

An open book with a dark cover and light-colored pages is held by two hands. The hands are positioned at the bottom and sides of the book, with fingers spread. The background is dark. Overlaid on the book is the text '50 COMMANDS OF CHRIST'. The number '50' is in a large, bold, red font. The words 'COMMANDS' and 'OF CHRIST' are in a white, distressed, serif font, stacked on two lines.

50 COMMANDS OF CHRIST

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The first followers of Jesus were a 'band of brothers' who traveled with him and learned from both his lifestyle and teaching, the secret to bringing heaven to earth. As a rabbi it was expected that Jesus would give to his chosen students his own interpretation of the scripture, and this he did in many commands. The commands made up a 'yoke' of teachings. Every rabbi had a specific 'yoke' of interpretations of scripture and commands. Jesus said His yoke was light - not cumbersome or complicated. It was a clear set of commands and commentaries on the popular schools of the day. Jesus' teaching, however was different. It came with authority and produced results that made lives better in tangible ways. Unlike other religious leaders, these were not mystical or abstract teachings to be interpreted by elite followers, but guidelines for living that every human could understand and profit from. He committed this core curriculum to the disciples in the form of 50 commands. Many commands Jesus gave were to individuals, such as to the rich young ruler to sell all or to Peter to step out on the water. If we remove these, we have left about fifty general commandments.

Whenever a commandment is practiced, there is a blessing. These are not merely instructions for followers of Jesus, but statements that define how mankind can live in harmonious alignment with the laws that govern the physical and moral universe. These non-optional life principles explain the law of cause and effect operating throughout the entire realm of creation. Like gravity, these laws apply to believers and unbelievers alike. A man who honors his wife and is diligent in his work is likely to have a more successful marriage and career than a person who claims to follow Jesus but is abusive to his wife or is lazy at work. When we practice the commands, we place our human hands upon the levers that shape the spiritual and physical realm we live. We become the farmer and our life becomes the field. Jesus' teaching, his words, become the seed that produces a harvest rich in blessing or barren of fruitfulness, depending on our diligence to work the soil of our hearts.



Following the dramatic events of Jesus death and resurrection appearance, the sacred writings of Luke tell us that Jesus spent 40 days "teaching the disciples about the kingdom of God." (Acts 1:2) This was finishing school for the young Apostles. He had given them parting instructions before ascending to heaven:

**“Go and make disciples of all nations,
TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THINGS
I HAVE COMMANDED YOU.” Matthew 28**

Jesus saw his message of love and reconciliation as a word that should touch nations. He instructed his followers to teach the curriculum He taught them. Evidently the disciples did so because religious leaders complained to the Apostles “you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine.”

What did these early followers of Jesus do that so impacted their culture?

1. They continued to teach and practice Jesus’ core curriculum - the 50 commands of Christ.
2. They lived as a community of genuine friends, built upon the practice of the presence of God made manifest in their lifestyle of fellowship, prayer, and mutual affection. They continued as a ‘band of brothers’ and taught others to do likewise, meeting from house to house and in the Temple.

As a result the first century followers of Jesus experienced and demonstrated extraordinary love, generosity, joy and powerful answers to prayer. This is what happens when the teachings of Jesus fill a city. There are incredible promises given to those who practice the 50 commands.

Jesus promises 9 special rewards for keeping the commands:

1. God will reveal Himself to you. John 14:21
2. God will dwell in you. John 14:23
3. Christ will be your friend. John 15:14
4. You will receive Gods love. John 15:10
5. You will genuinely love others. 1 John 5:2
6. Your prayers will be answered. 1 John 3:22
7. You will have true joy. John 15:11
8. You will have peace. John 16:33
9. You will be purified. John 17:17

Is it possible that the cultural drift in nations such as the United States could be due to a focus on making converts and church members and not disciples?

These 50 teachings of Christ have the power to transform a culture or a nation.

