

# END-TIMES ISSUES

#128

Commandment #8 –  
Obligations (3).

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

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1

## The Eighth Commandment

represents a **category** of instructions that teach us **how to treat people.**

You shall not steal.

Exodus 20:15 (BSB); also in Deuteronomy 5:19

OUR OBLIGATION IS TO **BUILD UP,** NOT TO **TEAR DOWN!**

(Not doing this is to "steal.")

**The "Positive" part:**

- ⇒ You shall work diligently to build up and protect what God has **entrusted to you** and to others, and **use all your gifts responsibly**, for doing what is good.

This implies a need to take care of ourselves.

- ⇒ But this is NOT a love-yourself-focused caring, but a love-God-and-neighbor-focused caring.

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### "Taking care of ourselves" –

Does this mean "loving yourself"?

- In recent years, a false teaching has crept into the church that totally distorts (or ignores) what Scripture teaches on this issue.
  - ✓ These "teachers" ① take various psychological teachings invented by people who *openly hate God* and who even claim that their teachings oppose the Bible... Then they ② "marry" those teachings to the teachings of Scripture. This obviously cannot work, so in the end, Scripture gets cancelled.
  - ✓ Some of these teachers, in a desire to promote "self-love," have taken what Jesus calls the two greatest commandments and turned them into three commandments. Then they take this third "commandment" (the one that Jesus *never* mentioned), and claim that it takes *priority* over the other two (the ones that Jesus *did* mention).
  - ✓ Here is a typical example of what they teach:

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⇒ Jesus says: "Only TWO."

Jesus replied, "This is the most important [commandment]: 'Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. **Love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

The second is this: '**Love your neighbor** as yourself.'

No other commandment is greater than these."

Mark 12:29-31 (BSB); ALL genuine translations say something similar to this.

⇒ False teachers say: "Actually, there are THREE!"

Jesus replied, "... '**Love the Lord your God** with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'

And: '**Love your neighbor** as yourself.'

But there is a greater commandment that you must obey first, before you can obey the others: 'You must first love yourself.'

Mark 12:29-31 (WPV = "World's Perverted Version")

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### IF YOU POINT OUT THE ERROR OF THIS "SELF-LOVE" VIEW...

- Those promoting it will often respond with questions such as:
  - ✓ "Why do people say they hate themselves? Why do people get depressed and suicidal? Surely this is proof that they don't have enough love for themselves!"
- Scripture tells us that people *already* love themselves.
  - ✓ They may hate their circumstances. They may think they *deserve* more than what they have (this can apply to any area of life).
  - ✓ The devil may *trick* them into interpreting it as "self hate." But if there *is* hate involved, it is against circumstances, people, and ultimately, against God.

"BUT WHAT ABOUT ... ?"

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- The problem is this: Once you *assume* such a view, you begin to redefine issues – to make things "fit" the view you are promoting. In fact, you begin to redefine all of reality!
- This basically means: 

If you aren't willing to start with Scripture, you aren't going to end up with the perspective of Scripture.

YOU CAN PICK ONLY ONE:

- ✓ A view that was *invented* by humans who openly *hated* God – a view that others then took and *pasted* into Scripture, and then claimed that it was taught by Scripture. ⇒ *Only as reliable as the inventors.*
- ✓ Scripture, which is *from God*, and has been attested through historical facts and eyewitness accounts. ⇒ *Only as reliable as its author, who is not capable of lying* (Hebrews 6:18; also, Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Titus 1:2).

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**WE WILL CONSIDER SCRIPTURE TO BE OUR FINAL AUTHORITY  
(NOT PEOPLE'S TEACHINGS).**

- Last time, we used the Heidelberg Catechism to organize what Scripture says about the Eighth Commandment. Its answer regarding the "positive" obligations seemed to suggest a need to focus on ourselves in some manner. *But we need to examine Scripture, in order to understand this issue more clearly.*

**Q. What does God require of you in this commandment?**

A. That I do whatever I can for my neighbor's good, ...

... that I treat others as I would like them to treat me, ...

↳ We could ask ourselves how we would want treated.

... and that I work faithfully so that I may share with those in need.

