

Who's Real?
Facing the Reality of True Christianity
John 14:21-24

John 14:21–24 (NKJV)

²¹ He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”

²² Judas (not Iscariot) said to Him, “Lord, how is it that You will manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?”

²³ Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him. ²⁴ He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father’s who sent Me.

Introduction

When Christian Smith and his fellow researchers with the National Study of Youth and Religion at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill took a close look at the religious beliefs held by American teenagers, they found that the faith held and

described by most adolescents came down to something the researchers identified as "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism."

As described by Smith and his team, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism consists of beliefs like these: 1. "A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth." 2. "God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions." 3. "The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about ones self." 4. "God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem." 5. "Good people go to heaven when they die."

That, in sum, is the creed to which much adolescent faith can be reduced. After conducting more than 3,000 interviews with American adolescents, the researchers reported that, when it came to the most crucial questions of faith and beliefs, many adolescents responded with a shrug and "whatever."

The Religious and Spiritual Eyes of American Teenagers by Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, found that American teenagers are incredibly inarticulate about their religious beliefs, and most are virtually unable to offer any serious theological understanding. As Smith reports, "To the extent that the teens we interviewed did

manage to articulate what they understood and believed religiously, it became clear that most religious teenagers either do not really comprehend what their own religious traditions say they are supposed to believe, or they do understand it and simply do not care to believe it. Either way, it is apparent that most religiously affiliated U.S. teens are not particularly interested in espousing and upholding the beliefs of their faith traditions, or that their communities of faith are failing in attempts to educate their youth, or both."

As the researchers explained, "For most teens, nobody has to do anything in life, including anything to do with religion. 'Whatever' is just fine, if that's what a person wants."

The casual "whatever" that marks so much of the American moral and theological landscapes--adolescent and otherwise--is a substitute for serious and responsible thinking. More importantly, it is a verbal cover for an embrace of relativism.

Accordingly, "most religious teenager's opinions and views--one can hardly call them worldviews--are vague, limited, and often quite at variance with the actual teachings of their own religion."

The kind of responses found among many teenagers indicates a vast emptiness at the heart of their understanding. When a teenager says, "I

believe there is a God and stuff," this hardly represents a profound theological commitment. Amazingly, teenagers are not inarticulate in general. As the researchers found, "Many teenagers know abundant details about the lives of favorite musicians and television stars or about what it takes to get into a good college, but most are not very clear on who Moses and Jesus were." The obvious conclusion: "This suggests that a strong, visible, salient, or intentional faith is not operating in the foreground of most teenager's lives."

The researchers, who conducted thousands of hours of interviews with a carefully identified spectrum of teenagers, discovered that for many of these teens, the interview itself was the first time they had ever discussed a theological question with an adult. What does this say about our churches? What does this say about this generation of parents?

These researchers assert that Christianity is either degenerating into a pathetic version of itself or, more significantly, Christianity is actively being colonized and displaced by a quite different religious faith.

This radical transformation of Christian theology and Christian belief replaces the sovereignty of God with

the sovereignty of the self. In this therapeutic age, human problems are reduced to pathologies in need of a treatment plan. Sin is simply excluded from the picture, and doctrines as central as the wrath and justice of God are discarded as out of step with the times and unhelpful to the project of self-actualization.

All this means is that teenagers have been listening carefully. They have been observing their parents in the larger culture with diligence and insight. They understand just how little their parents really believe and just how much many of their churches and Christian institutions have accommodated themselves to the dominant culture. They sense the degree to which theological conviction has been sacrificed on the altar of individualism and a relativistic understanding of truth. They have learned from their elders that self-improvement is the one great moral imperative to which all are accountable, and they have observed the fact that the highest aspiration of those who shape this culture is to find happiness, security, and meaning in life.

Indeed, our missiological challenge may be even greater than the confrontation with paganism, for we face a succession of generations who have transformed Christianity into something that bears no resemblance to the faith revealed in the Bible.

The faith "once delivered to the saints" is no longer even known, not only by American teenagers, but by most of their parents. Millions of Americans believe they are Christians, simply because they have some historic tie to a Christian denomination or identity. We now face the challenge of evangelizing a nation that largely considers itself Christian, overwhelmingly believes in some deity, considers itself fervently religious, but has virtually no connection to historic Christianity.

