

END-TIMES ISSUES



#98 Commandment #6 – How can we obey these commandments?

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 PURPOSE OF THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

DO THEY SHOW US...

?? How to live if you want to *BECOME* saved? NO!! [= to EARN salvation]

!!! How to live if you *ARE* saved? YES!! [= to LIVE salvation]



These two perspectives are opposites!

⇒ These commandments apply to all of a person's interactions with God and with people (and indirectly, with all of creation).

★ But you won't recognize it *unless* you realize that each command represents a category of commands and instructions; and within each category are both *obligations* and *prohibitions*.

The "Ten Commandments": More than just "Ten Commands."

- If we count up the *commands*, we find out there are *more than ten!* (Some of the commandments have more than one "command word.") Also, "commands" tend to focus on a specific action; and these "ten commandments" have to do with broader, ongoing obligations.
 - ✓ There is nothing that God *commands* that isn't related to one or more of these *commandments*.
- If we look at the original languages, we discover that these commandments are called the "Ten Words" – that is, "ten basic sayings," which represent the basic moral *principles* that are to govern *all of life*. (Their concept of "word" was different from ours. We could say "Ten Messages" or "Ten Principles.")
- We may need to remind ourselves that these commandments are comprised of *commands*, not *suggestions*! They are *authoritative*, not optional, or something to vote on.

What do the Ten Commandments do?

The commandments restrain sin.

- These commandments show *unsaved* people what they *need* to do; but this law is *external* to unsaved people – like being written on *stone*, and not on their *hearts*.
 - ✎ If God's law has not become written on your heart, so that obedience becomes an *internal* desire, then this obedience will be a burden – an *impossible* burden. It will be an ongoing battle between what you *want* to do and what you know you *should* do.

For the law was not intended for people who do what is right. It is **for people who are lawless and rebellious, who are ungodly and sinful ...**

1 Timothy 1:9a (NLT)

- Some aspects of the law are embedded in the consciences of people who do not have the Ten Commandments. This may provide some restraint. *But the normal tendency of unsaved people is to want to cast off this restraint.* (See Romans 1 and 2.)

The commandments point people to Christ.

- Since we are *all* sinners (needing the instruction mentioned in the 1 Timothy 1:9 passage), the law shows us our need to change. But we *can't* do this – and don't really *want* to.
- Our only hope is in God, who can enable unsaved people to:
 - ✓ Recognize their *rebellion* against God and his law.
 - ✓ Recognize their *inability* to do what the law requires... yet their *need* to do so.
 - ✓ Discover *through Scripture* their need for God's *grace*, available through Jesus' death and resurrection – a grace that deals with their sin and enables them to live according to the commandments.
- When this happens, the law is leading the person to Christ. Then, once it does this, its purpose changes.

The commandments teach us how to live.

- When God saves people, he writes these commandments on their hearts. These people *want* to do what the commandments teach, because the law has become *internal* – the motivating desire that influences their choices.
 - ✎ If you have been "born of God," God has embedded his law in your heart. Obedience becomes an *internal* desire, and ceases to be a burden. (Our trust in God makes success possible.)

And his **commands** are not a **burden**, because everyone who has been **born of God** conquers the world. This is the victory that has conquered the world: our faith.

1 John 5:3b-4 (CSB)

- God's people *love* the truth, his Word. They *rejoice* in it; they *follow* it. Through it, they grow in understanding the laws (commandments) that they now have a desire to follow.
- These people delight in every time they DON'T sin... and grieve when they DO sin... and they *repent*.

- The world and your flesh (your old nature) will fight back. *They* (not God's laws) become the burdens. You will need to *fight* them, but you can trust God for the power to overcome them.

What a wretched man I am! **Who will rescue me** from this body of death? Thanks be to **God, through Jesus Christ our Lord!**

Romans 7:24-25a (BSB)

- We are not perfect (yet). We *do* falter, every time we *fail* to trust God. But our #1 desire is to be "like him" in moral purity. We look forward to the day he will return and fulfil that desire 100% in us.

