

END-TIMES ISSUES



#88 Commandment #4 – The basis for work.

GOD DOESN'T TELL US TO KNOW ALL THE END-TIME DETAILS. HE TELLS US TO BE READY.

A N D B E Y O N D I

THE 4TH COMMANDMENT

✧ Certain things *are* to be a part of worship! ✧

- **A focus on truth** – the message of God's Word:
 - ↳ An awareness of God's worth, and our dependency on him.
 - ↳ Recognition that God, *because he is morally upright*, will put an end to the wicked, and will bless the righteous.
- **Praise and thankfulness** for who God is and *what* he does. Music and singing, rejoicing in God.
- **Prayer** – first for God's kingdom and his people, then for our needs. (This also includes praise and recognition of who God is, etc.)
- ↳ All this is to be done with the right attitude and a willingness to respond in whatever way necessary to honor God (repentance, trust, changes in values, etc.).

✧ Under the New Covenant... ✧

- It's OK if we treat *one day as special* (whatever day that might be) ... or *seven*.

One person regards **a certain day above the others**, while someone else considers **every day alike**. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes a special day does so to the Lord ...

Romans 14:5-6a (BSB)

- ↳ Even if we treat some days as "less special" than others, *they still belong to God*. So in one respect, they are *still* special!

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, **do it [all] to the glory of God.**

1 Corinthians 10:31 (BSB)

- ↳ What are we supposed to do on these "less special" days? **The Fourth Commandment tells us what to do!**

THERE IS NO OTHER OPTION GIVEN IN SCRIPTURE!

THE 4TH COMMANDMENT

✧ It tells us what to do the rest of the week! ✧

- **The commandment itself gives us the just the basic information.** But it represents the category of commands, instructions and examples that fill-in the rest of what we need to know.
 - ↳ This information is found throughout the Word of God.
- **Just like the teachings about the *Sabbath*, the teachings about the *rest of the week* have their origin in the book of Genesis.**
 - ↳ From that point, the concept is further developed throughout the rest of Scripture.
- **The New Testament doesn't repeat the *command itself*, but it *does* repeat the obligations that belong to that command.** Commands, instructions and examples of how to live the rest of the week.

✧ What the Fourth Commandment says. ✧

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. **Six days you shall labor and do all your work**, but **the seventh day** is a Sabbath to the LORD your God, on which **you must not do any work ...**

Exodus 20:8-10a (BSB)

Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. **Six days you shall labor and do all your work**, but **the seventh day** is a Sabbath to the LORD your God, on which **you must not do any work ...**

Deuteronomy 5:12-14a (BSB)

- This command is also mentioned in Exodus 23:12; 31:15; 34:21; 35:2; and Leviticus 23:3. It is quoted in Luke 13:14. The six/one pattern is also mentioned in reference to one of the non-week Sabbaths, in Deuteronomy 16:8.
- Two verses point to the *reason* for this obligation...

✧ The reason for this obligation: *God's own actions*. ✧

For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, but on the seventh day He rested.

Exodus 20:11a (BSB)

... for in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, but on the seventh day He rested and was refreshed.

Exodus 31:17b (BSB)

- These two verses refer back to *this* event:

And there was evening, and there was morning—the **sixth day**. Thus **the heavens and the earth were completed** in all their vast array.

And by **the seventh day God had finished the work** He had been doing; so on that day **He rested from all His work**.

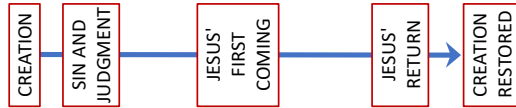
Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because on that day **He rested from all the work of creation** that He had accomplished.

Genesis 1:31b-2:3 (BSB)

We're going to see how the concept of "work" progresses down through the ages – according to Scripture.

- Some aspects of work have changed; some have remained the same.
 - ✓ Sin has affected things... so has salvation.
 - ✓ God has a goal. What sin has *destroyed*, Jesus is in the process of *restoring*. But this restoration is not yet complete.
 - ✓ All of this affects the nature of work ... and the nature of what we should be doing in life.

And it's all related to the Fourth Commandment concept!



7

**✧ Our obligation to work began with Adam. ✧
God has never cancelled it.**

- In fact, even before God created humans, he expressed his intention for them to work.

Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, **so that they may rule** over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

Genesis 1:26 (NIV)

- The first recorded words, spoken by God to people, were about work. Since this task was to be done *worldwide*, the humans would also have to "be fruitful and increase in number."

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and **subdue** it. **Rule** over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Genesis 1:28 (NIV)

8

"Rule the earth and subdue it?"