In 1746, about six years after the Great Awakening, in which Jonathan Edwards was the primary instrument of God to preach the gospel and bring about the greatest revival in American history thus far, Edwards wrote *A Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections*. He wrote it to deal with a problem not unlike one we face today: the matter of evidence for true conversion. Many people want the blessings of salvation, especially eternal security, but no more.

In the explosive drama of the Great Awakening, it seemed as though conversions were occurring in great numbers. However, it didn't take long to realize that some people claimed conversions that

were not real. While various excesses and heightened emotional experiences were common, scores of people didn't demonstrate any evidence in their lives to verify their claim to know and love Jesus Christ, which led critics to attack the Great Awakening, contending it was nothing but a big emotional bath without any true conversions. Thus, partly in defense of true conversion and partly to expose false conversion, Jonathan Edwards took up his pen. He came to this simple conclusion. The supreme proof of a true conversion is what he called "holy affections," which are a zeal for holy things and a longing after God and personal holiness. He made a careful distinction between saving versus common operations of the Holy Spirit. Saving operations obviously produce salvation. Common operations of the Holy Spirit, he said, "may sober, arrest and convict men, and may even bring them to what at first appears to be repentance and faith, yet these influences fall short of inward saving renewal" (Iain H. Murray, *Jonathan Edwards: A New Biography* [Carlisle, Pa.: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1987], p. 255).

How can you tell whether the Holy Spirit has performed a saving operation? As the principle evidence of life is motion, Edwards wrote, so the principle evidence of saving grace is holy practice (pp. 262-63). He said true salvation always produces an abiding change of nature in a true convert. Therefore, whenever holiness of life does not accompany a confession of conversion, it must be understood that this individual is not a Christian. In the very year Edwards' treatise was published, popular teaching asserted that, to the contrary, the only real evidence of true salvation is a feeling based on an experience—usually the experience at the moment of the alleged conversion. That teaching introduces the prevalent but erroneous concept that a person's true spiritual state is known by a past experience rather than a present pursuit of holiness. Edwards flatly contradicted that notion: "Assurance is never to be enjoyed on the basis of a past experience. There is need of the present and continuing work of the Holy Spirit ... [in] giving assurance" (p. 265). This is no esoteric theological debate: the substance of your assurance is at stake.

Review

John 13:36–14:20 (NKJV)

Christ Foretells Peter's Denial

Matt. 26:34, 35; Mark 14:30, 31; Luke 22:33, 34

³⁶ Simon Peter said to Him, “Lord, where are You going?”

Jesus answered him, “Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward.”

³⁷ Peter said to Him, “Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake.”

³⁸ Jesus answered him, “Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.

Christ Comforts His Disciples

14 “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. ² In My Father's house are many mansions; if *it were* not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also. ⁴ And where I go you know, and the way you know.”

Christ Answers Thomas

⁵ Thomas said to Him, “Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

⁷ “If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him.”

Christ Answers Philip

⁸ Philip said to Him, “Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us.”

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. ¹¹ Believe Me that I *am* in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves.

¹² “Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater *works* than these he will do, because I go to My Father. ¹³ And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*.

¹⁵ “If you love Me, keep My commandments. ¹⁶ And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you. ¹⁸ I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you.

¹⁹ “A little while longer and the world will see Me no more, but you will see Me. Because I live, you will live also. ²⁰ At that day you will know that I *am* in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you

Lesson

1. The Character of the Christian
2. The Character of the Counterfeit
3. The Creator of the Command

1. The Character of the Christian

21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.

21 ο εχων τας εντολας μου και τηρων αυτας εκεινος εστιν ο αγαπων με

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (Jn 14:21). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

23 Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word;

Απεκριθη ο Ιησους και ειπεν αυτω Εαν τις αγαπα με τον λογον μου τηρησει

These two verses teach the same truth. But notice that they say it differently.

1. He who has the commandments and keeps them Loves Jesus.

2. He who loves me is the the one that will keep my Commandments.

The first on its surface seems to say that keeping the Commandments can be the equivalent of Loving Jesus.

But this is not the case, because the next verse clarifies, along with the rest of scripture.

IF you love me...first. then you will keep my commandments.

Keeping the commandments is not that same as loving Christ.

But those that Love Christ will keep his commandments because the love him.

