

Read: John 14:15-21

Love for God

John 14:15,18-19

If you love me, keep my commands ... I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

It did not sound good. My dad turned the key, and the car only groaned. He turned the key again, and it only whimpered. He turned the key once more, and . . . *nothing*. "You gotta be kidding me," Dad muttered in frustration. I grabbed the battery tester off the workbench, walked over to the car, and touched the red to the positive and the black to the negative. Nothing. "Battery's dead, Dad." A car without juice will not work.

Did you know that you also were born with a dead battery? When a mom gives birth to a baby, that baby can breathe, cry, and move right away. She is alive—physically! But that same baby is also born with a spiritual defect. She *cannot love God or do what God wants*. She is dead—spiritually. As a matter fact, she would not want to love God or do what God says. Like a car with a dead battery, a human being without faith in Jesus will not obey God's commandments or love him. A dead battery is worthless. It's not worth keeping. God already knows this to be true.

Yet, listen to Jesus. He does not look at us in frustration and mutter, "You gotta be kidding me." He says, "I will not leave you. I will come to you. I live so that you also will live." God understands the problem in us. He gave Jesus as the answer. At Easter, Jesus came out of his grave and announced, "I live!" Then he immediately looked at you and declared, "You also will live!" He did it by removing our dead batteries. Then he replaced them with one filled with the power of his love and life. Now, we have power for life now and forever in heaven!

Do you remember when God gave your new battery? Think again of a baby. What a blessing when God comes through his promises in the waters of baptism whether young or old! There he made you a child of God, gave you life, and gave you the "juice"—a heart that so loves and trusts God, it inspires us to keeps his commandments!

Christ is risen! He is risen indeed! Alleluia!

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for Younger Children

- Why didn't the car start?
- Why is it hard for us to do the good things God wants?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- The Bible describes us as spiritually dead. What are some other Biblical pictures of our spiritual problem that comes from our sin? Try to connect the beautiful ways the gospel answers those spiritual problems.
- When Jesus says, "Because I live, you also will live," is he talking about our spiritual life now that follows God or eternal life in heaven? (Hint: The answer is found in second to last paragraph.)

Questions for Middle School and Above

- A friend asks you, "Why does God give us commandments that he knows we can't keep on our own?" What would you say to him?
- How does the hope of the resurrection inspire us to love God and keep his commandments?

Closing Prayer:

Gracious Savior, you know our struggle with sin. Thank you for your forgiveness. Give us your Spirit and faith in you so that we can live lives of thanksgiving and obedience that show our love for God. Amen.

Hymn: CW 497:1,2 – This is My Will

"This is my will, my one command,
That love should dwell among you all.
This is my will, that you should love
As I have shown that I love you.

No greater love can any have
Than that one die to save his friends.
You are my friends if you obey
What I command that you should do."