a jealous God ([James 4:5](#)). What He desires is our love. The next part of the book represents His indignation/resentment toward what His nation was doing. We can focus on some verses in chapter 2 saying:

*“¹⁴ Therefore, behold, I will allure her,
Will bring her into the wilderness,
And speak comfort to her.*

*¹⁵ I will give her her vineyards from there,
And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope;
She shall sing there,
As in the days of her youth,
As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.*

*¹⁶ “And it shall be, in that day,”
Says the Lord,*

*“That you will call Me ‘My Husband,’
And no longer call Me ‘My Master,’*

*¹⁷ For I will take from her mouth the names of the Baals,
And they shall be remembered by their name no more.” ([Hosea2:14-17](#))*

It is said that He will allure her in the wilderness and speak comfort to her. There are moments when we get astray from the Lord, and He works in our lives and deals with them. By going astray, I mean also that we don't love Him as we should. That's why He takes us to the wilderness. This is a place where there are not many things, and we go through a trial, and we are taken there to hear His voice. When that happens, we are renewed, and our strength is refreshed. V.15 says:

“I will give her her vineyards from there,
And the Valley of Achor as a door of hope;
**She shall sing there,
As in the days of her youth,
As in the day when she came up from the land of Egypt.”** (Hosea 2:15, emphasis added)

What will happen after that moment is that she will sing there as in the days of her youth and as in the day when she came out of Egypt. This represents the first love the Book of **Revelation 2:4** is talking about. When we came out of Egypt, out of the slavery and the dominion of sin, we were happy, and our hearts were full of joy. This is how the Lord wants us to love Him. This could happen when we are really grateful and follow the Lord because we love Him and because we are grateful. This is the way He wants to work in our lives. He wants to take us to the condition of having a relationship with Him in which we love Him. That’s why He takes us to the wilderness at times. This is to help us hear His voice and have that relationship. Even though He doesn’t want to force us, He will try all the ways possible to bring us to the condition in which we will willingly accept His love and will begin loving Him. God cannot compel us because love is not compulsory, but Paul said in **2 Corinthians 5:14** that the love of God compels us. That’s why it is specifically said that it is His love doing that. Because of that, believers willingly serve Him. When you love someone, you desire to do things for him. The same is true when you love God.

In **Hosea 2:16**, it is said that she will call Him “my husband” and no longer “my master.” It talks of marriage. The following verses also talk of that. Marriage represents a perfect relationship based on a covenant. That covenant cannot be broken. That’s why God is against divorce (**Matthew 19:6**). Still, God expresses Himself in such a way to represent also what will happen in heaven. There will be that perfect marriage between the church and Christ, between us and Christ, which cannot be broken anymore. There, all the imperfections will be swept away. There won’t be any pain, fear, doubt, or other difficulty to inflict on the believers. Here on earth, our relationship with the Lord could suffer at times. Still, we need to aim to have the relationship we find in the book of Song of Solomon, which, even having doubts and difficulties (**Song of Solomon 3:1-2**), perseveres thanks to

God's love. The other one in the book of Hosea is the one talking of a not sound relationship as the bride's heart was divided and was worshiping idols.

We wouldn't be able to love God if it wasn't for His love. Everything began on the cross, and it happened at the moment we were all far from Him. We need to ask God to help us see and acknowledge His love and what He did for us.

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