1. Some keep the commandments because they feel obligated to, but not because they Love God.

Like a soldier in the army who keeps the command of the Sergeant, not because he loves him but because he is obligated to.

This is the Moral man

2. Some keep the commandments because they believe it will make them acceptable to God. So they live a very careful life believe God will accept them into heaven not send them to Hell.

This is the man who hopes his good will outweigh his bad and he will go to heaven

This is the Religious Man

3. But some keep the commandments because they have been Saved, Regenerated, Forgiven of their sin. They have experienced the grace and mercy of God and out of gratitude and love for Jesus Christ keep his Commandments not because they have to but because they want to. The difference is that they have been changed on the inside through the miracle of regeneration and have been made a new Creation in Christ, and now have the Holy Spirit living inside of them

This is the Christian

Lets look at the specifics of the text

21 He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.

21 ο εχων τας εντολας μου και τηρων αυτας εκεινος εστιν ο αγαπων με

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (Jn 14:21). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

The is notable Johanian use of participles

In his description of Christians, they are always noted in Present tense verbs and notably participles that are verbal adjectives. They describe character of the believe in verbal form

Example.

present tense verb.

The dog is running down the street.

Participle

The running dog is faster than he use to be.

Youngs Literal Translation

²¹he who is having my commands, and is keeping them, that one it is who is loving me...

21 He who has My commandments

ο εχων τας εντολας μου

ἔχων τὰς ἐντολάς (the phrase does not occur again) is to have them in one's heart, to *know* them and apprehend their meaning; but τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς is to *keep* them, which is a harder thing. it is said that love issues in obedience; here the point is, that obedience is the proof of love.

Bernard, J. H. (1929). [A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to St. John](#). (A. H. McNeile, Ed.) (p. 548). New York: C. Scribner' Sons.

This is the starting point for obedience. One must have, possess (have), apprehend, understand.

Jeremiah 31:33 (NKJV)

³³ But this *is* the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

Deuteronomy 30:6 (NKJV)

⁶ And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.

Psalms 40:8 (NKJV)

⁸ I delight to do Your will, O my God,
And Your law *is* within my heart.”

Ezekiel 11:19–21 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Then I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within them, and take the stony heart out of their flesh, and give them a heart of flesh, ²⁰ that they may walk in My statutes and keep My judgments and do them; and they shall be My people, and I will be their God. ²¹ But *as for those* whose hearts follow the desire for their detestable things and their abominations, I will recompense their deeds on their own heads,” says the Lord God.

Ezekiel 36:25–27 (NKJV)

²⁵ Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. ²⁶ I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do *them*.

Romans 7:22 (NKJV)

²² For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man.

²¹ He who has My commandments and **keeps** them, it is he who loves Me.

21 ο εχων τας εντολας μου και **τηρων** αυτας **εκεινος** εστιν ο **αγαπων** με

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (Jn 14:21). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

083 tēréō (from tēros, "a guard") – properly, maintain (preserve); (figuratively) spiritually guard (watch), keep intact.

The opposite of breaking the commandment, but keeping, guarding, preserving, maintain.

τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς is to *keep* them, which is a harder thing. See on v. 15 above, where (as at v. 23) it is said that love issues in obedience; here the point is, that obedience is the proof of love.

Bernard, J. H. (1929). [*A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to St. John*](#). (A. H. McNeile, Ed.) (p. 548). New York: C. Scribner' Sons.

The phrase τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς is thoroughly Johannine (cf. 15:10, 1 Jn. 2:3, 4, 3:22, 24, 5:2, 3). It is the phrase used for “keeping” the Ten Commandments

Matthew 19:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ So He said to him, “**Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.**”

1 Corinthians 7:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Circumcision is nothing and uncircumcision is nothing, but keeping

the commandments of God *is what matters.*

; and that the precept “keep *my* commandments” should be placed in the mouth of Jesus is significant of His claim to be equal with God (cf. 13:34).

Bernard, J. H. (1929). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to St. John*. (A. H. McNeile, Ed.) (p. 545). New York: C. Scribner’ Sons.

In Jn. τηρεῖν τὰς ἐντολάς μου is used interchangeably with τηρεῖν τὸν λόγον μου (8:51, 14:23, 24, 15:20, 1 Jn. 2:5).

Bernard, J. H. (1929). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to St. John*. (A. H. McNeile, Ed.) (p. 545). New York: C. Scribner’ Sons.

