

SOME  
IMPERATIVES  
*FROM THE*  
BIBLE

ISBN: 978-1-4357-4735-7

@ 2007) - Domenico Barbera  
D. Barbera 5489 Desson Avenue Niagara  
Falls, ON  
Canada L2G 3S9 Tel: (905) 354-2237  
E-mail: [CVL\\_DBarbera@yahoo.ca](mailto:CVL_DBarbera@yahoo.ca)

Printed in Spain on August 2008

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced in any way, without the prior written consent of the Publisher, except for brief quotations for use in articles in which the book is being reviewed.

C.V.L. (Christian Vision Literature)  
5489 Desson Ave. NIAGARA FALLS, ON. L2G  
3S9 (Canada) email:  
[CVL\\_DBarbera@yahoo.ca](mailto:CVL_DBarbera@yahoo.ca)

Original Title: Alcuni imperativi della Bibbia  
Translation by Dino Cianflone.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

## Works by the same author:

- ❑ Is Jesus Christ God?
- ❑ The Great Commission of Jesus Christ
- ❑ Heroes of the Faith - Hebrews 11
- ❑ Is Marriage Divinely Instituted?
- ❑ The First Multiplication of Bread
- ❑ Nehemiah... A Man Moved, Sustained and Heroically Motivated
- ❑ The Spirit World
- ❑ Jesus... The Divine Healer
- ❑ Faith As Taught In The Bible
- ❑ Jacob... A Man Transformed By God
- ❑ The Journey of a People - From Egypt to Canaan
- ❑ Doing Good To Someone For Love
- ❑ I Believe, Therefore I Behave
- ❑ *Wath the Bible says about Satan*
- ❑ Womans mention of The Bible

# *DEDICATION*

*We dedicate this work to those who  
wish to know God and His Word and  
want to live their lives in obedience and  
submission to the Lord's will as  
revealed in the Holy Scriptures*

# INDEX

<b>PREFACE.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Chapter 1:</b>	
<b>BIBLE TERMS USED TO ILLUSTRATE ITS IMPERATIVES.....</b>	<b>19</b>
The first principle of the Bible .....	21
Reflections .....	25
<b>Chapter 2:</b>	
<b>NEITHER ADD NOR TAKE AWAY.....</b>	<b>29</b>
The Old Testament Passages .....	30
The New Testament text .....	33
<b>Chapter 3:</b>	
<b>THE BENEFITS OF OBSERVING GOD'S COMMANDS .....</b>	<b>37</b>
Happiness .....	38
Joy.....	41
Well-being and prosperity.....	42
Bible Texts .....	43
<b>Chapter 4:</b>	

<b>PASSAGES THAT SPEAK ABOUT PROSPERITY .....</b>	<b>51</b>
Conclusion.....	70
<b>Chapter 5:</b>	
<b>DO NOT SOW AMONG THORNS .....</b>	<b>73</b>
Preliminary note.....	73
A panorama of what the Bible teaches about thorns .....	74
Jeremiah’s directive in light of the parable of the Sower .....	81
<b>Chapter 6:</b>	
<b>LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF THE LORD AND WALKING IN ALL HIS WAYS .....</b>	<b>85</b>
The Privileges and Responsibility of the People of Israel.....	86
What God Says About Israel.....	87
Knowing the Lord’s Voice.....	90
Walking in all the ways of the Lord.....	94
<b>Chapter 7:</b>	
<b>AN EXHORTATION TO WATCHFULNESS IN MATERIAL PROSPERITY .....</b>	<b>97</b>
Biblical references regarding the abundance of material goods.....	98
Reflections from Deuteronomy 8:11-14.	102

Recommendations from the Deuteronomy  
text ..... 103

**Chapter 8:**

**THE COMMANDMENT TO LOVE THE LORD  
..... 107**

The reasons for the divine requirement. 108

What the New Testament says..... 109

The greatest commandment ..... 113

How God wants to be loved..... 114

How much God must be loved ..... 116

**Chapter 9:**

**JESUS' PROMISE TO THOSE THAT LOVE  
HIM ..... 119**

Preliminary notes ..... 120

A clear question ..... 120

Jesus' explanation..... 122

Judas' (not Judas Iscariot) question ..... 124

The meaning of Jesus' promise..... 125

**Chapter 10:**

**WHAT THE NEW TESTAMENT TEACHES  
ABOUT GOD'S COMMANDMENTS ..... 131**

The least of the commandments ..... 134

The jot and tittle..... 136

The exhortation to obey the  
commandments ..... 137

A reflection on the observance of the commandments ..... 140

What the Bible says about eternal life... 140

Conclusion of the story of the rich young man ..... 143

**Chapter 11:**

**WHAT COUNTS: KEEPING GOD’S COMMANDMENTS..... 147**

Why Paul perceives circumcision in the way he describes it in his epistles..... 152

