

COMMANDMENTS = LOVE

What does love have to do with commandments?



By Charlotte Larcabal
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When you think about commandments, you might think of stone tablets, rules, boundaries, demands, or requirements. You probably don't automatically think of love. What do commandments have to do with love?

Well, everything.

Because He Loves Us

Remember when you were little and your parents didn't let you play on a busy street? or when they made you eat more vegetables or go to bed earlier than you wanted to?

You probably didn't understand why there were so many rules. And you probably weren't always happy about them, either. But now that you're older, can you see why your parents gave you all those rules?

It was because they loved you and wanted what was best for you.

As the most perfect parent, Heavenly Father gives us rules or commandments for the same reason: He loves us and wants what's best for us. Even more than that, He wants us to become like Him and receive all that He has.

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained this with a parable:



AN EXPRESSION OF LOVE

"God's commandments are a manifestation of His love for us, and obedience to His commandments is an expression of our love for Him."

Carole M. Stephens, first counselor in the Relief Society general presidency, "If Ye Love Me, Keep My Commandments," *Ensign or Liahona*, Nov. 2015, 120.



“A wealthy father knew that if he were to bestow his wealth upon a child who had not yet developed the needed wisdom and stature, the inheritance would probably be wasted. The father said to his child:

“All that I have I desire to give you—not only my wealth, but also my position and standing among men. That which I *have* I can easily give you, but that which I *am* you must obtain for yourself. You will qualify for your inheritance by learning what I have learned and by living as I have lived. I will give you the laws and principles by which I have acquired my wisdom and stature. Follow my example, mastering as I have mastered, and you will become as I am, and all that I have will be yours.”¹

Like the father in Elder Oaks’s story, Heavenly Father wants us to have everything He has and become everything He is. His commandments are like stepping stones to help us learn and grow and become like Him.

“I give unto you a new commandment, . . . or, in other words, I give unto you directions how you may act before me, that it may turn to you for your salvation” (D&C 82:8–9).

Like a toddler who doesn’t understand why he’s not allowed to play in the middle of a busy, dangerous street, we may not always understand the reasoning behind certain commandments or standards. But when

we understand that God gives us commandments because He loves us and wants to guide us so that we will become like Him, it becomes easier to obey Him.

Because We Love Him

You could think of every commandment as a big “I love you!” sign from God. And when we choose to keep His commandments, it’s like we’re saying “I love you!” right back to Him.

President Dieter F. Uchtdorf, Second Counselor in the First Presidency, put it simply when he answered the question “Why bother with God’s commandments?”

“We obey the commandments of God—out of love for Him! . . .

“ . . . Our obedience to God’s commandments comes as a natural

outgrowth of our endless love and gratitude for the goodness of God.”²

Heavenly Father has given us everything we have—from the ability to move to the very air we breathe—and all He asks is that we keep His commandments (see Mosiah 2:21–22). It’s the best way we can show our love and gratitude to Him.

Jesus Christ said so Himself (see John 14:15).

Why does Heavenly Father give us commandments? Because He loves us.

Why do we keep His commandments? Because we love Him.

Commandments equal love.

It’s that simple. ■

NOTES

1. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Challenge to Become,” *Ensign*, Nov. 2000, 32; *Liahona*, Jan. 2001, 40.
2. Dieter F. Uchtdorf, “The Gift of Grace,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2015, 109.

JOIN THE CONVERSATION

THINGS TO PONDER FOR SUNDAY

- How do the commandments help me become more like Heavenly Father?
- How does knowing that God loves me help me keep the commandments?

THINGS YOU MIGHT DO

- As you study commandments, look for and note the promised blessings.
- When has keeping the commandments helped you feel closer to Heavenly Father? Share your feelings with your family, friends, or on social media.