21 **He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.**

21 ο εχων τας εντολας μου και τηρων αυτας **ΕΚΕΙΝΟΣ** ΕΣΤΙΝ Ο **ΑΓΑΠΩΝ** ΜΕ

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (Jn 14:21). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Emphatic demonstrative pronoun ἐκεῖνος [*ekeinos*]: “that is the one who loves me.”

Robertson, A. T. (1933). *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Jn 14:21). Nashville, TN: Broadman Press.

ἐκεῖνος: *he* it is (and no other) who loves me

Bernard, J. H. (1929). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to St. John*. (A. H. McNeile, Ed.) (p. 548). New York: C. Scribner's Sons.

These words are absolute, emphatically clear. No ambiguity

21 **He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.**

21 ο εχων τας εντολας μου και τηρων αυτας **ΕΚΕΙΝΟΣ** ΕΣΤΙΝ Ο **ΑΓΑΠΩΝ** ΜΕ

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (Jn 14:21). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Sof

who loves Me.

Ο **ΑΓΑΠΩΝ** ΜΕ

P. Part.

So it is that one, the one having and keeping His Commandments who is the one loving Christ.

All other claims are just that...claims.

There are thousands that attend evangelical church and are members of churches that do not meet the basic the requirements of true salvation as indicated in these verses.

A good indicator of the major problem facing the evangelical world is current condition of the SBC.

They claim as of 2018, 14.8 million members but can only claim 5.3 million attending their churches.

That is a huge discrepancy

That is a difference of 9.5 million people.

To put that in perspective, That is nearly 2 times the population of South Carolina.

Where are the other 9 million people.

Some are dead, some might be other churches, but most are not going anywhere and do not care that they do not attend. In fact, they care nothing about the Word of God or Jesus Christ and His Church. They live week after week and day after day with not thought of there love for God or His Word or his church. Weekends after weekend Sunday after Sunday with no Worship, no devotion to His Word, no communion, yet they do not miss it and rarely if every think about it. Yet they will tell you that they are saved and ok with God.

If we assume and I believe we can accurately that most of these to not attend church and don't attend because they have no real desire to follow Christ or keep His commandments and base on our text, do not then love Jesus Christ, our conclusion is that they are lost.

(The nation's biggest Protestant denomination isn't as big as it used to be, according to its Annual Church Profile (ACP), [released](#) today. Membership fell to 14.8 million in 2018—its first time below 15 million since 1989 and the lowest it's been since 1987.

the slight increases in worship attendance and total number of churches in the [previous report](#) did not continue their turnaround in 2018. Attendance saw a tiny decline of 0.43 percent to 5.3 million weekly worshipers, and churches are down by 88 to 47,456.)

Southern Baptists Down to Lowest in 30 Years

While giving is up, membership, baptism, and church numbers continued to drop in 2018.

KATE SHELLNUTT MAY 23, 2019 3:21 PM

21 **He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me.**

21 ο εχων τας εντολας μου και τηρων αυτας **ΕΚΕΙΝΟΣ** ΕΣΤΙΝ Ο **αγαπων** με

Newberry, T., & Berry, G. R. (2004). *The interlinear literal translation of the Greek New Testament* (Jn 14:21). Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.

Based on this verse there are huge numbers of people associated with Christianity that are lost.

There are so many who make verbal affirmation but do not show this Love for Christ.

Some of you in this church which i have been at now for 7 years, have never shared the gospel with one person. You don't talk about God or Christ unless it is brought up by someone else and then really you would rather take about something else. There are some of you here that I have never heard mention the name of God or Jesus Christ or how you love His Word hate your sin. Your commitment to Him amounts to attendance to this church on Sunday morning and you believe you are saved

because you do.... You come just enough to satisfy your nagging need for self righteousness and self affirmation. You could come to Bible Ed but you don't. You could come to Wednesday Prayer and Bible study but in your mind you believe it is a waste of time and gas to come and be with Gods people around the word and prayer, to many other important things to do. When opportunity comes of service, your not available or to busy, or you've done you part, you mistakingly believe....Yet you say you Love Jesus or maybe you don't even say it.

So many in the evangelical church are so full of themselves, there is not room for Loving Christ.

