

John 14:15

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

If ye love me, keep my commandments.

Analysis

Jesus states 'If ye love me, keep my commandments' (ean agapate me, tas entolas tas emas teresate). The conditional structure might suggest: love proves itself through obedience. The verb agapao indicates self-giving commitment, not mere emotional affection. The command tereo (keep, guard, observe) suggests careful, consistent obedience rather than casual compliance. Jesus establishes that genuine love for Him manifests in obedience to His teaching. This is not legalism but relational response - love desires to please the beloved. The verse prevents divorcing love from ethics, feeling from action, faith from works. Jesus presents obedience not as means to earn love but as evidence of love already present. The structure echoes covenant formulas in the Old Testament, where love of God is demonstrated through covenant faithfulness (Deuteronomy 7:9).

Historical Context

In Jewish thought, love of God was never merely emotional but covenantal - expressed through Torah obedience. Jesus recalibrates this: love for Him specifically motivates obedience to His teaching. Early church debates about law versus grace had to integrate this verse - salvation is by grace through faith, yet genuine faith produces obedience. The Johannine epistles elaborate: 'This is love, that we walk after his commandments' (2 John 6). Church Fathers countered antinomianism (lawlessness claiming grace) by citing this verse. Reformers distinguished justification (by faith alone) from sanctification (faith producing works). The verse challenges both legalism (obedience to earn favor) and license (grace without transformation). Modern evangelical theology emphasizes

obedience as fruit, not root, of salvation - we obey because we love, not to be loved.

Related Passages

John 3:16 — God's love and salvation

Romans 10:9 — Confession and belief for salvation

John 15:13 — Greatest form of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Study Questions

1. How does Jesus' linking of love and obedience prevent reducing Christianity to either emotionalism or legalism?
2. What is the relationship between loving Jesus and keeping His commandments - which causes which, or are they inseparable?

Interlinear Text

'Εὰν	ἀγαπᾶτέ	με	τὰς	ἐντολὰς	τὰς	ἐμὰς	τηρήσατε
If	ye love	me	G3588	commandments	G3588	my	keep
G1437	G25	G3165		G1785		G1699	G5083

Additional Cross-References

2 John 1:6 (Love): And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, That, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it.

1 Peter 1:8 (Love): Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

Galatians 5:6 (Love): For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love.

Matthew 10:37 (Love): He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

John 8:42 (Love): Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.

1 Corinthians 16:22 (Love): If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha.

Ephesians 6:24 (Love): Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity. Amen.

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