

50 Commands of Christ ~ Lesson 6 ~ (Commands #26-29)

26. Take my yoke—*Matthew 11:29.*

What did Jesus mean by this command? (*John 13:15, Philippians 2:5, 1 Peter 2:21, 1 John 2:6*)

Is this a new command? (*Isaiah 30:21*)

If we obey this command, what does Jesus say will happen to us? (*Psalm 116:7, Jeremiah 6:16 to end of chapter, Psalm 116:7*)

How do you get yoked with Jesus?

27. Honor your parents—*Matthew 15:4.*

Was this a new command of Jesus? (*Exodus 20:12, 21:17, Deut. 5:16, Lev. 20:9*)

To who did Jesus give this command? Does that mean it's not meant for us?

What if your parents don't deserve your honor or respect?

What do you think of the extreme penalty (death) for disobeying this command?

28. Beware of false teaching—*Matthew 16:6, 11-12.*

Jesus likens wrong ideas to yeast. What does that mean? Can one small wrong idea get you into trouble? How?

How can we judge whether the spiritual teaching we receive is healthy or dangerous?

29. Deny yourself—*Luke 9:23 (Also Matthew 10:38 and Mark 8:34).*

What does it mean to "take up your cross?" How about "to deny yourself?"

In what do you take the most pride? Why?

Have you ever made a sacrifice for the sake of someone else? When? How?

In what ways can you lose your life for Jesus?

50 Commands of Christ ~ Lesson 6 ~ (Commands #26-29) ~ Leader's Guide

26. Take my yoke

Matthew 11:29 - Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.

What did Jesus mean by this command? Basically, follow his example.

John 13:15 - I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

Philippians 2:5 - Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.

1 Peter 2:21 - To this you were called, because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps.

1 John 2:6 - Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

Is this a new command? Follow Jesus, new. Follow God, the "right" way, old.

Isaiah 30:21 - Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, "This is the way; walk in it."

If we obey this command, what does Jesus say will happen to us? If you don't?

Psalms 116:7 - Be at rest once more, O my soul, for the LORD has been good to you.

Jeremiah 6:16 - This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But you [Israelites] said, 'We will not walk in it.'"

Obey said Jesus and "you will learn from me" and "you will find rest for your soul" and will be at peace. However, this call to obey followed by the people saying "no" goes on to the end of the chapter (6:30) with the LORD replying that he will punish the people so they will stumble, that they will be put to shame, that they will be defeated by other nations and taken into exile, that friends and neighbors shall all perish, and that they shall all be rejected by the LORD.

How do you get yoked with Jesus?

The previous verse says, "come to me all who are weary and burdened). So in stressful situations, first pause (think to yourself, "maybe I don't have the answer," i.e., be humble) and then pray (with absolute certainty that God will answer).

27. Honor your parents

Matthew 15:4 - For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.'

Was this a new command of Jesus? No; this was one of the original 10 commandments.

Exodus 20:12 - Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Deut. 5:16 - Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

Exodus 21:17 - Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.

Leviticus 20:9 - If anyone curses his father or mother, he must be put to death. He has cursed his father or his mother, and his blood will be on his own head.

To who did Jesus give this command? Does that mean it's not meant for us?

At this time, he was speaking to Pharisees and Jewish teachers of the law who "came from Jerusalem" to scrutinize Jesus' activities. Over the centuries since the Jews return from exile in 538 BC, hundreds of religious traditions had been added to God's laws. The Pharisees considered them all equally important. Many were not bad in themselves and added richness and meaning to life. But just because traditions had been practiced for a long time doesn't give them a sacred standing and, if they were fundamentally wrong, it doesn't make them right. This is as true today as it was then. Think about the traditions added by the Catholic church from 300 on and by other denominations from the Reformation (1525) on.

The tradition that Jesus was criticizing here was one that allowed a man to make an offering to the church rather than support his parents. This is known as "Corben," and became a religiously acceptable way to neglect one's parents. One reason the Jews liked this is that offerings were often made in public ways to bring accolades to the giver. (Mark 12:41-44, Luke 21:1-4)

What if your parents don't deserve your honor or respect?