↳ We could ask ourselves what we would need to do for ourselves, to enable us to do this sharing.

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- Who we follow will influence our answer.

- ✓ If we are following Jesus, our views will be God-focused – even when we are dealing with our own selves. (Result: We will look for what the Bible says.)
- ✓ If we aren't following Jesus, our views will be self-focused – willing to grasp at anything that removes God from the main focus, or even completely removes him from our perspective. (Result: We will look anywhere that promotes our view.)

**WE ARE GOING TO LOOK AT THIS ISSUE 3 DIFFERENT WAYS:**

- ✓ "THEM" – Based on the Scripture passages that some of the catechisms included in their answers. (This reflects what people recognized several centuries before the modern view crept into the church, so they weren't influenced by it.)
- ✓ "IT" – Based on what modern-day Bible software can find.
- ✓ "US" – Based on cross-references and any other potentially relevant Scripture passage that we personally may find.

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**TIME TO LOOK AT THE "WITNESSES"!**

"Every matter must be established by the testimony of **two or three witnesses.**"

2 Corinthians 13:1b (BSB); stated at least 6 times in Scripture.

**WITNESS #1 ("THEM") – Verses from the catechisms.**

- ⇒ YES, we can enjoy what God has given us! *But it's also connected to "doing good"!*

I know that there is nothing better for them than to **rejoice and do good** while they live, and also that every man should **eat and drink and find satisfaction in all his labor—this is the gift of God.**

Ecclesiastes 3:12-13 (BSB)

- ✓ Examples of diligent work and its rewards; also, a reminder that *riches don't last forever* – Proverbs 27:23-27.

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- ✓ It's a gift from God!

Nothing is better for a man than to **eat and drink and enjoy his work**. I have also seen that this is **from the hand of God. For apart from Him, who can eat and who can find enjoyment?**

Ecclesiastes 2:24-25 (BSB)

(See also James 1:17: Every good and perfect gift is from God.)

- ⇒ All must be done with a "kingdom of God" focus (as in Matthew 6:33).
- ✓ God's people have been "crucified" to the world and its values – Galatians 6:14. (These worldly values include attempts to gain God's favor through religious practices.)
  - ✓ Preoccupation with riches brings you to ruin and destruction – 1 Timothy 6:9-10. In contrast...

But **godliness with contentment** is great gain.

1 Timothy 6:6 (NIV); read vs. 6-10.

- ✓ You *cannot* serve both God and "stuff" – Matthew 6:24.

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- ⇒ Be aware: ALL that we have is temporary.

- ✓ Don't put your trust in it... it will fail! Instead, this is the attitude you must have:

Command those who are rich in this present world **not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth**, which is so uncertain, but to **put their hope in God, who richly provides** us with everything for our enjoyment.

Command them to **do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share.**

In this way they will **lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age**, so that they may **take hold of the life that is truly life.**

1 Timothy 6:17-19 (BSB)

This is similar to the instruction that Jesus gave the rich young ruler, when he told him to give away his possessions ... and he'd have treasure in heaven. It's connected to "hope in God," and is made possible because of the heart changes that occur in salvation.

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- ⇒ Some of the basic instructions/principles (in Scripture) for honoring God in our work, and with our possessions:

- ✓ Work, as opposed to being lazy! Proverbs 10:4.
- ✓ Stop stealing and (instead) share with others! Ephesians 4:28.
- ✓ Follow your calling – whatever situation God has placed you in.
  - » The original example of Adam working in the garden in Eden; also the reason that work became difficult – Genesis 2:15; 3:19.
  - » We can serve God in *any* legitimate work situation. No need to change occupations, when God saves you!

Each person should remain in the situation they were in when God called them.

1 Corinthians 7:20 (NIV)

- ✓ The contrast between wise and foolish: being productive vs. merely consuming things – Proverbs 21:20; also, an example of not wasting – John 6:12.
- ✓ Don't take foolish risks. Example: cosigning a loan for someone – Proverbs 6:1-5; 11:15.