- Today, many people distort the Bible's message and change it into an excuse for *destroying* the earth. To them, this passage gives people permission to "rape and pillage the earth, ruin and destroy it"! Then they blame the *Bible* (or God) for what *people* do.
- ISSUE:** How should we respond, if people try to "justify" their sins by claiming that God commands it (based on their *distortions* of Scripture)?
 - ✓ **RESPONSE:** Don't join them. *Their sinful distortions don't justify the rest of us rejecting what God says!*
- ISSUE:** What if we somehow misunderstand what the *Genesis* passage teaches?
 - ✓ **RESPONSE:** Pay attention to the rest of the Bible! God gives us *many* commands related to *honoring* God in all that we do! Some focus specifically on our treatment of creation.

9

HOW should we rule/subdue?

- We are to do it as God's "image-bearers"** – because we bear God's "image" in creation. We are to do things in a way that reflects God's glory and goodness, and brings honor and glory to God.
 - ✓ This is totally *against* the idea of misuse and abuse of creation!
- Creation belongs to God.** People are to take care of it, like supervisors or managers over it. They are to develop it and use it for the benefit of people – and also for God's honor. (This is basically what Paul tells us to do, in 1 Corinthians 10:31, when he tells us we must do *all* for the glory of God.)
 - ✓ This working with creation is an expression of science and technology. But it can also include other legitimate ways that human society develops – things such as esthetics (beauty), art, literature, and various other social interactions.
 - ✓ Doing these things is an expression of love for neighbor. It's also an expression of love for God.

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Genesis 2 – The first example of work.

- Verses 8-14 – A description of the things that Adam would have been able to *work* with. Rivers, minerals, and other things found there. Some general statements about plants.
- Verse 15 – Adam was told to *work* the garden.
- Verses 19-20 – Adam's first task was to "name" some of the animals.
 - ✓ This "naming" didn't involve merely blurting-out a few syllables – and that's what the animal would be called.
 - ✓ Rather, it involved Adam learning characteristics about the animal, and then calling it something that accurately represented what it was – its nature. (Back then, names had more meaning and significance than they often do today.)
 - ✓ God also used this task to teach Adam about *himself* – his need for a "helper suitable for him."

11

We have a PROBLEM: SIN messes things up.

- Work would have *continued* to be a joyful blessing, if Adam and Eve had not fallen into sin. Because of their sin, *all* of creation was affected. *This is where the often-unpleasant aspects of work originated.*

"**Cursed is the ground** because of you; through **painful toil** you will eat food from it all the days of your life.

It will produce **thorns and thistles** for you, and you will eat the plants of the field.

By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and **to dust you will return.**"

Genesis 3:17b-19 (NIV)

12

Sin has consequences.

- Sin in the world did not cancel the obligation to work. But it did make work more difficult and frustrating.
 - ✓ Now, the things we do often don't seem to have any meaning or lasting value. ① The *general existence of sin* in the world has an effect on *everything* – even on the *good* things we do. ② The *sins of individuals* (and/or their sinful attitudes) creates problems for others. ③ Also, we tend to forget that *our own sinfulness* (or sinful attitudes) influences our own work.
- In Genesis 4, we see some examples of the development of science and technology (as well as the disintegration of society). But it is now being done by *sinner*s – which means that the technology is often used for *sinful* purposes.
 - ✓ This is the way things continue, *to this day*. And it will continue this way, until Jesus returns.
 - ✓ **Even so, none of this cancels our original obligation to work with creation, and to use it for the glory of God and the good of people.**

13

SALVATION has consequences.

- When God changes our hearts and minds (which includes changing our values), we have a renewed ability to do things in a way that honors God.
 - ✓ It's not that we *gain* an obligation to do things this way. That obligation has *always existed*! Even the *unsaved* have this obligation – though they don't do it.
 - ✓ What we have gained is the *ability* to begin doing things the right way. Until sin is totally removed from the world, there will still be problems; but we will contribute *less* to them. *We can improve the situation, even if we can't perfect it.*
- We look forward to the *new* heaven and earth, where all the effects of sin on the world will be gone. There will *still* be things to do... and the *full joy* of doing them will have returned!
 - ✓ ***We are not there yet!*** Our job is to do what we can *now* to work in a way that honors God. Remember that we *will someday* give account to God for how we do it!

14

We are **NOT** going to spend eternity sitting around on clouds!

- God has made creation *infinitely* complex. There will *always* be things to learn, things to do, creation to explore and develop, ways to benefit others... *And things to enjoy!*
 - ✓ God doesn't give us very many details. He gives us what we *need* to know, but not what we might *want* to know. That could be because we're supposed to trust and love *God*, rather than "eternal enjoyment." What God has in store for his people belongs to those who want to be with *God*, not those who just want to "have fun."
 - ✓ There will be activity. For instance, we will be *serving* God. And we will *not* be hindered by sin!