What do you think of the extreme penalty (death) for disobeying this command?

The Jewish Study Bible (JPS Tanakh Translation) says "the death penalty may be meant only rhetorically as a deterrent though it could be meant literally because

of the potentially serious consequences that cursing was thought to entail.” This is one of the 23 capital crimes in the Torah (8 religious practices, 8 sexual practices, and 7 miscellaneous crimes, of which this was one). As time went on, for more and more of these offenses, Jews suggested that the death penalty was actually rhetorical and only stated to point out the serious nature of the offense. Today, there are only a few crimes such as murder, kidnaping, and certain rapes which Jews believe are deserving of the death penalty. In fact, leading rabbis in Judaism today tend to hold that the death penalty is a correct and just punishment in theory, but that it should *not* generally be used (or *not* used at all) in practice.

28. Beware of false teaching

Matthew 16:6 - “Be careful,” Jesus said to them. “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

Matthew 16:11-12 - ¹¹ How is it you don’t understand that I was not talking to you about bread? But be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees. ¹² Then they understood that he was not telling them to guard against the yeast used in bread, but against the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Jesus likens wrong ideas to yeast. What does that mean? Can one small wrong idea get you into trouble? How?

Yeast is put into bread dough to make it rise and it takes only a little for a large batch of dough. Jesus used it as an example of how a small amount of incorrect ideas or teaching could affect a large group of people. The wrong teaching of the Pharisees and teachers of the law was deceptive and was leading many people astray.

These kind of false ideas are huge today. And not just started by “evil” people. Some people believe that during the transition phase between life and death, often at a hospice, God offers the dying person one last chance to repent and believe. Some people even go so far to say that God’s love *guarantees* life beyond death.

Another false idea is that Christian mediums (indeed, all Christians) can communicate with the dead and get advice from their dead loved ones. They support this with verses such as John 1:50, John 14:18-21, and Luke 16:22.

Not a false teaching, but an incorrect small fact that got blown into something huge: in May 2011, James Dobson of Focus on the Family claimed that atheists had petitioned the FCC to get religious broadcasting banned from American airwaves. It was completely false, yet hundreds of thousands of people signed letters and petitions to the FCC opposing it.

How about the “Lost Gospel” in the British Library recently translated (April 2016) by Professor Barrie Wilson and Simcha Jacobovici that reports that before the period of Jesus’ life described in the Bible, he became engaged, got married to

Mary Magdeline, had sexual relations, and fathered children?

How about the idea that eating dandelion root will kill all cancer cells in your body in 48 hours? I could go on, but all you have to do is look at the Snopes Archives for examples of the thousands of false ideas in circulation today.

How can we judge whether the spiritual teaching we receive is healthy or dangerous?

29. Deny yourself

Luke 9:23-25 - ²³ Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it. ²⁵ What good is it for a man to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit his very self?

What does it mean to “take up your cross?” How about “to deny yourself?”

The cross was an instrument of death and here symbolizes the necessity of total commitment—even unto death—on the part of Jesus’ disciples. Cross bearing includes a willingness to suffer and die for the LORD’s sake. Today that means being willing to publically identify with Jesus, to experience almost certain opposition (some obvious, some hidden), and be committed to face possible ridicule, suffering, and even death for his sake. To deny yourself means to cease to make yourself the sole object of your life and actions.

If this present life is all that matters to you, you’ll do anything you can to protect it. You won’t want to do anything that might endanger your safety, health, or comfort. But if following Jesus comes first, you may find yourself in unsafe, unhealthy, or uncomfortable places. Think about helping build a hovel for a family living in the Guatemala City Garbage Dump or helping erect a wall to keep out bandits in a village in Bangladesh. You might truly risk death in such places, but you will not fear it because you know that Jesus will raise you to eternal life. As a disciple of Jesus we are told to not use our life for our own pleasure but rather for honoring and glorifying God by serving others. We must deny our selfish desires to use all our time and money our own way. Anything less is superficial lip service.

In what do you take the most pride? Why?

Have you ever made a sacrifice for the sake of someone else? When? How?

In what ways can you lose your life for Jesus?