

# OWING LOVE

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Romans 13:8-10 says, “*Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loves another has fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. Love works no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.*”

Rather than indebting ourselves to others in the typical physical ways such as money, we have a debt to love one another.

## **The second greatest commandment**

The Law of Moses is not for us to follow today. The Old Testament *law* (the “ordinances”) has been nailed to the cross and taken out of the way (Col 2:13-17). We cannot obey the Old Law today or we will be cut off from Christ and fallen from grace. Galatians 5:1-4 says, “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

Behold, I Paul say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law. *Christ is become of no effect unto you, whosoever of you are justified by the law; ye are fallen from grace.*” Therefore, there is no command that we obey today *because* it is found in the Old Law. However, there are several commandments that God gave in the Old Testament that He incorporates into the New Testament. Half of the original Ten Commandments are found here in Romans 13:9, word-for-word. God had a good reason for making these commandments a part of the New Testament. When Jesus taught the “Golden Rule” (“all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them”), he said that “this is the law and the prophets” (Matt 7:12). When asked what is the greatest commandment, Jesus said, “*Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great*

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(continued)

*commandment. And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Matt 22:37-40).*

### **Working no ill to others**

A great principle that is taught in Romans 13:8-10 is that love works no ill to one's neighbor. God originally gave those commandments to Moses on mount Sinai (Exod 20:13-17) as applications of the command for them to love their neighbor. A person who loves their neighbor will not commit adultery with his wife, kill him, steal from him, bear false witness against him, or covet his goods. “Any other commandment” is also “comprehended” in the commandment to love one's neighbor (Rom 13:9). Love will not work any ill towards another person. Anyone who does harm to someone else is by definition not loving that person. One who never works ill to their neighbor is well on the way to fulfilling God's law, because “he that loves another has fulfilled the law” (Rom 13:8,10). Of course, love is more than what we do *not* do to another, and many other commandments tell us what we must *do* to others. For example, in that great chapter about the love of God, 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 says, “Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”

Similarly, Galatians 5:22-23 says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law” (see also Eph 4:22-5:10; Col 3:10-15). These are the things we must demonstrate towards one another as our debt of love. This is a debt, because Christ died for us, and we are constrained by his love to live only for him (2 Cor 5:14-15). The way that Christ says that we serve him is by serving our fellow Christians (Matt 25:31-40; John 13:1-17,34-35). The only debt we should owe to another is our love (Rom 13:8).