What counts, that is, what is of value... 153

**Chapter 12:**

**GOD’S COMMANDMENTS IN 1 & 2 JOHN ..... 157**

What this text teaches..... 158

What there is to be gained by obeying God’s commandments ..... 159

The meaning of our relationship with God ..... 160

Loving the children of God..... 161

**Chapter 13:**

**THE EXHORTATION TO BE ALERT ..... 163**

Statistical note ..... 163

Review of the seven sections ..... 165

II. Matthew 25:13 – The parable of the ten virgins.....	170
III. Matthew 26:41 and Mark 14:34, 38	173
IV. Acts 20:31 .....	175
V. 1 Corinthians 16:13.....	178
VI. Ephesians 6:18.....	179
VII. 1 Peter 5:8.....	181

**Chapter 14:**

<b>THE COMMANDMENT: LOVE ONE ANOTHER.....</b>	<b>185</b>
The Bible text.....	185
How to love .....	187
A necessary explanation.....	188
The importance of the adverb “as” .....	189
Why Jesus gave such a commandment	190

**Chapter 15:**

<b>A STANDARD FOR CHRISTIAN BEHAVIOUR.....</b>	<b>193</b>
The Bible text.....	193
Preliminary note.....	194
1. Love your enemies.....	196
2. Do good to those who hate you .....	200
3. Bless those who curse you .....	201
4. Pray for those who mistreat you .....	203

5. Do not reciprocate a wrong committed against you .....	204
6. Give generously.....	207
7. Treat men as you would want to be treated by them.....	210
<b>Chapter 16:</b>	
<b>HOW YOU SPEAK.....</b>	<b>213</b>
The false oath.....	214
Texts that speak about lying.....	217
False testimony .....	219
Some recommendations for self-control	219
<b>CONCLUSION .....</b>	<b>221</b>
<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY.....</b>	<b>225</b>

## PREFACE

**I**t is often said today that all religions are the same. What do you think? Others say: No, but all lead to God and the best way is Christ.

This sounds broad-minded, but in reality it is a denial of the truth. By saying this, we make “a liar” of our Lord Jesus Christ who said: “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6).

The reality is that God has revealed Himself and there is no other God. He has not been silent, neither has He been detached from his creation, man. He has spoken to us in various ways that are not in contradiction with one another, because God cannot lie.

In the Holy Scriptures (God’s revelation), the author of the Letter to the Hebrews expressed it this way: “In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:1-2).

**Following this introduction it is necessary to make an important point**

The Bible is a gold mine. The imperatives, the directives, the councils, the commandments, etc. are like a never ending chain of happiness. Everything written in it is sound and is not subject to change, just like its Author, God.

In Deuteronomy 4:40, Moses is speaking on behalf of God; “Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children”.

The prophet Jeremiah, inspired of God, addressed this commandment to the Hebrew people of his time: “Walk in all the ways I command you that it may go well with you” (Jeremiah 7:23).

Jesus, paraphrasing the above, said: “Come to me... you will find rest [= happiness] for your souls. (Matthew 11:28-30).

Pastor **Domenico Barbera**, in this work, discusses “Some Imperatives from the Bible”. He skilfully reviews not only positive imperatives, but unfortunately, also some negative ones, but all toward understanding the goal which is happiness.

God is a loving Father who desires good and happiness for His creation as we have said earlier, but this requires emphasis on the

commandments (both positive and negative) that God gives. To confirm the truth of what we have stated, which the author of this work has emphasized, it is sufficient to read Deuteronomy 11. God assures the happiness of those that submit to His commandments (= imperatives).

I have read and reread this work. I can declare that it has done me much good and has also revived my faith, thus I am sure that all who will have this new book (new also in regard to its subject) of **Pastor Domenico Barbera** in their hands will be edified and encouraged to probe deeper into the Bible to discover the treasures that it contains.

Nino Tirelli

## INTRODUCTION

**B**ased on the grammar of a language, “imperative manifest a vast range of values: command, prayer, invitation, council, permission, petition, prohibition”. The function is to express oneself in a “command”, an “invitation”, an “exhortation”, a “prayer”.

It is widely asserted - without distinction of religious denomination - that the Bible is the word of God. Although He did not write it directly Himself, the author is not man or men (inasmuch as some forty men drafted it) but God. Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, men compiled the Bible (which is a miniature library) in all its parts, generally known as: the “Old and New Testaments”.

Those that accept the canonical writings know that the Bible is composed of 66 books: 39 belong to the Old Testament and 27 to the New Testament. Those instead that do not adhere to only the canonical writings, believe that the number of books of the Bible is different and that there are more than 66 books.

