

# Love God And Live As You Please

“Love God And Live As You Please.” This was the response of Augustine when he was asked what is the secret to the Christian life. This was also the response of Martin Luther when he was asked to cite his rule of life.

Everyone except those who are physically confined or restrained endeavors to live the rule “Live as you please.” The difference between us is the object of our love. For we are motivated to live by whom we love. This is true for both “lovers of *themselves*” (2 Timothy 3:2) and “lovers of *God*” (2 Timothy 3:4). The first will have “pleasure in unrighteousness” (2 Thessalonians 2:12). The second will imitate Jesus Christ when He said of His Father, “I always do those things that please Him” (John 8:29). Nevertheless, many religious folks become upset when Christians confess to live by the rule “Love God, and live as you please.” They appear to skip over the *first* part of that rule – which is the most important part to a Christian – and therefore misunderstand or misapply the *second*.

Some have told me, “Your rule lets you do what you want to do.”

O, how I wish I could do what I want to do! I want to serve the God I love completely and perfectly. I am grieved when I do not (see Romans 7:15ff).

Some have told me, “Your rule gives you a license to sin.”

To the contrary, a license to *sin* belongs to those who hate God and love themselves. Lovers of God depart from sin to godliness because they have, as it were, a license to *righteousness*. Lovers of God obey His Word when it says, "You who love Jehovah, hate evil!" (Psalm 97:10). Lovers of God are compelled by their love to "no longer . . . live the rest of his time in the flesh for the lusts of men, but for the will of God" (1 Peter 4:2) and to "live according to God in the spirit" (v.6). Lovers of God live so as to be "imitators of God as dear children" (Ephesians 5:1), and to be holy and perfect because He is (1 Peter 1:15f; Matthew 5:48), and to live according to the example of their Lord and Savior Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:21).

Lovers of God are not *legalists* motivated by the desire to live in a way that obtains justification or sanctification through keeping the law. Nor are lovers of God *mercenaries* motivated by the desire to live so as to earn rewards from God.

Rather, lovers of God are motivated to live according to God's love to us and our love to Him.

And, as Augustine also said, "To profess to love God while leading an unholy life is the worst of falsehoods."

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