

GETTING MY ATTENTION

What would it be like to be the only person in the world?

– Like being stranded on a tropical island in an ocean?

With no one around,... Why, you would be the “Law” unto yourself, wouldn’t you?

You could chuck the “Second Table of the Law” couldn’t you?

You know, the Fourth through Tenth Commandments! Just pitch ‘em!

- “Honor your mother and father”: No parents! Pitch it!
- “You shall not murder”: No one to kill! Pitch it!
- “You shall not commit adultery”: No one for a relationship! Pitch it!
- “You shall not steal”: No one to steal from! Pitch it!
- “You shall not bear false testimony”: No one to lie to or lie about! Pitch it!
- “You shall not covet your neighbor’s...”: No neighbor! Pitch it!

WOW! You’d be a pretty good person if it wasn’t for other people!

Only Three Commandments to follow!

- No other gods but the Lord!
- Use God’s Name properly!
- Worship God regularly!

Do you think you could handle those?

FOCUSING MY ATTENTION

If you lived alone,

there would be one “Law” for you to follow!

What would that “Law” be? → Take care of yourself!

“Well, that’s a given!” you say.

“Yes! But it’s still a ‘Law’!

It’s a ‘Law’ you tell yourself!”

**But, all it takes is for one other person
to enter “your” world,
and everything changes!**

Now what do you do?

How do you interact with someone else?

How does the other person interact with you?

You each could make up

a list or rules for the other person,
and exchange the lists.

Or, you could each agree to one rule!

“Love your neighbor as yourself!”



When you think about it, in the beginning God created one man...

God then prepared a unique place for that man, the Garden of Eden.

God told the one man to take care of the Garden,

and from the trees and plants in the Garden he would eat.

God then took a rib from the man, created a woman and brought her to the man.

When God brought the woman to the man, the man said:

“²³This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;

she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.” – Genesis 2:23

**Hearing Adam’s words, do you think he “instinctively” cared for Eve,
recognizing her as “bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh”?**

What do you think?

*Parents, when your first child was born, and every child thereafter,
did you “instinctively” desire to care for that child as much as your care for yourself?
No one had to command you, “Love your child as you love yourself!”*

*Sometimes as a pastor, when I am teaching about creation,
someone will ask, “Why didn’t God create the world full of people?”*

Why did God create only one man and one woman?”

Keeping in mind what we have just considered, what might God have had in mind?

What might God want all people to have in their minds?

“Instinctively” every creature, every animal, bird, fish, looks out for itself!

“Instinctively” every person looks out for him/herself!

“Instinctively” parents care for their children as they care for themselves!

**Now, as one large extended family in the world,
what should all people “instinctively” do in their interactions with others?**

So, why don’ we?

Why don’t all people “instinctively” look out for and care about others
as much as each person cares for him/herself?

You know the answer! That’s why you are here!

But not everyone knows or accepts that answer, do they?

Living as one person, alone, is easy.

No rules about how to interact with others because there are NO OTHERS!

As soon as ‘another’ person enters your ‘world’, everything changes.

How do you interact with the other person?

How does the other person interact with you?

SIMPLE EQUATION!

Actually, every interaction is that SIMPLE!

How do “we” interact with one another?

God made a man. God made a choice to create man. God went from “Me” to “We”!

Man had no choice!

From the moment of his existence, the first man was in a “We” existence.

Man and God!

The best way for two separate persons to interact is to do so in “Love” and “Trust”.

Love says, “I care about you. I want the best for you.”

Trust says, “I know/believe you care about me.

I know/believe you want the best for me.”

A **Relationship** based upon **Love** and **Trust** exists
where two people each have that **reality** between them!

God and man had that **Reality** in the beginning.
When man turned away from God,
that **Reality** was no longer true of man's interaction with God.
Man was **Independent** of God.

Independent of God, man lives as if he is alone, without the rules of Interaction.

And that's where each of us finds him/herself as we enter this world.

"Take care of myself!"

The Good News is, God never turned away from man!
Man turned away from **Loving** and **Trusting** God.
God never stopped **Loving** man.
God never stopped being **Trustworthy** in His **Love** for man.