But JESUS said

21 He who has My commandments
and keeps them, **it is he who loves**
Me.

This theme is woven through this passage like the scarlet thread redemption is woven through the whole of scripture. It is a reminder that these promises or given directly to those who are true believers in Jesus Christ.

It is also an emphatic reminder of the character and quality of a true Christian. Anyone can claim to be a believer but that does not necessarily mean that he is a believer. True genuine faith is characterized by obedience to Jesus Christ and love of the father and the son.

John 13:34–35 (NKJV)

³⁴ A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. ³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

John 14:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ “If you love Me, keep My commandments.

John 15:1–2 (NKJV)

15 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser. ² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every *branch* that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

John 15:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love.

John 15:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit, and *that* your fruit should remain, that whatever you ask the Father in My name He may give you.

John 15:20 (NKJV)

²⁰ Remember the word that I said to you, 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted Me, they will also persecute you. If they kept My word, they will keep yours also.

John 15:23 (NKJV)

²³ He who hates Me hates My Father also.

John 17:6 (NKJV)

⁶ “I have manifested Your name to the men whom You have given Me out of the world. They were Yours, You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word.

John 17:8 (NKJV)

⁸ For I have given to them the words which You have given Me; and they have received *them*, and have known surely that I came forth from You; and they have believed that You sent Me.

1 John 1:6–7 (NKJV)

⁶ If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.

1 John 2:3–5 (NKJV)

³ Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments. ⁴ He who says, “I know Him,” and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him. ⁵ But whoever keeps

His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him.
By this we know that we are in Him.

1 John 2:29 (NKJV)

²⁹ If you know that He is righteous, you know that everyone who practices righteousness is born of Him.

1 John 3:6 (NKJV)

⁶ Whoever abides in Him does not sin. Whoever sins has neither seen Him nor known Him.

1 John 3:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ In this the children of God and the children of the devil are manifest: Whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor *is* he who does not love his brother.

1 John 3:22 (NKJV)

²² And whatever we ask we receive from Him, because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing in His sight.

1 John 3:24 (NKJV)

²⁴ Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

1 John 4:6 (NKJV)

⁶ We are of God. He who knows God hears us; he who is not of God does not hear us. By this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

1 John 4:9 (NKJV)

⁹ In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.

1 John 5:2 (NKJV)

² By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.

2 John 9 (NKJV)

⁹ Whoever transgresses and does not abide in the doctrine of Christ does not have God. He who abides in the doctrine of Christ has both the Father and the Son.

3 John 11 (NKJV)

¹¹ Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but he who does evil has not seen God.

2. The Character of the Counterfeit

24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

24 ο μη ἀγαπῶν με τους
λογους μου ου τηρει

This sentence has the same Present Participle that reflects the character of the lost person. The one who is characterized as not loving me

24 He who does not love Me

ὁ μὴ ἀγαπῶν με κτλ., “he that does not love me” (*sc.* the world) “does not keep my sayings” (λόγοι as distinct from λόγος, His full

message). λόγοι here is practically equivalent to ἐντολαί (v. 21).

Bernard, J. H. (1929). *A critical and exegetical commentary on the Gospel according to St. John*. (A. H. McNeile, Ed.) (p. 551). New York: C. Scribner' Sons.

The one who do not love Him are

1. Of the World

John 14:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

John 15:18–19 (NKJV)

¹⁸ “If the world hates you, you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. ¹⁹ If you were of the world, the world would love its own. Yet because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

John 17:14–16 (NKJV)

¹⁴ I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I

am not of the world. ¹⁵ I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

1 John 2:15 (NKJV)

¹⁵ Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

2. Ones that do not continue in His Word

John 8:30–31 (NKJV)

³⁰ As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

³¹ Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, “If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

3. Ones who leave the truth and church

John 6:64–69 (NKJV)

⁶⁴ But there are some of you who do not believe.” For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him.

⁶⁵ And He said, “Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.”

⁶⁶ From that *time* many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.

⁶⁷ Then Jesus said to the twelve, “Do you also want to go away?”

⁶⁸ But Simon Peter answered Him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.

⁶⁹ Also we have come to believe and know that You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”

1 John 2:19 (NKJV)

¹⁹ They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would have continued with us; but *they went out* that they might be made manifest, that none of them were of us.