Recognizing the sure truth that the Bible is God's book, as it is commonly called: "The Word of God", we must keep in mind that He did not cause His book to be written for Himself; nor even for use by His angels, nor for all the heavenly hosts, but only for man; that is to say for all humanity, without regard to social status, colour of skin or place of residence. By the phrase "place of residence", we mean to refer to planet Earth, without thought that there are others in various parts of the Universe.

If we accept that the Bible was written for man, the Author of this book which is to say God, wanted to make Himself known to His creation and at the same time make man aware of His interest in him. This means that God has given everything necessary in His Word so that man, whom He created, may enjoy blessings both for spiritual as well as material life.

Moreover, knowing that man will not live forever on earth, God, through His book, wanted to enlighten man, not only for earthly life, but also for eternal life, i.e. life beyond the grave. The "imperatives" that God caused to be written in His book have this precise goal, even though it did not appeal to men throughout the ages to submit to direction, commandments or exhortations.

Everything that we write in this book, speaking specifically about the "imperatives

of the Bible”, will be in regard to the concepts of: direction, order, exhortation and prayer (this last one not meaning a devotional exercise, but as an invitation to receive, to welcome something that comes from God and His Word).

The Bible text that we will use in this work will be The New International Version (NIV) and when we believe appropriate we will refer to other translations which we will not fail to identify.

Finally, we are duty bound to publicly acknowledge the work of revision carried out with great care by the beloved brother, Nino Tirelli and also for the wise counsel that he provided us.

The best we can wish for all readers is that each will treasure what will be read later on, with a fervent recommendation to put it all into practice every day.

Domenico Barbera

Niagara Falls, January 2007

# Chapter 1

## BIBLE TERMS USED TO ILLUSTRATE ITS IMPERATIVES

### **Introductory Note**

The terms, “command”, “commandment”, “commandments”, “order”, “to order”, “ordered” (in the sense of following a directive), “was ordered”, which are referred to in this chapter and that are intended to show the value of the “imperatives” that the Bible contains under these entries, are 798 in all; 712 in the Old Testament and 86 in the

New Testament. This count is based on the text of the Italian Nuova Riveduta version.

Obviously, in these occurrences, there are many passages that speak about the ceremonial liturgies of the Israelites with all the related rules that God commanded them to practice, i.e. the sacrifice of animals offered to the Lord, religious festivals and other things which today are no longer valid, considering above all, the sacrifice that Jesus offered on Calvary once and forever.

Moreover, from the number of occurrences mentioned above, there are commandments and orders that were given by men or women for particular situations. Of course, we will not take into account any of these. We will only take into consideration those commandments and directives given by God, Jesus Christ, the prophets and the apostles, keeping in mind above all, that the Church of the Lord is *built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone* (Ephesians 2:20).

If it is true that everything continually changes around us in all areas of life, including individual, collective and social religion, i.e. humanity outside of the Church of the Lord, it is equally true that the Word of God is not subject to change as declared in Psalm 119:89, *Your word, O LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens.*

With this premise, we can examine the information that we find in the Bible

regarding the above terms in order to emphasize the “imperatives of the Bible”.

### **The first principle of the Bible**

God’s commandment to the man: Adam

The first “principle” that the Bible mentions is under the heading of: “commanded”.

*<sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;*

*<sup>17</sup> but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17).*

*After the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed; He caused lovely trees to sprout from the ground. The fruit they produced served as food for the humans living there. Of all the trees in the garden, there were two that were called: *The tree of life* and the *tree of the knowledge of good and evil*. Some believe that the two trees were “similar in appearance”<sup>1</sup>. The forbidden fruit was from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil; while of the other fruit, i.e. from the tree of life, there was no prohibition. This means that, first Adam and later Eve, most certainly did eat of this fruit.*

Leaving aside everything that the commentators have written to explain our story, we suggest a simple question to all (it

---

<sup>1</sup> Allen P. Ross, *Investigate le Scritture, Antico Testamento*, pag. 31

is not a new question, but a very old one) to understand it. What was God's purpose in ordering Adam not to eat of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil?

That this fruit was not the "apple" symbolizing sexual relations, as some have asserted and that many have accepted as divine truth is shown by the blessing that God gave Adam and Eve when He said to them: *"Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground"* (Genesis 1:28). No one would deny that "fruitfulness" could not occur without sexual relations. Consequently, the forbidden fruit (it does not matter what it was called), could not have been sexual relations.

The simplest answer that can be given to the question is: God asked of the man that He had created obedience and submission to His Word. This obedience and submission was not to have been perceived as an imposition of divine will over human will, but instead would be the result of free choice activated in full spontaneity by the human.

To help understand the value and importance of obedience, we refer to the military norm. In this environment, the obedient attitude of a soldier to his commander's orders is: "ready, respectful and absolute". If military authorities demand this kind of obedience, it is silly to think that our God, who is by far

superior to the highest state authorities, would require anything less from men.