A follower of Jesus was hired by the United Nations to train a group of Scientists and PhD's from 20 countries whose special expertise involved oceanic studies. The group had been meeting at a University in Halifax, Nova Scotia for several weeks and this was to be their final class. They wanted the teacher to help them be more effective leaders, communicators and fund raisers in their field. He was told not to bring any theology into the training since many were from diverse countries: Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, Communist, etc. This particular man was more accustomed to quoting freely from the Scripture and was concerned if he could teach and be relevant to the needs of the U.N. if his faith was not welcome. Upon reflection, it occurred to him that much of Jesus teaching is universal. He observed that the first 25 commands can be taught and practiced by anyone, so he reworked his training and his language so that the powerful ideas he learned as a disciple could be applied to that diverse group of scientists without them knowing the Scriptural source. The students rated it the most effective class they had ever taken! He learned a powerful lesson- followers of Jesus can be covert and overt! If overt, you can personally evangelise an individual and afterward disciple them. However, when dealing with a nation, an institute, corporation or government especially one that does not adhere to the Bible, you disciple the nation first by teaching a new and superior way of getting results and then use the platform of credibility provided through your success to show more fully the principles of faith that produce those results. By teaching solutions to problems that showcase a new way of thinking, your 'good works' will build you a platform to share more fully about your personal beliefs and your faith. Imagine what the world would be like if the sons and daughters of world leaders were taught the relevance of Jesus' sayings on leadership? They would learn to understand rather than react to differences, learn to see God's handiwork in diversity, and learn how to influence others through humility and flexibility rather than intimidation or manipulation. This is the global teaching assignment present day disciples must engage. The sayings of Jesus can build common ground for peace when all other religious and political philosophies fail.

Leaders in Colombia understand this. For many years the cocaine drug lords have had more money and better equipment than the national army! The United States assisted Colombia by providing eight Black Hawk helicopters to balance the military disparity of weapons. While this helped, it did not stop the seemingly invincible power of bribery and corruption that followed the money trail. A handful of followers of Jesus decided to do something and began presenting the wisdom of God's words as part of a leadership development program. They started where nobody wanted to go - **the prison system**. This was where all could see how powerful the cartel was, as criminals were treated like holiday guests with special rooms, meals and entertainment. Recent feedback on the results of this program are powerful! When presented as "**Leadership Principles**" the teachings of Scripture have been able to thwart the powers of the mighty drug cartel of Colombia and initiate the transformation of all their prisons- 61,000 inmates and 8000 guards. The same results have been achieved in the judicial system of Guatemala. Now 200,000 soldiers in Colombia and 100,000 civil servants in Guatemala are experiencing the transformational power of Jesus teaching.

Indeed, wherever there is a problem of global proportions, there is a solution for those willing to apply principles of faith and wisdom. The AIDS crisis in Uganda nearly wiped out a country and destabilized an entire region of Africa. The solution came from a dialogue between the President and men of faith. They worked together to find the keys in Jesus' teaching and discovered that, when applied, the call to purity, self control, faithfulness and wisdom not only reduced the plague from 30% to 5% in 3 years, but helped revitalize the national economy!

What about the current conflict in the Middle East? Is there a role for 21st century people of faith and the sayings of Jesus? **Yes!** Jesus is respected as a true Prophet in the Qur'an. What would happen if the sayings of Jesus were made the centerpiece for dialogue in centers of Islamic influence? The links that connect Jesus and Islam are much deeper, more complex and intricately woven than most would expect. He is respectfully referred to as 'Isa bin Maryam' or Jesus son of Mary. According to the Holy Quran, Isa bin Maryam is a prophet like Mohammed, Moses and David. While Muslims emphasize that Isa was only a prophet, Islamic scriptures paint a different picture. The Quran acknowledges Jesus' divine birth, earthly miracles, messianic mission, ascension to heaven, divine return, victory over the anti-Christ (al-Dajjal), and eventual global theocracy. Eleven times Isa bears the title "Messiah," and his mother, Virgin Mary, is the only woman mentioned in the Quran. The Quran proclaims Isa to be sinless and holy. Spread over fifteen different Suras (chapters), Isa is spoken of as "the Word of God," "the Spirit of God" and a "Sign of God." Indeed, there are many differences between Islam and Christianity, but there are equally great differences between Christians and Hindu's, Buddhist and Communists. The vast majority of 1.3 billion Muslims are not extremists. The common ground of all three faiths in Abraham (Hebrew, Islam and Christianity) should be more than enough to build a platform for peace. It is the devil who desires war and destruction. God blessed Ishmael and told him there would be kings coming out of his lineage. Those kings need to meet kingdom ambassadors. Now, more than ever, we need those who follow Jesus to step into the gap and serve nations by teaching solutions to problems through the commandments of Christ. Truly, if Jesus is lifted up, he will draw all men unto him.