4. They take the easy road and wide gate.

Matthew 7:13–14 (NKJV)

¹³ “Enter by the narrow gate; for wide *is* the gate and broad *is* the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. ¹⁴ Because narrow *is*

the gate and difficult *is* the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.

5. Religious but not Real

Matthew 7:21–23 (NKJV)

²¹ “Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. ²² Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ ²³ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

What makes all of this even more serious is the origin of the the Words. The Creator of the Commands

3. The Creator of the Commands

24 He who does not love Me does not keep My words; and the word which you hear is not Mine but the Father's who sent Me.

και ο λογος ον ακουετε ουκ εστιν εμος
αλλα του πεμψαντος με πατρος

The first part of the verse says they do not keep His words (plural). It is specific in its intent to make it clear the the individual statements are not kept by the lost person.

Now Jesus drives home the point that this is a serious matter because ALL of his words defined by the singular

ο λογος

refers to the entirety of His teaching, the whole body of teaching, all that he has said, All that he taught.

John 14:10 (NKJV)

¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not

speak on My own *authority*; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.

John 3:34 (NKJV)

³⁴ For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure.

John 7:16 (NKJV)

¹⁶ Jesus answered them and said, “My doctrine is not Mine, but His who sent Me.

John 8:26 (NKJV)

²⁶ I have many things to say and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true; and I speak to the world those things which I heard from Him.”

John 8:28 (NKJV)

²⁸ Then Jesus said to them, “When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am *He*, and *that* I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father taught Me, I speak these things.

John 12:49–50 (NKJV)

⁴⁹ For I have not spoken on My own *authority*; but the Father who sent Me gave Me a command, what I should say and what I should speak. ⁵⁰ And I know

that His command is everlasting life. Therefore, whatever I speak, just as the Father has told Me, so I speak.”

The Reality and the Tragedy and Sobriety of this is that when one does not keep, honor and obey the Words of Christ, YOU reject God. His Word, His Way and His Work.

John 5:23 (NKJV)

²³ that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.

John 15:23 (NKJV)

²³ He who hates Me hates My Father also.

Jesus in this discourse, which, like Jesus’ teaching elsewhere, is fully authorized by the Father and therefore to be received as God’s word

Lincoln, A. T. (2005). [*The Gospel according to Saint John*](#) (p. 396). London: Continuum.

These Words of Christ, Give weight, and eternal Authority to His Words as the Words of God. for all that He says

The Promise of Heaven
 The Promise of His Return to get them
 The Promise the Holy Spirit.
 The Promise of the Power to do the Ministry He as
 Called them too.....and more.

He highlighted this fact again so that the disciples would know with certainty that the promise of the coming of the Father and the Son to make their home with the believer was entirely trustworthy.

Kruse, C. G. (2003). *John: an introduction and commentary* (Vol. 4, p. 306). Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.

There are disloyal—and therefore unreal —“Christians,” who do not love Jesus, and they show this lack quite simply by the fact that keeping Jesus’ words is not a priority for them at all. His words are just so many interesting but usually dispensable and even irrelevant and bothersome words, not all that important to such “believers.” This attitude throws into serious question whether such persons are really believers in Jesus at all.

Bruner, F. D. (2012). *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (p. 844). Grand Rapids, MI;Cambridge, U.K.: Eerdmans.

Moralistic Therapeutic Deism—the New American Religion

When Christian Smith and his fellow researchers with the National Study of Youth and Religion at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill took a close look at the religious beliefs held by American teenagers, they found that the faith held and described by most adolescents came down to something the researchers identified as "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism."

As described by Smith and his team, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism consists of beliefs like these: 1. "A god exists who created and ordered the world and watches over human life on earth." 2. "God wants people to be good, nice, and fair to each other, as taught in the Bible and by most world religions." 3. "The central goal of life is to be happy and to feel good about ones self." 4. "God does not need to be particularly involved in one's life except when God is needed to resolve a problem." 5. "Good people go to heaven when they die."

That, in sum, is the creed to which much adolescent faith can be reduced. After conducting more than 3,000 interviews with American adolescents, the researchers reported that, when it came to the most crucial questions of faith and beliefs, many adolescents responded with a shrug and "whatever."