We know that when Christ appears, we **will be like Him**, for we will see Him as He is. And everyone who has this hope in Him **purifies himself**, just as Christ is pure.

1 John 3:2b-3 (BSB)

FUTURE GOAL

PRESENT GOAL

The goal: A life characterized by pursuing obedience, rejoicing when successful, and being sorrowful (and repentant) when failing.

7

What about those who don't love the truth and don't respond correctly to it?

- Such people are not saved.

They perish because they refused to **love** the **truth** and so be saved.

... all will be condemned who have not believed the **truth** but have delighted in wickedness.

2 Thessalonians 2:10b, 12 (NIV)

- All people have the obligation to NOT sin. But when the law is an external command, trying to obey it is a burden. It's a "rule" that exists *outside* of them.

(Unsaved people might want to "get out of hell"... but only for self-centered reasons, not out of love for God.)



8

The amazing work of God!

- When we realize *how hopeless* our situation was ...

- ✓ The fact that we were dead in our sins ...

And **you were dead** in your trespasses and sins, ...

Ephesians 2:1 (BSB)

- ✓ The fact that unsaved people will never choose to submit to God's law ...

The mind governed by the flesh is **hostile to God**; it **does not submit to God's law**, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh **cannot please God**.

Romans 8:7-8 (NIV)

... and yet we are repenting, trusting, and submitting to his will ...

Then we will recognize the *wonder* of salvation – and will want to love God and to submit to his will.

9

- As this change occurs, and we submit to God's Word, and it changes our values, thoughts, actions...
 - ✦ As all this happens, we will recognize that God is at work in us – and that it is a purely undeserved expression of his *love*. In other words, we will confess that it is by grace we are saved!

But because of **His great love** for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when **we were dead** in our trespasses. It is **by grace you have been saved**!

Ephesians 2:4-5 (BSB)

Salvation is 100% undeserved and unearned. We all *totally* rejected the true God; yet he has chosen to save some of us, using:

- ✓ The Word of truth (Scripture)
- ✓ Jesus' accomplishment on the cross, and
- ✓ The Spirit's work in our hearts.

10

★ God, on his level (as the Creator), has done all this! ★

- He has replaced our *deadness* with *life*. He has turned our *hate and rebellion* into *love and submission* to his will.
- He has taken the laws that were *outside* us and embedded them *within* us. (It's not that he has *changed* the laws; rather, he has *relocated* them.)

"I will put **My laws** in their hearts and inscribe them on their minds."

Hebrews 10:16b (BSB)

- ❖ What is meant by the "Law"? Our focus is on the *moral* law. The same book of Hebrews, which tells us about these laws being *embedded* within us, also tells us that the *ceremonial* laws have been *fulfilled* in Christ, and are no longer applicable to us.

If God has embedded this law in our hearts, *it will stay there*. But we will also be willing to pursue the life of a saved person.

11

Because of what God has done, we now have a changed attitude about God.

- We recognize that he is the *uncreated* God – completely different from us. He dwells in *unapproachable* light (1 Timothy 6:16), and those who try to approach him *cannot* survive.

⇒ And we realize that he is to be **feared**.

- We recognize that, in Jesus, he is our redeemer, brother, friend, advocate – our *life* (replacing the *death* that once was ours). With humility and holiness, we *can* enter his presence.

⇒ And we realize that he is to be **loved**.

- We also recognize him as the Spirit who empowers, changes and instills values.

⇒ And we realize that he is to be **obeyed**.

⌋ All this has happened because of God's work in us, giving us life, and changing us. ⌋

12

★ Yet God also affirms that we, as humans, have a responsibility. ★

- The changes that belong to "human responsibility" will occur in those who are saved. The changes that God has made in our hearts and minds *guarantees* it will happen.
- From *our* perspective, the changes – the *new* way of life – will take place. We will *choose* them, because they will be *a reflection of our new values*.
- Making these changes may be difficult, hard and painful – just as Scripture tells us they may be. But, with God's power, we will *still* pursue the way of God, recognizing that it is *eternally* better than the alternative – and because we now *love* God.

