

# FULFILLING THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT

Each Christian's Ultimate Goal

By Brooks A. Harris

It is one thing to say that you believe in God, but it is another to show it. We know that we are to praise God, to worship Him, to thank Him and pray to Him every day, but what is really most important to God?

In Matthew 22:36-40, when Jesus was asked, "Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

Matthew 25:31-46 states that those who help provide the needs of other people are blessed in God's eyes. Jesus said "I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me." So Jesus sees our "doing good deeds for others" as having done the good deeds for Him. Therefore we should willingly and joyfully do things for other people, treating them as we would want to be treated, treating them as if we were doing these things for Jesus Himself.

It is easy to think "I am a good Christian because I avoid the 'sins of commission' as adultery, murder, stealing, lying and coveting," but what about our "sins of omission"? These are the sins we perform by not doing what we should to help others.

In James 2:14-26 we see that our faith is demonstrated by our works, by our deeds in helping others. We are justified by our works and by works is our faith made perfect. By works a man is justified, and not by faith alone. True faith is demonstrated by our love. Just saying you believe in God is not enough. Even the devil believes in God; the devil has no doubt. The difference is that the devil will not show love for God; he will not bow down to God. So according to this scripture - faith without works is dead. Although we are not saved by good works alone, our good works show evidence of our faith. It has been said that "We are saved **by** the grace of God **through** faith in Jesus **from** sin and sin's penalty **for** God's kingdom **to** do good works." Christians are expected to do good works, not to be saved, but because we are saved.

This all tells me that the most important thing we Christians can do in life is to show our love for God. We show our love for God best by demonstrating our sincere love for our neighbors. Who are our neighbors? Our neighbors are all other people - our family members (spouse, parents, children, relatives), co-workers, people in our community, state, nation and whole world. According to Matthew 25:31-46 we show our love for others by helping to provide for their needs: by providing food and water

for those who are hungry and thirsty, by providing shelter for the homeless, by providing clothes for those in need of clothing and by visiting and caring for those who are lonely, sick and /or imprisoned.

The Bible tells us that God has a purpose for every one of His children. We have all been given gifts, abilities and talents so we may fulfill God's purpose for us. Although each of us has a different specific purpose, each of us are to work together to fulfill God's ultimate plan for us.

I believe we were put on earth for one main purpose and that is - to prepare for eternity. We do that by learning how to love and respect God and learning to love and respect our neighbors. God even gave us 10 commandments to show us how to do this. The first 4 commandments tell us how to respect God and the next 6 tell us how to respect each other.

I also believe that we have one main purpose as Christians and that is to help others. We are to help other believers by comforting them, supporting them, encouraging them, building them up in their faith and helping them grow spiritually.

We are to help non-believers too by sharing God's love for them through our actions and sharing God's Word with them. The first thing we can do to teach others about God is to set an example of God's love through our daily behavior. As children of God, our actions and words will influence others one way or another. We may be the only type of a Bible that some people will read. So we must show people God's love through proper attitude and behavior.

We can share God's Word through our testimonies and by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with them. Jesus even commanded His disciples to "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15) And in Matt. 28:19,20 Jesus commanded His disciples to: "Go and make disciples of all the nations ... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you..." , and Luke 24:47 says "that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations... ."

So, as Christians, we are commanded to spread the gospel - the Word of God. Does this mean that we are all to become missionaries and go around the world preaching the gospel or distribute Bibles? I don't think so, but I believe each of us is to help spread God's Word as well as we are able. How can we do this?

Although most Christians want to spread the gospel, only a few are actually able to preach or distribute Bibles. Therefore we should do what we can to support those who preach and distribute Bibles by praying for them regularly and through our financial gifts.

Since the single most important thing we can do in our life is to be saved, we must learn to love God, then learn to show our love for God through our prayers and our worship for Him and by willingly helping others, then share the opportunity to be saved with others by sharing the Word of God with them.