As a matter of fact, the researchers, whose report is summarized in *Soul Searching: The Religious and Spiritual Eyes of American Teenagers* by Christian Smith with Melinda Lundquist Denton, found that American teenagers are incredibly inarticulate about their religious beliefs, and most are virtually unable to offer any serious theological understanding. As Smith reports, "To the extent that the teens we interviewed did manage to articulate what they understood and believed religiously, it became clear that most religious teenagers either do not really comprehend what their own religious traditions say they are supposed to believe, or they do understand it and simply do not care to believe it. Either way, it is apparent that most religiously affiliated U.S. teens are not particularly interested in espousing and upholding the beliefs of their faith traditions, or that their communities of faith are failing in attempts to educate their youth, or both."

As the researchers explained, "For most teens, nobody has to do anything in life, including anything to do with religion. 'Whatever' is just fine, if that's what a person wants."

The casual "whatever" that marks so much of the American moral and theological landscapes--adolescent and otherwise--is a substitute for serious and responsible thinking. More importantly, it is a verbal cover for an embrace of relativism. Accordingly, "most religious teenager's opinions and views--one can hardly call them worldviews--are vague, limited, and often quite at variance with the actual teachings of their own religion."

The kind of responses found among many teenagers indicates a vast emptiness at the heart of their understanding. When a teenager says, "I believe there is a God and stuff," this hardly represents a profound theological commitment.

Amazingly, teenagers are not inarticulate in general. As the researchers found, "Many teenagers know abundant details about the lives of favorite musicians and television stars or about what it takes to get into a good college, but most are not very clear on who Moses and Jesus were." The obvious conclusion: "This suggests that a strong,

visible, salient, or intentional faith is not operating in the foreground of most teenager's lives."

One other aspect of this study deserves attention at this point. The researchers, who conducted thousands of hours of interviews with a carefully identified spectrum of teenagers, discovered that for many of these teens, the interview itself was the first time they had ever discussed a theological question with an adult. What does this say about our churches? What does this say about this generation of parents?

In the end, this study indicates that American teenagers are heavily influenced by the ideology of individualism that has so profoundly shaped the larger culture. This bleeds over into a reflexive non-judgmentalism and a reluctance to suggest that anyone might actually be wrong in matters of faith and belief. Yet, these teenagers are unable to live with a full-blown relativism.

The researchers note that many responses fall along very moralistic lines--but they reserve their most non-judgmental attitudes for matters of theological conviction and belief. Some go so far as to suggest that there are no "right" answers in matters of doctrine and theological conviction.

The "Moralistic Therapeutic Deism" that these researchers identify as the most fundamental faith posture and belief system of American teenagers appears, in a larger sense, to reflect the culture as a whole. Clearly, this generalized conception of a belief system is what appears to characterize the beliefs of vast millions of Americans, both young and old.

This is an important missiological observation--a point of analysis that goes far beyond sociology. As Christian Smith and Melinda Lundquist Denton explained, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism "is about inculcating a moralistic approach to life. It teaches that central to living a good and happy life is being a good, moral person. That means being nice, kind, pleasant, respectful, responsible, at work on self-improvement, taking care of one's health, and doing one's best to be successful." In a very real sense, that appears to be true of the faith commitment, insofar as this can be described as a faith commitment, held by a large percentage of Americans. These individuals, whatever their age, believe that religion should be centered in being "nice"--a posture that many believe is directly violated by assertions of strong theological conviction.

Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is also "about providing therapeutic benefits to its adherents." As the researchers explained, "This is not a religion of repentance from sin, of keeping the Sabbath, of living as a servant of sovereign divinity, of steadfastly saying one's prayers, of faithfully observing high holy days, of building character through suffering, of basking in God's love and grace, of spending oneself in gratitude and love for the cause of social justice, et cetera. Rather, what appears to be the actual dominant religion among U.S. teenagers is centrally about feeling good, happy, secure, at peace. It is about attaining subjective well-being, being able to resolve problems, and getting along amiably with other people."

In addition, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism presents a unique understanding of God. As Smith explains, this amorphous faith "is about belief in a particular kind of God: one who exists, created the world, and defines our general moral order, but not one who is particularly personally involved in one's affairs--especially affairs in which one would prefer not to have God involved. Most of the time, the God of this faith keeps a safe distance."