"We must endure many **hardships** to enter the kingdom of God," they said.

Acts 14:22 (BSB)

"If it is **hard** for the righteous to be saved, what will become of the ungodly and the sinner?"

1 Peter 4:18 (NIV)

13

Is following Jesus *really* a "hard" way to go?

- Without Jesus, it would be. But the same Jesus who said this...

"If anyone comes to me and does not **hate** father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not **carry their cross and follow** me cannot be my disciple. ...those of you who do not **give up everything** you have cannot be my disciples."

Luke 14:26-27, 33b (NIV)

"Hate" refers to putting *God first*, ahead of all else.

...also said this...

"Come to Me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you **rest**. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find **rest for your souls**. For My yoke is **easy** and My burden is **light**."

Matthew 11:28-30 (BSB)

14

What will we do? ⇒ The work God has prepared for us to do!

- We will *take seriously* the responsibility that has been placed before us, and will endeavor to pursue that way of life... realizing that God has given us both the desire and the empowerment to do so.

For **God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.**

Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

- We might not *see* what God is doing; but it's there, and it enables *our* works to coincide with what *he* is accomplishing in us.

For **we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared** in advance as our way of life.

Ephesians 2:10 (BSB)

- We have a serious responsibility; but we have an equally serious empowerment to fulfil it. And so, it can be said that we are "working out" the work that God has enabled us to do. As Paul tells us...

... **continue to work out your salvation** with fear and trembling.

Philippians 2:12b (BSB)

15

WHY this "fear and trembling"?

- Fear is the *appropriate* response of a created being in the presence of the Creator. Many Scripture passages mention this. [We have looked at this issue in the past.]
- This phrase "fear and trembling" emphasizes the *seriousness and importance* of what we are to do! It shows us that our actions *do* matter!
 - ✓ There are many fakes and deceived church-goers out there; and our actions – the things we do – are the way we make sure we *aren't* one of them!
- This phrase is found four times in the New Testament:
 - ✓ Philippians 2:12 – which we have just mentioned.
 - ✓ Hebrews 12:21 – which describes the response of Moses and the people, when they found themselves in the very presence of God, at Mount Sinai.
 - ✓ 2 Corinthians 7:15 and Ephesians 6:5 – which describes the seriousness and importance of certain interactions with people.

16

What specific work must we do, to fulfil our "human responsibility"?

- Our #1 work is to *trust Jesus*. He makes it possible. And once we do it, *he* will enable us to do the rest.

Jesus replied, "**The work of God** is this: to believe [= trust] in the One He has sent."

John 6:29 (BSB)

- Having trusted Jesus, we can learn to fulfil our greatest obligation:
 - ✓ We could summarize it as "obeying the Ten Commandments."
 - ✓ We could summarize it as "love for God and neighbor" – yet this love happens to be a *command* that summarizes the Ten Commandments!
- We can't really separate the concepts of love and command (and obedience). In fact, the two concepts are *inseparable in many* ways.

> We will have to consider some of these issues next time. <

17

 OUR MISSION:

As we look at the commandments, our focus is on the "obedience" issue.

But we must never forget the **grace** that makes this obedience possible, ...

... and provides the **love from God** that flows through us ...

...and results in our **love for God and neighbor, and obedience to his commands.**

Today, our main focus is *here!*
Don't forget this truth!

We plan to look at these other things in the future.

18

There is *much* we do not know about eternity.

↳ Many things have not been revealed.

↳ In all these matters, our duty is to trust God, and to be ready for whatever he has planned for us.

↳ But here is something we do know:

- ✓ In eternity, God will reward us, based on what we did in this present life – a focus on our "human responsibility."
- ✓ At the same time, we will lay our crowns at his feet, recognizing what he graciously did to save us and to make us holy.



19

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20