ONE RENEWED FAMILY IN CHRIST

So, as man lives in the world to **"Take care of myself"**,
God still **Cares** about each person, and God still **Wants What is Best** for each person.
That's why God sent His divine Son into the world, into the flesh,
so that through Him, through Christ, we can return to God,
to **loving** God, to **trusting** God, Who loves us, Who is trustworthy, as ever!

On the night Jesus was betrayed and arrested, He told His disciples:
¹²*This is My commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you.*
¹³*There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends.*
¹⁴*You are my friends if you do what I command. – John 15:12-13*

God loves each us as His Own children! Jesus lays down His life for us!
I find it interesting that Jesus uses the word, "Friend" with His disciples.
"There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends."
Why did Jesus use that word? What is a "Friend"?
A **"Friend"** is someone with whom you are in a relationship of **Love and Trust**.
How many "Friends" do you have that you don't love or trust?

**I think Jesus used the word "Friend" with His disciples that night
to emphasize the fact that He loved them and they knew it.
And Jesus knew, even in their weakness, they loved Him.**

Now, as He was preparing to leave them, to die for them,
He wanted them to take special notice of the depth of His love for them.
His love for them was the **"greatest"** love He could show for them.
"There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends."
See the depth of the **Love** God has for every person, for you!
See the depth of the **Trustworthiness** of God! You can **Trust** His Love for you!

Notice what Jesus told His disciples:
"This is My Commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you!"
I think you'll agree, that's a tall order to fill!
Jesus told His disciples,
"Love each other with the deepest love, the most trustworthy love there is!"
That's DEEP!

Can you **Love** like that?
That **Love** doesn't come natural to a person corrupt in sin!
The only hope to **Love** with that type of **Love** is supernatural,
is through the Holy Spirit!

The apostle Paul wrote to Thessalonians who had received the Gospel of Christ, ...

⁹*Now concerning brotherly love you have no need for anyone to write to you,
for you yourselves have been taught by God to love one another,
¹⁰for that indeed is what you are doing to all the brothers throughout Macedonia.
But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more, ... – 1 Thessalonians 4:9-10*

Jesus taught us, Jesus showed us, how **"to love one another."**

"You yourselves have been taught by God to love another!"

Paul called this **Love**, **"Brotherly Love"**!

Why is that? Why did Paul use the word "Brotherly"?

**I think Paul used that word because he is emphasizing "relationship",
that is, he is emphasizing that each of two people**

have the same Love and the same Trustworthiness toward each other.

And in Christ, that is the DEEPEST Love and Trustworthiness there is!

But it is hard to do in an imperfect, self-centered world!

It takes time! It takes commitment! It takes effort!

It takes reaffirming it over and over again!

That's why Paul also wrote, *"But we urge you, brothers, to do this more and more..."*

Keep at it! Grow into it! Never give up! When you fall, Get Up! Start anew!

APPLICATION FOR MY LIFE IN CHRIST

That's what being a follower of Christ is all about!

If you want to live with NO RULES for interacting with others, you can do that!

It's called living ALONE! Living for YOURSELF!

And "Yes" you can be an ISLAND in an OCEAN of people!

You can live for Yourself, ignoring God, ignoring/neglecting others.

You can do that now, in this life, and you can do it for eternity.

But God created you, He chose to create you, to **Love** you!

God offers you a **Love** that never changes, a **Love** that is the **DEEPEST Love**,
as He has shown you in Christ. You can **Trust** His **Love** for you!

Jesus paid the DEBT for all your selfish thoughts, words and actions,
thoughts, words, and actions that were against God and against others.

In Christ, through faith in what Christ has done for you, you are DEBT FREE!

Now, DEBT FREE, you can live in a RENEWED relationship of Love and Trust with God.

By the leading and power of the Holy Spirit,

**you can offer to God the DEEPEST Love and be Trustworthy yourself,
committing to Love and Serve God with all your heart, soul and strength, and
you can offer the same Love you have received from Christ,
the DEEPEST Love and MOST Trustworthy Love there is,
to your brothers and sisters in Christ!**

Once God sets foot on your ISLAND, in your soul, everything changes!

You can Love God as you love yourself!

You can Love your neighbor as you love yourself!

... As Christ has Loved you as Himself! AMEN