Smith and his colleagues recognize that the deity behind Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is very much like the deistic God of the 18th-century philosophers. This is not the God who thunders from the mountain, nor a God who will serve as judge. This undemanding deity is more interested in solving our problems and in making people happy. "In short, God is something like a combination Divine Butler and Cosmic Therapist: he is always on call, takes care of any problems that arise, professionally helps his people to feel better about themselves, and does not become too personally involved in the process." Obviously, Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is not an organized faith. This belief system has no denominational headquarters and no mailing address. Nevertheless, it has millions and millions of devotees across the United States and other advanced cultures, where subtle cultural shifts have produced a context in which belief in such an undemanding deity makes sense. Furthermore, this deity does not challenge the most basic self-centered assumptions of our postmodern age. Particularly when it comes to so-called "lifestyle" issues, this God is exceedingly tolerant and this religion is radically undemanding.

As sociologists, Smith and his team suggest that this Moralistic Therapeutic Deism may now constitute something like a dominant civil religion that constitutes the belief system for the culture at large. Thus, this basic conception may be analogous to what other researchers have identified as "lived religion" as experienced by the mainstream culture.

Moving to even deeper issues, these researches claim that Moralistic Therapeutic Deism is "colonizing" Christianity itself, as this new civil religion seduces converts who never have to leave their congregations and Christian identification as they embrace this new faith and all of its undemanding dimensions.

Consider this remarkable assessment: "Other more accomplished scholars in these areas will have to examine and evaluate these possibilities in greater depth. But we can say here that we have come with some confidence to believe that a significant part of Christianity in the United States is actually [only] tenuously Christian in any sense that is seriously connected to the actual historical Christian tradition, but is rather substantially morphed into Christianity's misbegotten step-cousin, Christian Moralistic Therapeutic Deism."

They argue that this distortion of Christianity has taken root not only in the minds of individuals, but also "within the structures of at least some Christian organizations and institutions."

How can you tell? "The language, and therefore experience, of Trinity, holiness, sin, grace, justification, sanctification, church, . . . and heaven and hell appear, among most Christian teenagers in the United States at the very least, to be supplanted by the language of happiness, niceness, and an earned heavenly reward."

Does this mean that America is becoming more secularized? Not necessarily. These researchers assert that Christianity is either degenerating into a pathetic version of itself or, more significantly, Christianity is actively being colonized and displaced by a quite different religious faith.

This radical transformation of Christian theology and Christian belief replaces the sovereignty of God with the sovereignty of the self. In this therapeutic age, human problems are reduced to pathologies in need of a treatment plan. Sin is simply excluded

from the picture, and doctrines as central as the wrath and justice of God are discarded as out of step with the times and unhelpful to the project of self-actualization.

All this means is that teenagers have been listening carefully. They have been observing their parents in the larger culture with diligence and insight. They understand just how little their parents really believe and just how much many of their churches and Christian institutions have accommodated themselves to the dominant culture. They sense the degree to which theological conviction has been sacrificed on the altar of individualism and a relativistic understanding of truth. They have learned from their elders that self-improvement is the one great moral imperative to which all are accountable, and they have observed the fact that the highest aspiration of those who shape this culture is to find happiness, security, and meaning in life.

This research project demands the attention of every thinking Christian. Those who are prone to dismiss sociological analysis as irrelevant will miss the point. We must now look at the United States of America as missiologists once viewed nations that had never heard the gospel. Indeed, our missiological challenge may be even greater than the confrontation with paganism, for we face a succession of generations who have transformed Christianity into something that bears no resemblance to the faith revealed in the Bible. The faith "once delivered to the saints" is no longer even known, not only by American teenagers, but by most of their parents. Millions of Americans believe they are Christians, simply because they have some historic tie to a Christian denomination or identity.

We now face the challenge of evangelizing a nation that largely considers itself Christian, overwhelmingly believes in some deity, considers itself fervently religious, but has virtually no connection to historic Christianity. Christian Smith and his colleagues have performed an enormous service for the church of the Lord Jesus Christ in identifying Moralistic Therapeutic Deism as the dominant religion of this American age. Our responsibility is to prepare the church to respond to this new religion, understanding that it represents the greatest competitor to biblical Christianity. More urgently, this study should warn us all that our failure to teach this generation of teenagers the realities and convictions of biblical Christianity will mean that their children will know even less and will be even more readily seduced by this new form of paganism. This study offers irrefutable evidence of the challenge we now face. As the motto reminds us, "Knowledge is power."

