

END-TIMES ISSUES



#91 Commandment #5 – Introduction.

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

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LOVE

✧ All human obligations can be summed-up by this word! ✧

"Teacher, which **commandment** is the greatest in the Law?"

Jesus declared, " **Love** the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest **commandment**.

And the second is like it: '**Love** your neighbor as yourself.'

All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two **commandments**."

Matthew 22:36-40 (BSB)

Two considerations: ✓ This love is *not* a spontaneous emotional feeling, but a command that must be obeyed.

✓ Also, love for God comes *first*.

LOVE

✧ HOW do we express this love? ✧

- Not by emotional platitudes; not by blowing kisses to God; not by constantly repeating "I love you."
- Rather, God says it's by *obeying his commandments*.

If you **love** Me, you will keep My **commandments**.

John 14:15 (BSB)

Those who accept my **commandments** and obey them are the ones who **love** me.

John 14:21a (NLT)

Obedience to God's commands: It's not to gain salvation, but to live-out salvation. It's an expression of the new life that is in those who have the changed hearts that come with salvation.

- The Old Testament constantly connects love and obedience to God's commandments.

Love the Lord your God ... These **commandments** that I give you today are to be on your hearts.

Deuteronomy 6:5a, 6 (NIV)

Oh, how I **love** Your **law**!
All day long it is my meditation.
Your **commandments** make me wiser than my enemies, ...

Psalms 119:97-98a (BSB)

- For saved people (i.e., people who are "born of God"), obeying God isn't a *burden*, but a *desire* – a reflection of the changes that have occurred in the heart.

In fact, this is **love** for God: to keep his **commands**. And his **commands** are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world.

1 John 5:3-4a (NIV)

- Do you want to know what "love" is?** Paul tells us that it is "the fulfillment of the law" – and he defines this "law" as the Ten Commandments (focusing here on the commandments related to "love for neighbor").

Let no debt remain outstanding, except the continuing debt to **love** one another, for whoever **loves** others has **fulfilled the law**. The **commandments**, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not covet," and whatever other command there may be, are summed up in this one **command**: "**Love** your neighbor as yourself." **Love** does no harm to a neighbor. Therefore **love** is the **fulfillment of the law**.

Romans 13:8-10 (NIV)

- When we realize that each of the commands represents a *category* of commands, instructions and examples, we discover that every moral concept in *either* Testament belongs in one (or more) of the Ten Commandment categories. Furthermore, each moral concept is an expression of what it means to love God and/or neighbor. This shows us that *love and commandment work together*.

❖ CLAIMS THAT ARE FALSE ❖

- We live in a day when people want to **separate "love" from the commandments**. Yet Scripture defines "love" primarily as an action, a choice, an act of the will. These actions and choices – if genuine expressions of love – will align with the nature of God, which is expressed in the Ten Commandments. *There is no expression of genuine love that goes against them!*
- Some people claim that the commandments have been **replaced by "love."** Then they leave the concept of "love" *undefined* – which allows people to do as they please, since they can define "love" any way they want. *In contrast, Scripture defines "love," and consistently links it to obedience to God's commands.*
- Some people claim that the Old Testament commandments have been **replaced by New Testament commandments** – and that the *New* ones look about the same as the *Old* ones (perhaps omitting the Sabbath command). *Yet neither Jesus nor the apostles make such a claim. Instead, they quote Old Testament commandments, and never say anything about them being replaced!*

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

God spoke this command on Mount Sinai:

"Honor your father and your mother, ..."

... so that **you may live long** in the land the LORD your God is giving you."

Exodus 20:12 (NIV)

Between these two occasions, God gave Israel a number of instructions on how they were to do this.

Moses reaffirmed it,* many years later:

"Honor your father and your mother, **as the LORD your God has commanded you, ...**"

... so that **you may live long** and that **it may go well with you** in the land the LORD your God is giving you."

Deuteronomy 5:16 (NIV)

* (When Moses did this, he expounded on certain details.)

7

"Honor your father and your mother, ..."

Exodus 20:12a (NIV); also Deuteronomy 5:16a

Jesus quotes this commandment:

- ✓ In Matthew 19:19; Mark 10:19; Luke 18:20 – when answering the rich young ruler, who asked about eternal life. He connects eternal life and obedience to the commandments (not denying *God's* role in salvation).
- ✓ In Matthew 15:4; Mark 7:10 – when talking to the religious rulers. He also quotes a different passage regarding the deserved punishment of those who violate this commandment (as a warning to them, since they were doing just that).

Paul quotes this commandment:

- ✓ In Ephesians 6:1-3 – when teaching children about the attitude they should have toward their parents. He also mentions the promise given to those who do this, as well as the responsibilities of the parents (v. 4).

8

- **Leviticus 19 restates the Ten Commandments**, often expressing them in ways that focus on *application*. (They are not given in the same order as found in the Exodus and Deuteronomy passages.)
- ✓ In this chapter, God makes a direct connection between this fifth commandment and the fourth commandment – all in one sentence.

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the whole congregation of Israel and tell them:
Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.
Each of you must respect his mother and father, and you must keep My Sabbaths. I am the LORD your God.
Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods. I am the LORD your God."

Leviticus 19:1-4 (BSB)

There are many similarities and connections between these two commandments – and it shows us how serious this Fifth Commandment is.

9

Similarities between the Fourth and Fifth Commandments.

Both are "positive" commands ("Do").

- ✓ These two commandments tell us what we must do – one related to God and one related to people.
- ✓ The other commands give us boundaries that we are not to cross. They give us freedom to do anything that does not cause us to cross the boundaries.

In Deuteronomy, both contain the phrase: "as the LORD your God has commanded you."

