



**“A new command I give you: . . .  
As I have loved you, so you must  
love one another.” (John 13:34)**

**W**hat happened to this *new* command? Why isn't it taught more often in today's churches? Have we misunderstood Jesus' words? Or worse, ignored them?

*The Lost Commandment* is an eye-opening book that unpacks the meaning of an often overlooked teaching of Jesus Christ. Using stories, Scripture, and practical applications, author Dave Greber shows how the “Lost Commandment” reveals seven characteristics of Christian love that will bring us greater joy.

With a free, downloadable study guide online, *The Lost Commandment* is perfect for small group study or personal devotions. To share the book with larger groups, an eight-part sermon series outline is also available. Discover how to experience the complete joy that comes from loving others as Jesus has loved us.

“This vivid, Christ-centered, down-to-earth delineation of the heart of real discipleship will come as a challenge to everyone who reads it.”

—**J. I. PACKER**, best-selling author

“[This book] resurrects a critical and foundational truth that is key to God's people experiencing and transferring his powerful presence to his church. The ‘Lost Commandment’ is the key to authentic Christianity.”

—**TONY EVANS**, senior pastor of Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship and president of The Urban Alternative

“Individually or in small group discussions, [this] book will guide you on an exciting, life-changing journey.”

—**GARRY POOLE**, author, *Seeker Small Groups*

**DAVE GREBER** and his wife, Lynne, live in Frederick, Maryland. Visit Dave's Web site at [www.davegreber.com](http://www.davegreber.com).

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Senior Pastor, Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship, Dallas, TX  
President, The Urban Alternative

“*The Lost Commandment* is a clear and powerful challenge to love others the way Jesus loves us. Individually or in small group discussions, Dave Greber’s book will guide you on an exciting, life-changing journey.”

—GARRY POOLE

Speaker and author, *Seeker Small Groups*

“*The Lost Commandment* provides a compelling vision for transforming the church and reaching the world by learning how to delight in the sacrificial, reconciling love of Christ and letting it flow through us into the lives of every person we meet. A book that every Christian should read, study, and joyfully live out in daily life.”

—KEN SANDE

President, Peacemaker Ministries

“In *Knowing God*, J. I. Packer distinguished knowing about God from knowing God personally; thousands were blessed by his words. In *The Lost Commandment*, Dave Greber distinguishes the Golden Rule from the ‘new commandment’ Jesus gave his followers; thousands will be blessed by his words. *The Lost Commandment* is a great book—valuable for new Christians, yet more than a refresher course for veterans in the faith.”

—KENNETH G. ELZINGA

Robert C. Taylor Professor of Economics, University of Virginia

“In this book, Dave Greber provides some fresh, original thinking about Jesus’ ‘Lost Commandment.’ You cannot read this and remain the same.”

—R. DALLAS GREENE

Senior Pastor, Grace Community Church, Frederick, MD

“In this well-written, practical book, the heart and calling of Jesus is put on clear display.”

—JEFF BOGUE

Lead Pastor, Grace Church, Greater Akron, OH

“*The Lost Commandment* has impacted my thinking and my preaching and my life. My prayers for others and with others have changed. It has even changed how I view and work with people who are difficult to love!”

—MICHAEL BRUBAKER

Pastor, Grace Community Church, Frederick, MD

“My small group loved studying this convicting, insightful, practical, and thought-provoking book. *The Lost Commandment* helped us deepen our walk with Christ by showing us how to live out Jesus’ command to love one another as he has loved us.”

—MONTE FESTOG

Small group leader

# THE LOST COMMANDMENT

Have We Missed What Jesus  
Really Wants?

DAVE GREBER

# CONTENTS

<i>Acknowledgments</i>	7
<i>Introduction</i>	9

## **PART 1—Joy: The Surprise of Christ’s Love**

1. Find Complete Joy	15
2. More Costly Than Gold	29

## **PART 2—Relationship: The Invitation of Christ’s Love**

3. RSVP	47
4. Enjoy Your New Self	57
5. Shadow the Real VIP	67

## **PART 3—Mission: The Determination of Christ’s Love**

6. No Mission Impossible	77
7. Leave No One Behind	92

## **PART 4—Humility: The Heart of Christ’s Love**

8. No One Died and Made Us King!	105
9. The Last Come First	116

## **PART 5—Obedience: The Power of Christ’s Love**

10. Love Letters from God	127
11. Ask and It’s Yours	142
12. Show Them How It’s Done!	149

## **PART 6—Forgiveness: The Strength of Christ’s Love**

13. Let It Go	157
14. Get It Together	172
15. Shuttle Diplomacy	190

*The Lost Commandment: Have We Missed What Jesus Really Wants?*

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## PART 7—Service: The Soul of Christ’s Love

16. Feet and Hands	201
17. Dollars and Sense	210
18. Who’s Next in Line?	217
<i>Conclusion</i>	227
<i>Appendix A: Scriptures That Echo the Lost Commandment</i>	231
<i>Appendix B: How to Create a Reading Plan</i>	241
<i>Notes</i>	251

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## INTRODUCTION

Do to others as you would have them do to you." That's what my pastor preached, quoting the Golden Rule from Luke 6:31. It was an ordinary Sunday, and I settled in for a good sermon on a very familiar theme. As I listened, I looked through the four gospels to read what Jesus said about love.

And then my eyes landed on twenty words that changed my life: Jesus said, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John 13:34).

