


END-TIMES ISSUES



#50 Commandment #1 – Honoring God in all things

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ONE OF THE WAYS WE FULFIL THIS COMMAND IS BY HONORING GOD IN ALL THAT WE DO.

"You shall have **no other gods** before Me."
Exodus 20:3 (BSB); also Deuteronomy 5:7.

And **whatever you do**, in word or deed, **do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus**, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.
Colossians 3:17 (BSB)

So whether you eat or drink, or **whatever you do**, **do everything for the glory of God.**
1 Corinthians 10:31 (NET)

Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people ...
Colossians 3:23 (CSB)

... in all your ways acknowledge Him, ...
Proverbs 3:6a (BSB)

SOMEDAY, ALL PEOPLE WILL HONOR GOD!

⇒ **ALL NATIONS will honor God.**

(The **rebellion** described in Genesis 11 (at the tower of Babel) will be over. It will no longer be "all nations vs. God"!)

At that time Jerusalem will be called The Throne of the LORD, and **all the nations will be gathered in Jerusalem to honor the name* of the LORD. They will no longer follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts.**
Jeremiah 3:17 (BSB)

Then **the nations** of every shore **will bow in worship to Him**, each in its own place.
Zephaniah 2:11b (BSB)

* (God's "name" represents "all that God is." All nations and people will recognize and acknowledge God's greatness.)

O Lord, there is none like You among the gods, nor any works like Yours.

All the nations You have made will come and bow before You, O Lord, and they **will glorify Your name.**

For You are great and perform wonders; You alone are God.
Psalm 86:8-10 (BSB)

"My name will be great among the nations, from where the sun rises to where it sets. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to me, because **my name will be great among the nations,**" says the Lord Almighty.
Malachi 1:11 (NIV)

⇒ **God guarantees that all PEOPLE will bow down before him.**

"Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other.

By myself **I have sworn**, my mouth has uttered **in all integrity a word that will not be revoked:**
Before me every knee will bow;
by me every tongue will swear.

They will say of me, 'In the Lord alone are deliverance and strength.'"
All who have raged against him will come to him and be put to shame.
Isaiah 45:22-24 (NIV)

EVEN THOSE WHO OPPOSED HIM.

- The New Testament applies part of this passage to Jesus – see Philippians 2:10-11. See also John 5:22-23.

DON'T WAIT! WE CAN (AND SHOULD) HONOR GOD NOW!

The way we honor God **now** ⇒ will influence ⇒ how we honor him **in the future.**

⇒ Ask yourself: **HOW do you want to honor God in the future?**
Filled with joy and love? Or filled with terror and shame?

3 ISSUES PEOPLE MUST FACE, IF THEY WANT TO BEGIN HONORING GOD NOW:

- Your **attitude** is a serious matter. What is your **motivation**?
- Your **obligation** is to honor God 100% of the time, in 100% of life ... even though you **will not succeed** in this present life.
- You need to be **willing to learn** from the Bible **how** to honor God in all things. (You may also need to learn the meanings of some words used in the Bible. The world has distorted many definitions.)

ISSUE 1: Your attitude is a serious matter. What is your motivation?

WHY do you want to honor God?

- ⇒ Only because you have to (= obligation), or...
- ⇒ Also because you want to (= desire)?

This involves the issue of *external* vs. *internal* motivation.

Are your attempts to honor God done by your own "brute force," or are they empowered by the Holy Spirit?

Under the New Covenant, God places within his people the *desire* to do his will!

"I will put my laws **in their hearts**, and I will write them **on their minds**."
Hebrews 10:16b (NIV)

If you have no such heart desire, repent and trust God to change you, and start doing what you know you should be doing. And give him credit any time you succeed!

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ISSUE 2: Your obligation is to honor God 100% of the time, in 100% of life ... even though you will not succeed in this present life.

When you hear this statement, what part of it do you focus on?

- ⇒ Do you focus on your obligation to honor God 100% ... and make it your *desire* to pursue this goal?? Or...
- ⇒ Do you focus on the fact that you won't succeed 100% in this present life ... and use that as an *excuse* for sinning?

Those with changed hearts want the perfection they don't have. And they're willing to pursue it!

- **Psalm 119** illustrates this attitude. Some verses focus on a desire for perfection; others focus on weakness.
- **The apostle Paul** had this desire to pursue perfection – Philippians 3:7-14; **the Apostle John** tells us that saved people do pursue it – 1 John 2:29-3:6.

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ISSUE 3: You will have to be willing to learn from the Bible HOW to honor God in all things.

(You may also need to learn the meanings of some words.)