- ✓ Moses stresses that they must do these things exactly the way God has instructed.
- ✓ Between God's original giving of these commandments and Moses' reaffirming of them, God gave Israel more information about their obligation to these commands. This included the *consequences* for violating them (which, in both cases, was *death*).

10

Both are associated with holiness.

- ✓ **4th Comm.**: Holiness is part of this command. "You must keep the Sabbath day holy."
- ✓ **5th Comm.**: This command is found in the context of holiness, as stated in Leviticus 19: "You must be holy; you must respect your parents; you must observe the Sabbaths."
- In both cases, **obedience results in blessing**. (The results of the one seem more *immediate*; the other's results seem more *long-term*.)
- ✓ **4th Comm.**: Obedience to this command results in "rest" from work, which is the blessing.
- ✓ **5th Comm.**: The "long life" and "days going well" are later results of obedience to this command.
- In both cases, **disobedience is worthy of serious consequences**.
- ✓ In both cases, other passages show us that the disobedient person is worthy of *death*. (More about this later.)

11

Both demonstrate love (the focus of two greatest commandments).

- ✓ **4th Comm.**: Love for God.
- ✓ **5th Comm.**: Love for neighbor. (The immediate application is to parents.)
- Both focus on a relationship that involves **dependency on another**.
- ✓ **4th Comm.**: The focus is on our dependency on God. He is the reason we exist. This fact must influence our attitude toward him.
- ✓ **5th Comm.**: The focus is on our dependency on our parents. Physically, they are the reason we exist. This fact must influence our attitude toward them.
- Both require a similar response.
- ✓ **4th Comm.**: The words "honor" and "respect" are *not* found in the text of this commandment; but they are found elsewhere, in both Old and New Testaments, showing how we are to respond to *God*.
- ✓ **5th Comm.**: The words "honor" (Exodus 20:12 and Deuteronomy 5:16) and "respect" (Leviticus 19:3) describe how we are to respond to our *parents*.

12

- Both make **absolute demands** on how we are to live.

- ✓ **4th Comm.**: Under no circumstance are we to *not* recognize our dependency on God – both for existence and for salvation.
- ✓ **5th Comm.**: Under no circumstance are we to *not* recognize our dependency on our parents – both for our existence and (when applicable) for our "spiritual heritage."

PROBLEM: Sin in the world – and in our parents and in us – complicates the way this command applies to us.

- ↳ Most parents do *not* give their children a "spiritual heritage" (by teaching them the ways of God, and showing how to live according to those ways). At the same time, children often don't honor their parents, which makes it more difficult for the parents.
- ↳ There may be times when an *act of disobedience* is necessary (i.e., if the action would violate "love for God"). But *never* is there a time when the *attitude of honor* is to be omitted. We will need to learn the differences between these two issues.
- ↳ We will have to explore these (and other) issues in the future.

13

- Both have an ultimate focus on **God**.

- ✓ **4th Comm.**: (This is obvious.)
- ✓ **5th Comm.**: When children are young, parents are God's representatives to the child. In a sense, they stand in the place of God.
 - ↳ **Their** will for the child is to be a reflection of **God's** will. They are to *guide* their children according to God's will, and *teach* them according to God's will.
 - ↳ The parent's goal (if obeying Scripture) is to enable the child to independently follow God's will – not given through the parents, but directly from God (through applied Scripture).

Since "love for God" is our greatest priority, nothing in the Fifth Commandment (= part of "love for neighbor") is to ever be done in a way that violates "love for God."

Sin may *complicate* the way we need to respond in applying the Fifth Commandment, but it never *cancels* the obligations of the commandment.

14

How serious is violation of the Fifth Commandment?

- **Violators are worthy of death:** This would be done by the *community* – today, we would call it "civil government." No government is going to do this (and it seems that Israel quickly stopped doing it); but one can *still* see how serious this matter is.
 - ✓ For being stubborn and rebellious – Deuteronomy 21:18-21 (This passage includes the *process* by which the punishment would be done: not by the *parents*, but by the *community*.)
 - ✓ For physically attacking one's parents – Exodus 21:15.
 - ✓ For treating one's parents with contempt – Exodus 21:17; Leviticus 20:9. (This refers to an ongoing attitude, not just an isolated uttering of angry words. This type of conduct is also an attack on the very structure of *society* under God – which begins with *family*.)

As a **category of commands**, this commandment regulates all of society's social structures. The family is the basic pattern and foundation, given by God, for the others. This category includes regulations for the conduct of both authorities and those under authority.

15

- **Violators are under God's judgment:** They would be "cursed" – as opposed to being "blessed."

"Cursed is anyone who dishonors their father or mother."
Then all the people shall say, "Amen!"

Deuteronomy 27:16 (NIV)

- ✓ This contrasts with the *blessing* offered to those who *obey* this commandment.

... so that **you may live long** and that **it may go well with you in the land** the LORD your God is giving you."

Deuteronomy 5:16 (NIV)

As we have stated before, promises like this represent:
(1) what can be expected on a *national* level (the "average," when a nation follows God's laws), and (2) the more likely expectation on an *individual* level (being fully aware that random misfortune may sometimes interfere). Any injustices on the individual level will be resolved at the future Day of Justice.

16

OUR MISSION:

There is a lot more to the Fifth Commandment than we might first think.

And we haven't yet considered what else belongs to the **category of commands, instructions and examples that are represented by this command!**

TODAY: It would do us well for us to consider:

- The *seriousness* of this command.
- The *fact* that we have all violated it many times in our lives. (*Adults* can violate it as easily as *children* can.)
- Our *need* to better understand this command, and to *rely on God* for the power to obey it better.

17

Credits

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18