I'd been a Christian for twenty-five years. How could I have missed this commandment? But when I talked to my Christian friends about it, they too seemed to have missed it. Every person I asked about Jesus' new commandment answered me with a blank stare.

*No problem*, I thought. Somewhere there must be shelves of books about the new commandment. After all, it was among Jesus' last words at the Last Supper. He even repeated it (John 15:12, 17). And it's been two thousand years since the new commandment was given. It's not so new anymore.

So I went looking. I asked my most devout Christian friends whether they knew of any books on the new commandment. I went to Christian bookstores. I searched the Internet. I went to a seminary library. I found almost nothing—and nothing at all of book-length—on what I now consider to be the "Lost Commandment."

I continued to study John 13–16. As I did—as I realized the significance of the Lost Commandment and in particular the surprising link between obedience to the Lost Commandment and joy—my life changed. Jesus said, in effect, "Do you want *me* to take joy in you? Do *you* want to experience complete joy? Then do this: love others as I have loved you!" (John 15:10–12, author's paraphrase).

Practicing obedience to the Lost Commandment brings our faith alive—a faith that results in an amazing, joy-filled life. We discover God’s purpose for our lives. We experience Jesus’ presence and become more like him as we love others the way he loves us. The Lost Commandment also changes our prayer lives. It enables us to better understand God’s will on a day-to-day, moment-by-moment basis. Our relationships improve as we love others the way Jesus loves us. And those who don’t know Jesus sense his presence in our lives and want to know more about him. No other verse—including the Golden Rule—better summarizes how God expects Christians to treat other people.

Jesus wants us to experience the complete joy of knowing his will. He doesn’t want us to live our lives wondering, “What *would* Jesus do?” Instead, he wants us to know the answer to “What *did* Jesus do?” And then he wants us to do likewise in the power of the Holy Spirit.

This book is a practical guide to loving others in obedience to the Lost Commandment. Two premises guide the way this book is organized and written. The first is that we must focus on the Lost Commandment itself in order to follow it. Jesus said that our obedience to *this* commandment brings joy to him and complete joy to us. And in chapter 1, I describe some of the ways we experience this joy, which thrives even in the midst of pain and adversity.

The Lost Commandment is different from the Golden Rule. That’s why Jesus called it “new.” No doubt, the world would be a much better place if everyone did follow the Golden Rule. But true as this statement is, it misses the point: Jesus commanded us to go into the world teaching others *everything* that he had commanded us (Matt. 28:20). In chapter 2, then, I explain how the Golden Rule is different from the Lost Commandment, and why I believe Jesus intended to replace the Golden Rule with the Lost Commandment.

The second premise of this book is that everything that Jesus has done for humankind throughout history, as revealed in the Bible or experienced in our individual lives, is both an expression of his love for us and an example of how we are expected to love others. Therefore, to obey the Lost Commandment, we have to

become students of Jesus’ love for us so that we can better love others in this same way. Part of what brings us joy as we obey the Lost Commandment is, in fact, having a better understanding of the depth and breadth of Christ’s love for us.

Whether you agree with the first premise of this book or not, the second premise stands on its own. It is not controversial, and represents the majority of the teaching of this book (chapters 1, 3–18). As followers of Jesus, we are called to demonstrate his presence in our lives by the way that we love others (John 13:35). His life is our life example (John 13:15; 1 Cor. 11:1; 1 Tim. 1:16; 1 Peter 2:21).

As we study Jesus’ love for us, particularly as revealed in the New Testament, we discover that it has seven major elements that follow a logical sequence and yield practical principles for our lives with God and others. Parts 1 through 7 of this book express these elements as themes.

Part 1: The primary purpose of our lives is to bring *joy* to Jesus, and to our Father God, by practicing obedience to the Lost Commandment. We also experience complete joy when we follow Jesus’ loving example in our lives.

Part 2: To follow Jesus, we must have a close, personal *relationship* with God, whose love for us can heal the pain in our lives, as we follow in Jesus’ loving footsteps.

Part 3: Our relationship with God requires us to accept Christ’s *mission* to transform our lives, and to bring others into a close, personal relationship with God. We do our part primarily by paying Jesus’ love forward to others with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Part 4: Our mission, like Christ’s, is an expression of *humility* toward God and others.

Part 5: As we follow Jesus’ example, our humble dependence on God enables us to tap into God’s power through *obedience* to his commands, the most important of which is to love others as Jesus has loved us. The Holy Spirit gives us the power and understanding that we need to obey God as we speak with God, study his Word, and learn from others who follow Jesus.

Part 6: Our humble obedience to Christ leads us to forgive and serve others. God’s *forgiveness* makes it possible for us to become

## INTRODUCTION

reconciled to him. He commands us to forgive others as he has forgiven us, and he empowers us to reconcile with them. He also helps us to act as peacemakers who help others find peace with each other.

Part 7: As Christ lived his life on earth in *service* to us, so he calls us to serve others as though we were serving Jesus himself. We are called to give time and money to those most in need, according to the priorities God gives to each of us.

This book provides more, though, than an overview and a framework for understanding Jesus' love. It also contains insights and illustrations that demonstrate how to allow Jesus' love to flow to others through our lives. Whether you don't know Jesus, you've just met him, or you've known him for years, this book will help you experience the complete joy that comes from loving others as he has loved us.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will use this book to help you find the only love that brings complete joy, and that leads not merely to life, but to abundant life.

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## PART 1

# JOY

## The Surprise of Christ's Love