How much do you care about honoring God?

- ⇒ Do you consider it important enough, that you're willing to go the Bible and learn what you need to do?

Honoring God involves more than just talking about it!

THESE PEOPLE
HAD THE TALK...
BUT THEY
DIDN'T
HONOR GOD.

"These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

They worship me in vain;
their teachings are merely human rules."

Matthew 15:8-9 (NIV)

- See also Ezekiel 33:31-32 (an example); Titus 1:16 (a warning).

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HOW can we learn to do this?

We're going to have to be willing to "meditate" on the Word of God.

But this concept of "meditate" is NOT the same as what the world promotes.

The world has adopted the "meditation" concept of some eastern false religions. It teaches us to "empty" or "clear out" our minds. In contrast, Scripture – when using the term "meditation" – tells us to *fill* our minds with a focus on God and his Word.

- ★ It is normal for some changes to occur in language; but many of the modern-day changes have been *deliberate*, made by those who are
- ★ *openly* opposed to Scripture, and who know what they are doing. It's
- ★ done at the university level, by the media, etc. This means we will have
- ★ to pay careful attention to the way *Scripture* uses words and concepts.

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"MEDITATING" ON THE WORD OF GOD.

This word is found in the *Old Testament*. Since the world has promoted the *false* concept of "meditation," some Bible translations may use other terms that communicate the same concept – such as "think about (it)." (This is how the New Testament describes this concept.)

Blessed is the man ... [whose] delight is in **the law of the LORD**, and on his law he **meditates** day and night.

Psalm 1:1a, 2 (ESV)

May the words of my mouth
and the **meditation** of my heart
be pleasing in Your sight,
O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.

Psalm 19:14 (BSB)

- **Old Testament passages** focus mostly on what God has *done* (his works), and what he has *said* (his Word).

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- **Psalm 119** describes the attitude of the person who loves God. It mentions the concept of "meditation" several times.
- **The apostle Paul**, using the word "think," applies this concept to life. Scripture (here referring to what *Paul* taught them) is the basis for knowing what things are "excellent or praiseworthy." (Anything that doesn't agree with Scripture doesn't qualify!)

Since Paul is not with us today, we can learn about these things only in Scripture!

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—**think on these things.**

Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me, put it into practice.

And the God of peace will be with you.

Philippians 4:8-9 (BSB)

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"Meditating" on Scripture and *applying it to life* is the *only way* we can attain the "renewed mind" necessary for glorifying God!

- The necessary "transformation" is only possible when our thinking is "renewed," and our conduct is no longer "conformed" to the world.

Do **not be conformed** to this world, but **be transformed** by **the renewing of your mind**. Then you will be able to test and approve what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God.

Romans 12:2 (BSB)

- We must pay attention to the Word... and do what it says, if we want to be blessed by God!

Be doers of the word, and not hearers only. Otherwise, you are deceiving yourselves. ... But the one who looks intently into the perfect law of freedom, and continues to do so—not being a forgetful hearer, but an effective doer—**he will be blessed in what he does**.

James 1:22, 25 (BSB)

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APPLYING THE WORD OF GOD TO ALL OF LIFE.

- We **can't** do this unless we are willing to let Scripture **change the way we think**! This is the only way we can know the difference between *God's* ways, and *the world's* ways that we learned from birth! (How we *think* will influence how we *live*.)
- This **change** will be an ongoing process. We will need to *grow* in doing God's will – undoing years of learning the world's ways!

Understanding Scripture is our goal:

- The first step is to **start reading and learning what the Bible says!**
- Pay attention to the words** (and their meanings), **how they connect** to other words in the passage, **and the context** (the immediate context; then the context of the whole Bible).
- Be aware that **some passages will be easier to understand** than others (as Peter tells us in 2 Peter 3:16). Start with the clearer passages, and later go to the more difficult ones.

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Different passages apply different ways.

- You will find **facts** to influence your *thinking*, and **commands** to influence your *actions*.
- Different **literary structures** may influence how you understand a passage – examples: history, illustrations, poetry (which may communicate factual information), figures of speech, ...
- There are different ways to apply Scripture passages.
 - ✓ **Direct commands** often have a direct application.
 - ✓ **Different contexts** may result in different applications. Example: Commands to a *nation* do not always apply to *individuals*.
 - ✓ **Sometimes, we need to do the opposite!** People are *sinners*. When we read about a *saved* sinner doing something, *it does NOT guarantee* that we should do it. (It could have been sin!) We need to see what *other* Scripture passages say about their actions.
 - ✓ Some passages might have **no application** – such as lists of names.