I have intentionally described these first 25 commands in terminology I would use in teaching Jesus commands as principles that apply to any nation or people. You could no doubt find other ways to render the meaning, application or interpretation of the same scripture.

Teachings Of Jesus For All Peoples And Times

1. **Be Reconciled**

Matthew 5:23-24

- Learn to walk in harmony with others, discerning their needs and building bridges.
- Valuing people more than things

2. **Do Not Commit Adultery**

Matthew 5:29

- Learn to protect your marriage and your children
- Mastering the appetites of the physical senses and building the spiritual senses to discern right from wrong.

3. **Keep Your Word**

Matthew 5:37

- Learning to make commitments you keep and recognizing how personal integrity feeds our confidence and influence.
- Understanding the power of words and expectations

4. **Go the Extra Mile**

Matthew 5:38-42

- Giving beyond what is required to change the context of the relationship. Roman law required any Jew to carry a Roman backpack for one mile in any direction. By offering to go beyond a mile, the follower of Jesus made the Romans curious and created a door for sharing your beliefs.

5. **Love Your Enemies**

Matthew 5:44-46

- Destroying your enemies, by making them your friends. Whatever you give energy too expands. By feeding hate you get more hate. By loving enemies we feed another powerful spirit, and it in turn, feeds us with peace of mind.

6. **Be Perfect**

Matthew

- Learning to compare yourself to the standard that is highest rather than excusing yourself by comparisons to others

7. Practice Your Spirituality in Secret

Matthew 6:3-4, 17-18

- Learning to live your highest values in secret and not for the applause of men. Understand that private victories of self mastery lead to public victories.

8. Lay up Treasures

Matthew 6:19-21

- Learning to distinguish that which is temporal from that which lives on in eternity. Investing in that which has ultimate value gives you access to resources others cannot steal or take from you.

9. Judge Not

Matthew 7:1-3

- Learning to see clearly without the distortion of anger or self interest.
- Learning to discern hidden causes behind surface activity and understanding the universal law of cause and effect in harvests that follow our attitude.

10. Do Not Cast Pearls

Matthew 7:6

- Learning to rightly discern the time and place to share that which you value most.

11. Ask, Seek, Knock

Matthew 7:7-8

- Realizing that the Universe you live in rewards perseverance and if you persist you shall be rewarded.

12. Do unto Others

Matthew 7:12

- Understanding how to practice genuine sensitivity to the needs of others.
- Realizing your common humanity and asking yourself how you would want to be treated in a situation, and treating others accordingly.

13. Choose the Narrow Way

Matthew 7:13-14

- Recognizing that the easy way does not yield the same reward as deliberately choosing the harder but superior way.

14. Beware of False Prophets

Matthew 7:15-16

- Learning to test the ideas that influence us through the persuasion of others.

15. Be Wise as Serpents

Matthew 10:16

- Learn to wisely read and adapt to an environment so that you can achieve the honorable outcome you seek.

16. Honor Your Parents

Matthew 15:4

- Learn to recognize and appreciate the sacrifice and investment of those who helped you grow.

17. Beware of Leaven

Matthew 16:6

- Learn to discern the subtle influence of insincerity and hypocrisy in living your core values.

18. Deny Yourself

Luke 9:23-25

- Learning to say “no” when the call of a greater “yes” is on your life.
- Learning that self control is the master aptitude.

19. Despise Not Little Ones

Matthew 18:10

- Learning to balance priorities so that you invest and care for the weaker and more vulnerable status of children.

20. Go to Offenders

Matthew 18:15

- Learning to take the initiative to heal relationships that have been damaged in your life.

21. Beware Of Covetousness

Luke 12:15

- Realizing that your happiness can never be defined by what you own, rather, life’s truest riches are free for anyone who values people more than things and others before themselves. True contentment is built on the bedrock of what is eternal.

22. Go to Offenders

Matthew 18:21-22

- Taking the initiative to release yourself and others from captivity to their destructive behavior.

23. Honor Marriage

Matthew 19:4-6

- Realizing that there is no clearer test of your real character than the way you treat the ones who are closest to you. Your devotion to God is revealed in the quality of your commitment to your spouse. Faithfulness to another enables you to appreciate Gods unchanging devotion toward you as one of His own covenant people.

24. *Be a Servant*

Matthew 20:26-28

- Understanding that true greatness is not wrapped up in title or position but rather your capacity to set aside a selfish agenda in order to take up an agenda of service.
- Discerning the difference between false and genuine leadership by embracing a role of service over significance.
- Real leadership starts with leading yourself, and committing your energies to do for others what they cannot do for themselves.