No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and **his servants will serve him.**

Revelation 22:3 (NIV)

We will be like *priests*, offering to God the "fruit" of our labor (whatever our labor might be) – 1 Peter 2:5, 9; Revelation 1:6; 5:10.

15

- In eternity, there will be *nations* – *godly nations*. Things will be done in those nations that will be presentable to the King of Kings in the New Jerusalem. This shows us that we won't be just sitting around doing nothing! Things of great significance will be happening!

... the glory of God gives [the New Jerusalem] light, and the Lamb is its lamp.

The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth **will bring their splendor into it.** ... The **glory and honor** of the nations will be **brought into it.**

Revelation 21:23b-24, 26 (NIV)

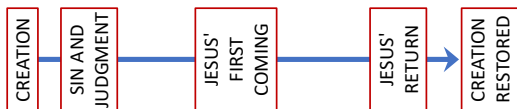
{ Our accomplishments will be presented to the King of Kings! }

- There are a number of passages that give us *hints* about what we can expect (though not all the *details* we might want). But that's not our focus today.

16

God's ultimate plan *isn't* for us to sit around!

- God is moving things toward a final goal – and that goal is the restoration of all things... *and more!*
 - ✓ **God created the world** to display his glory. He created humans to be the ones who actively did things (= work) to glorify God in ways that the rest of creation couldn't.
 - ✓ **Sin destroyed things.** Creation still reveals God's glory (Psalm 19:1; Psalm 8, etc.), though not as well as before. *But God is not going to let sin win.*
 - ✓ **God's ultimate goal** is not just to *restore* what was lost. Rather, he plans to make it *better*! Because of Jesus, we will not only be "children of *Adam*," but we will be the *adopted* "children of *God*!"



17

We can safely **ignore** the stories people have invented about "heaven." We can safely **trust** God for what will **really** happen!

WE'VE BEEN HERE FOR A THOUSAND YEARS SO FAR... AND WE'RE BORED!

NEITHER OF US WANTS TO PLAY A HARP!

IGNORE THE WORLD OF MYTHS!

- We *won't* be sitting around on clouds!
- Musicians* might use harps... but *the rest of us* will be doing other things!



CLING TO FOURTH COMMANDMENT REALITIES!

- We can expect *times to work*, without the negative effects of sin.
- We can expect *times of rest from work*, with a focus on the God who *created* and *saved* us!

18

FINALLY...

What about WORK... NOW?

We will look at this issue **next time**.

- But here is something for us to consider:
 - ✓ Paul has told us to do everything in a way that honors God. *This includes all legitimate human activity!*
 - ✓ We will someday stand before God and give account for everything we have done in this present life.
 - ✓ We will be judged and rewarded for everything we have done.
- This means: Everything we do has value, *if it is done in a way that honors God. And God gives a promise to those who do this...*

19

GOD'S PROMISE!

Therefore, my dear brothers and sisters, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that **your labor in the Lord is not in vain**.

1 Corinthians 15:58 (NIV)

- This promise isn't limited to "religious" things" done for God, since God has already told us to do "all" things" for him.
- Because of the world we live in, many things we do seem to be a *meaningless* waste of time. But if they are done *for God's honor*, they will result in something *meaningful* and worthy of God's praise.

I SPEND ALL DAY PUSHING A BUTTON ON A MACHINE.

BUT I DO IT WELL; AND IT BENEFITS EVERYONE WHO BUYS THE PRODUCT!

WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT!

20

OUR MISSION:**1. Realize that all of life belongs to God.**

- ✚ **All seven days of the week have value!** They are *all* governed by the Fourth Commandment!
 - ✚ Knowing this can help us to be careful *how* we live our lives.

2. Realize the importance of work.

- Work is valuable.** God made us for doing work!
- Work has become burdensome *because of sin*.** But it didn't start that way; *nor will it end that way*.

Whatever you do, **work** at it with your whole being, for the Lord and not for men, because you know that you will receive **an inheritance from the Lord as your reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.**

Colossians 3:23-24 (BSB)

21

FINALLY...

3. Realize that this "work" includes all legitimate human activity!

- ★ **Even times of enjoyment and celebration.** ★
- ✚ **IF we do it in a way that honors God!**

NOT THIS WAY!



(It's sin – Ephesians 5:18.)

22

For we are God's handiwork, **created in Christ Jesus to do good works**, which **God prepared in advance for us to do.**

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV)

Credits

SCRIPTURE

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