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Things to look for – patterns, contrasts, principles, etc.

- It is helpful to observe how Scripture links together certain commands and concepts. This can teach us **principles** to help guide us in making decisions.
- A variety of attitudes and actions may be grouped into the **same category**. Example: Murder, hatred, anger – Matthew 5:21-22.
- Various attitudes or actions may be **contrasted**: **contradictory opposites** that *cannot* go together. Example: We *cannot* love God *and* have the world's values at the same time – James 4:4; 1 John 2:15-14.
- Other concepts may be like **boundaries**: **complementary opposites** that work together. Staying within the boundaries will give us *freedom* to do many things, yet will help us to avoid sin. Example: God gave us food to enjoy (Ecclesiastes 5:18, etc.), but *not* for us to become gluttons (Proverbs 23:1-3, 21).

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Learning to have *God's* priorities.

- There is a **hierarchy**, or order of importance, among the commands. Certain commands and principles take precedence over others.
 - ✓ **Love for God** comes first, followed by **love for neighbor**. **Other legitimate conduct** (including religious activities) has lower priority. **Sin** is never to be considered an option.
- This is why situations are found in Scripture, where certain commands can be broken *without* it being sin – *when the command comes into conflict with a command of higher priority*.

EXAMPLE: Love for neighbor and religious activities (such as sacrifices) were *both* commanded in the Old Testament. However, if a situation caused a *conflict* between the two, love for neighbor was to take precedence over religious activities.

For I desire **mercy** [= an expression of love], **not sacrifice**, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings.

Hosea 6:6 (NIV)

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Sin complicates matters.

- Living in a *sinful* world may leave us with **difficult choices**. Being aware of the hierarchy (on the previous slide) may help.
- There may be times when **two obligations on the same level** may seem to contradict. This is often the result of *not* carefully evaluating the situation. But if the contradiction is genuine, we need to look for higher-level commands that may also be related to the issue at hand.
- Sin may destroy the morally good options** that exist. There may be times when the only *good* choice would have been to NOT sin in the first place. In this case, we may have to choose the least sinful of *bad* options. (If a *higher* obligation can be found, it may help us to determine what to do.)
 - ✦ There may be times when we have to **repent**, try to minimize the horrible consequences, and move on... aware that some consequences *cannot* be undone.

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Some concepts may be good **OR** evil, depending on the context.
EXAMPLES:

- **Hatred and anger:** We already learned that these can belong in the *same* category as murder – sinful conduct to be avoided. Yet there *are* certain situations in which anger or hatred is a legitimate conduct that honors God – such as when it is directed toward sin (Exodus 32:19; Romans 12:9). Even so, we must be careful to not give the devil an opportunity to *turn* it into sin (Ecclesiastes 7:9; Ephesians 4:26).

[Note: Scripture shows us that hatred and love are *not always* opposites, though they *often* are.]

- **Jealousy** is often described as a sin... yet sometimes it is a God-honoring action (2 Corinthians 11:2)!
[Note: The English concepts of "jealous" and "zealous" are two ways to translate the same O.T. Hebrew or N.T. Greek words! With either word, it can be good or evil – depending on the context.]

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Some concepts may be "parallel" to each other. They are *separate issues* that people often try to bring together... and this results in confusion.

- A typical example has to do with **God's sovereignty and human responsibility**. Scripture *never* describes them as competing or conflicting with each other in any way; yet people tend to think that the one cancels or limits the other! In reality, these concepts are referring to two different issues – *parallel* concepts, rather than *intersecting* concepts!
- You may find other issues that fall into this category, such as: justice and mercy, truth and love, salvation and works, etc. Each belongs in its own context, and none cancels the others!

Avoid half-truths! Over-emphasis in one "direction" has bad results!

- Many situations involve *two* concepts that work together or "complement" each other. People tend to focus on one of them and ignore the other. In the long run, this will always result in error.

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NEXT TIME, WE PLAN TO LOOK AT SOME SPECIFIC EXAMPLES OF APPLYING SCRIPTURE TO LIFE!

TODAY, THE FOCUS OF OUR MISSION IS:
Learn to apply the Bible to life!

- **IF YOU ARE ALREADY DOING THIS:** We encourage you to do more... it's a *lifetime* adventure!
- **IF YOU HAVEN'T DONE THIS BEFORE** (and are interested in following Jesus and applying Scripture to life):
 - ↳ Try it! Even if you do poorly, you'll have made a start.
 - ↳ Next time, you'll get some additional ideas, and you can improve from there.

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Credits

SCRIPTURE

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