

Messianic Rabbi: What Shabbat and Adultery Have in Common

Recently, I was confronted by a Christian man who, with sincere convictions, wanted to bring correction to my faith. He knew I was a Messianic Jew and, because he had made incorrect assumptions based on faulty information—which led him to false conclusions—he felt spiritually obligated to correct me.

He began to explain to me that my keeping Sabbath was a legalistic attempt at achieving righteousness by following the Torah, and that instead of keeping commandments for my salvation, I should simply trust in Yeshua for my righteousness and salvation.

This wasn't the first time that I was confronted by a loving Christian who was concerned that I was trying to "work" my way into heaven instead of trusting in what Yeshua did for me. So, I asked the man, "If you believe that my observing Shabbat is legalistic and demonstrates my lack of faith in the complete work of Yeshua to provide my salvation, would it be okay for you to go out and commit adultery?"

He looked shocked as if I had slapped him across the face and responded forcefully, "Absolutely not!"

So, I asked him to explain why my keeping the fourth commandment was legalistic, but his keeping the seventh commandment was not.

Instead of answering my question, he tried to make his point a different way by proclaiming that, as a believer in Yeshua, he only had an obligation to two commandments—after all, Yeshua said in Matthew 22:37-40:

"And He said to him, "'You shall love Adonai 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, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' The entire Torah and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

So, he said, "According to Yeshua, we only have to keep these two commandments."

After he made this statement, I said, "You are exactly correct, and we are in full agreement on not only that Yeshua said those words, but also that we as believers have a responsibility to keep those commandments." Then I asked him to provide from the Scriptures exactly how a believer would love G-D and love their neighbor.

After all, if these two commandments are incumbent upon believers, the Bible should provide precise details on how we would not only go about loving G-D and loving our neighbor, but also provide details on how we would know when we are *not* loving G-D and loving our neighbor. I explained that I believed when Yeshua answered the question about the greatest commandment, His answer didn't end after verse 39. Rather, He went on in verse 40 to say, "The entire Torah and the Prophets hang on these two commandments." Notice that He doesn't abolish the rest of the Torah with His answer; He actually states that all of the rest of the commandments hang upon the two He stated. In other words, if the Torah was made into two lists, then Loving G-D would be the heading of one list and Loving Our Neighbor would be the heading of the second list.

As he thought about those words, I continued, and because I didn't want him to get angry again, I chose not to bring up the fact that Yeshua didn't mention adultery in these two commandments.

Instead, I chose to ask him the question, "If you believe that believers in Yeshua have a responsibility to love G-D and love their neighbors, how is that different from my believing that

I have a responsibility to keep the Sabbath? After all, the commandments to love G-D (Deut. 6:5) and love our neighbor (Lev. 19:18), and the commandments to keep Shabbat (Ex. 20:8-11), are all found in the Torah. So, how is my keeping the Torah commandments concerning Shabbat legalistic, while keeping the Torah commandments to love G-D and love your neighbors is not legalistic?"

I ended our conversation by letting him know that Messianic Jews, just like all other believers, trust only in Yeshua's atoning sacrifice for our salvation. Also, just like other believers, after making the choice to accept Yeshua as our Messiah, we also make the choice to do all we can to live our lives according to the commandments G-D has given us, which include loving G-D, loving our neighbors, keeping Shabbat and not committing adultery.

So, as you see, Shabbat and adultery are both commandments from the Torah and they are both commandments that are possible for a believer to obey while not being legalistic.

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