When He speaks and addresses His Word to us (99% of it is by the written word, i.e. the Bible), He wants to be readily listened to. This attitude shows not only an interest in His Word, but it also conditions our attitude towards Him. Moreover, our readiness unflinchingly leads us to seriously consider the things of God and to obey all that He communicates to us. That becomes our goal.

But man often behaves the way Governor Felix behaved when he told Paul: *“That’s enough for now! You may leave. When I find it convenient, I will send for you”* (Acts 24:25). How different instead was Samuel’s attitude: *“Speak, for your servant is listening”* (1 Samuel 3:10).

God is never pleased with half measures such as when we say: “Better a little than nothing at all”. The Lord does not want partial obedience; He wants full, deferential obedience. Even if we do not always understand certain of the Lord’s commands, this does not excuse us from submitting to His Word.

If we accept that the Word of God is truth and that it is without error, the respect we manifest toward it is derived from the knowledge that our God, who is always interested in our good, deserves our full confidence in all that He communicates to us. If we hold fast to this reference point, our attitude in regard to obedience will not be

tremulous, but will unfailingly be the result of a right choice and of full acceptance of the will of the Lord.

The commandment that God gave not to eat the forbidden fruit also contained a severe warning: *for when you eat of it you will surely die.*

The question we ask is the following: if it had not been for the “serpent” succeeding to convince Eve to eat the forbidden fruit, would our ancestors have contravened the divine order? Surely not! This does not mean that we can excuse them from their responsibility in what they did. In fact, God later called to Adam: “*Where are you?*”

*<sup>10</sup> He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."*

*<sup>11</sup> And he said, "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?"*

*<sup>12</sup> The man said, "The woman you put here with me—she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it." (Genesis 3:9-12).*

If we had heard these words, we would easily have acquitted Adam from his guilt since Eve was truly responsible. But God, without giving an immediate answer, continues His intervention by calling out to the woman: “*What is this you have done?*” *The woman said, "The serpent deceived me, and I ate." (v. 13).*

Having heard Adam and Eve's justification, God pronounces the sentence:

*14 So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this,"Cursed are you above all the livestock and all the wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life.*

*15 And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel."*

*16 To the woman he said, "I will greatly increase your pains in childbearing; with pain you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you."*

*17 To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat of it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat of it all the days of your life. (v. 14-17).*

### **Reflections**

What can we learn from this episode? Here are some reflections:

1. Obedience to God and His Word must be the primary and predominant element in our life; our hopes, desires, plans and programs must converge and be realized in it. It cannot be expected that God would put a "seal" of His approval on us if we take no account of what He says and we do things our own way.

There is a saying in the Word of God that resounds: *But now the LORD declares: 'Far be it from me! Those who honour me I will honour, but those who despise me will be disdained'* (1 Samuel 2:30).

How do we honour the Lord? By putting His Word into practice! The apostle James is completely correct when he states:

*<sup>22</sup> Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*

*<sup>23</sup> Anyone who listens to the word but does not do what it says is like a man who looks at his face in a mirror*

*<sup>24</sup> and, after looking at himself, goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like.*

*<sup>25</sup> But the man who looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom, and continues to do this, not forgetting what he has heard, but doing it—he will be blessed in what he does. (James 1:22-25).*

To what did Jesus compare the person who puts His words into practice?

*<sup>24</sup> "Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock.*

*<sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock.*

*<sup>26</sup> But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand.*

*27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." (Matthew 7:24-27).*

1. To obey God and His Word is the most demanding challenge for anyone that seeks to do what pleases Him. In Christian life, there is no value in what pleases us or what pleases those around us: whether they are parents, children, brothers, sisters, friends, work colleagues; but only un what pleases the Lord.
2. Living one's existence with the aim of doing whatever pleases the Lord, at times requires a price to pay that consists in being willing to renounce certain carnal pleasures and tendencies. With such a disposition, we will be ready for anything and surely the Lord will not fail to help us in various situations of life and in the choices and decisions that we make.
3. Obedience that is dictated by imposition is not obedience, but simply fear. What God wants and what pleases Him is obedience that represents free choice and firm determination by the individual.
4. God has not created robots. He created conscious and free beings that know how to express, through voluntary acts, the choices concerning the standard of living that they want to follow,

according to the plans and will of the Lord. Considering that God never imposed His will on anyone, we must realize that failure to obey Him to the fullest extent that He wants, whether we like it or not, whether we believe it or not, will not only result in tragic consequences from disobedience and unfaithfulness, but as is stated in God's Word: *Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. The one who sows to please his sinful nature, from that nature will reap destruction; the one who sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life.* (Galatians 6:7-8).