25. *Beware of the leaven of Herod*

- Recognizing the subtle corruption that permeates mans philosophies in contemporary political discourse.

These first 25 commands can be presented to any culture and any nation in such a way as to provide universal principles for practice. These commands, especially 26-28 could actually continue to be presented as principles anyone could apply, however there are certain commands only a devoted follower of Christ can meaningfully enter into. I list them as 26-50.

26. *Bring In the Poor*

Luke 14:12-14

- Recognizing that your abundance enables you to demonstrate Gods reality to others.
- Remembering that you are a steward and not an owner of your possessions and that God is free to direct you at any time to acts of unselfish investment in others who cannot repay.

27. *Render to Caesar*

Matthew 22:19-21

- Learning that honoring authority is a principle of Gods design and in doing so you honor Him.
- Expressing that gratefulness to God and others for the ways they have benefited you is superior to murmuring.
- Knowing that God requires honesty in paying what is required to secular authorities.

28. *Love Your Neighbor*

Matthew 22:39-40

- Demonstrating your love for God by honoring man who is made in His image.

29. Repent

Matthew 4:17

- Turning your thinking and behavior around to agree with the things God is saying.

30. Follow Me

Matthew 4:19

- Remembering that you are not practicing a sterile system of principles, but following a living dynamic person who makes Himself real to you through His indwelling Holy Spirit.

31. Rejoice

Matthew 5:11-12

- Understanding that righteousness is sometimes celebrated and at other times ridiculed. You are free to interpret some opposition as an indication that you are challenging the right things and will therefore be respectful but happy about the rejection of your message.

32. Let Your Light Shine

Matthew 5:16

- You will let your good works speak more loudly than your good words as I demonstrate the superiority of Christ's life by illuminating the darkness with acts that help others in unexpected ways.

33. Honor Gods Law

Matthew 5:17-18

- Understanding that Christ did not come to destroy the law but to fulfill it by making it possible for you to live the law of love through the power of His Spirit.

34. Seek First the Kingdom

Matthew 6:33

- Discerning that the highest priority in your life is to do the will of Him that sent you and to complete your current kingdom assignment.
- Being confident that your pursuit of heavenly priorities will be rewarded by heavenly provision.

35. Fear Not

Matthew 11:15

- Discerning the power of perfect love to cast out all fear.
- Welcoming the only fear that actually produces blessing- the fear of God- who observes your paths and is rewarding or disciplining you according to your behavior in His sight.

36. *Having ears to Hear Gods Voice*

Matthew 11:15

- Being attentive to the projects and priorities God shows you so that you can give them your undivided attention.
- Cultivating a lifestyle of listening so that you can be sensitive to the sound of His voice.
- Learning to honor the prompting of your spirit and the still small voice of conscience.

37. *Take My Yoke*

Matthew 11:28-30

- Knowing that as you come to Christ you find rest for your soul that no other source can satisfy.
- You willingly adjust to His teaching so that you can plow in the field He places you with accuracy.

38. *Be a House of Prayer*

Matthew 21:13

- Learning that prayer is the very atmosphere of God's house realizing that as you engage in steadfast prayer you are building a habitation for Gods will to be done completely in your life as a living temple of His Spirit.

39. *Ask In Faith*

Matthew 21:21-22

- Understanding that Gods words will feed your spirit that your words will have the power to release His will in the earth. Therefore, fill your heart with His Words and speak that which is in agreement with Him, believing that what you say will come to pass.

40. *Love the Lord with All Your Heart*

Matthew 22:37-38

- Realizing that God is deserving of your full and entire affection, you will therefore guard your heart so that nothing will be more important to you than pleasing the one who gave His infinite and utmost for you.

41. *Watch for His Return*

Matthew 24:42-44

- Keeping your attention upon the fact that there will be a literal return of the resurrected Jesus and that your stewardship of influence and blessing will be evaluated to determine your reward.

42. *Take, Eat, Drink*

Matthew 26:26-27

- Realizing that you must continually examine your state lest you become hardened by the subtle deception of sin. Eating and drinking the body and blood of Christ in a worthy manner so that the grace quickening power of this sacrament can infuse you with life.

43. *Receive Power to Become Sons of God*

John 1:12-13,

•Understanding that you have been received by Him and are therefore a new creation, a full member of Gods own family, partaking of the divine nature that is worked out in you daily as you abide in Him and His words. You now have authority at the throne of grace to present your needs and to represent the authority of heaven on earth in the scope of your assignment.

44. *Keep My Commandments*

John 14:15

•Knowing that as you abide in His love He abides in you and you make your way prosperous and filled with His Joy and Peace.

45. *Watch and Pray*

Matthew 26:41

•Understanding that your spirit may be willing but your natural man is weakened under the downward pull of the earth, flesh and temptation augmented by the devil. Therefore you will be diligent to experience Gods power to deliver you from evil by drawing nearer to Him daily and especially at the very time you feel weak and susceptible to temptation.

47. *Feed My Sheep*

John 21:15-16

•Understanding the importance of taking heed to both yourself and those whom you have influence over in the kingdom so that they may be properly nourished in the revelation of the Word. Purposing to do the will of God regardless of cost and investing in the growth of other believers.

48. *Teach all Nations and making Disciples*

Matthew 28:19

•Remembering that you are called to not only feed the flock where you live but to teach other nations the truths that can bring the blessing of Christ's commandments to them. Believing that you can play a part in making disciples of nations. You can serve leaders of nations by healing their national sickness much like a believer heals an individual's sickness, and like Joseph or Daniel, serve your way into a place of influence.

49. *Baptizing them*

Matthew 28:19

•Remembering that the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus is something you experience fully the moment you were born into the kingdom and that this experience of a new beginning is manifest in waters of baptism.
• Realizing the message of forgiveness and reconciliation can touch entire nations.

50. *Receive Gods Power and Demonstration*

Luke 24:49

•Realizing that the life God has called you to live cannot be lived without the power of His Spirit continuously filling you. Jesus knows that you cannot stand apart from Him and has commanded you to be filled daily with the power of His grace and to pray for the sick and set free those that are bound. You are able to speak words with great penetration and impact because He has called you to be clothed with power from on high and will use your words to fix lasting impressions in the hearts of others.

The great difference between Jesus' teaching and others is that His words are Spirit and Life. They have within them the capacity to produce supernatural fruit. He told his followers: "*If ye abide in me and my words abide in you , you shall ask whatever ye want and it shall be granted unto you.*" He taught them that as followers, they were to be "*as their master,*" and expected the Holy Spirit to fully take up the role of leading them into all truth in that his physical departure would be to their advantage.

What would it look like if we were to be as He is, in this world? The nine virtues of the Spirit describe the perfection of Jesus' character. They are called the fruit of the Spirit. Jesus taught the disciples that a tree is known by it's fruit and a character is known by it's deeds. The nine virtues or expressions of the fruit of the Spirit are: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, and Self Control.

All these expressions of the divine nature exist in you because the Spirit of Christ dwells in you. This is the divine nature in every person born from above... to minister Christ is in practical terms, to impart supernatural grace in...

- Love to the unlovely
- Peace to the fearful or frustrated
- Joy to the sad and depressed
- Patience to the driven
- Gentleness to the rude
- Goodness to the undeserving and selfish
- Faith to the doubting and uncertain
- Meekness to the haughty and proud
- Self Control to the hasty, impulsive, unthinking

You cannot only minister these virtues, but you can, and indeed must partake of them for yourself. This is one of the powerful ways disciples *'put on Christ.'* As believers we can *"partake of the divine nature"* and draw life from the very presence of *"Christ in you the hope of glory."* There is sufficient divine provision in the indwelling Holy Spirit residing in you to cause every weakness and human character trait, fault, ignorance and tendency to be overcome.

By abiding in Jesus' words and letting his Spirit abide in us, we can be the solution to problems around us. You are called to be an *"Able Minister"* of the New Covenant.

Thus, the disciple can minister the character of Christ. Not only this, but disciples are called to minister in Jesus name, the power of God to produce soundness of mind and body. The disciple is also called to minister the mind of Christ in wisdom from above. The spirit of the Lord's is the power of illumination through the spirit of counsel, might, wisdom, knowledge, understanding and the fear of the Lord. These are described in Isaiah 2:1-4.

Christ 50 commandments are meant to lead us to a life lived through Him and for Him. Thus, our fruit will always remain.

* Some suggest you also partake as follows:

Toward You in strengthening you for service

Love, Joy, Peace,

Toward Others in service

Patience, Kindness, Goodness,

Toward God in service

Faith, Meekness, and Self Control