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⇒ **The things people have (or should have) will vary by situation.**

- ✓ Some things may be appropriate for one person, but not for another. Example: Matthew 11:7-9 tells us that "fine clothes" may be fit for a person who works in a king's palace, but not for a prophet in the wilderness!
- ✓ Whatever our circumstances may be, we are to be content, lest we be destroyed by our focus on "stuff" (1 Timothy 6:6-10).

**THE VERDICT OF "WITNESS #1"**

- Nothing here focuses on "love for self" (as defined by the self-love advocates).
- However, there *is* much about focusing on God (instead of on what you own), and also about sharing with others.
- We can enjoy what God has given us... *but only in the context of love for God and neighbor* (NOT in the context of love for self).

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**WITNESS #2 ("IT") – Based on what Bible software could find.**

• **Method:**

- ✓ Using AI (artificial intelligence), the Bible software was asked to examine the Bible (and *only* the Bible) for every Scripture passage it could find for these three categories:
  - » Passages that tell us to love God: It found 120 passages.
  - » Passages that tell us to love neighbor: It found 194 passages.
  - » Passages that tell us to love self: It found 11 passages.

- **Cautions:** AI doesn't claim to be perfect. It could miss some verses (not many) or include a few duplicates. It could accidentally include some verses that we might not consider applicable (not many).

• **Initial conclusion:**

- ✓ Love for God and neighbor are well-supported concepts, with *many verses* supporting each. In contrast, "**love for self**" has **strikingly few verses to support it**. WHAT DO THESE VERSES SAY? →

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⇒ **References to the second greatest commandment** (just quoting it): "Love your neighbor as yourself" – Leviticus 19:18b; Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Luke 10:27; Galatians 5:14. (= Almost half of the verses.)

⇒ **References that focus on self:**

- ✓ Loving one's self includes: willing to acquire wisdom – Proverbs 19:8.
- ✓ Loving one's body involves: Caring for and feeding it. This is the opposite of "hating" it – Ephesians 5:29.
- ✓ Loving one's body involves: Loving your wife (if you are married) – Ephesians 5:28. (See the context... this is a serious matter!)
- ✓ Loving one's self does NOT mean "self-seeking" – 1 Corinthians 13:5.
- ✓ We need to think "sober-mindedly" about ourselves – Romans 12:3.

⇒ **A reference that focuses on self AND others:**

- ✓ You CAN look to your own interests, but ALSO to the interests of others – Philippians 2:4. You are to follow Jesus' example (v. 5+).

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⇒ **References that focus on our relationship to others:**

- ✓ NOT seeking revenge or bearing a grudge against your neighbor is directly linked to "love your neighbor as yourself" – Leviticus 19:18a.
- ✓ The way we love ourselves (defined in the context) is connected to the way we are to love our wives (if we are married) – Ephesians 5:28-29.
- ✓ Taking care of other family members (if needed) is also an expression of love – 1 Timothy 5:8. (Note: I'm not exactly sure why this verse was included. But it was... so it's included here.)

**THE VERDICT OF "WITNESS #2"**

- Scripture passages that *do* mention love for one's self are very few; and none of them promote the views of the "self-love" advocates.
- Most of the verses that the software found either warn against a preoccupation on self, or else promote one's self in the context of expressing love toward others.

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**WITNESS #3 ("US") – Based on any Scripture passage that we can find, using Scripture cross references, etc.**

• **Method:**

- ✓ Every possibly relevant verse that we could find was evaluated. The verses that were *previously* found by the computer ("Witness #2) were *not* included in the following evaluation, since we have already seen what they say.

⇒ **Concerning "love for neighbor" and a focus on others.**

- ✓ When we are saved, God teaches us to focus on "love for others" – 1 Thessalonians 4:9.
- ✓ "Love one another" is to be our only ongoing debt – Romans 13:8-9.
- ✓ It is fulfilled by carrying other's burdens – Galatians 6:2.
- ✓ It means no favoritism toward others – James 2:8-9.

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⇒ **A legitimate focus on self includes God and other people!**

- ✓ **GOD-focus:** It is OK to enjoy life, with an awareness of the future judgment (which will be based on how we live) – Ecclesiastes 11:9.
- ✓ **PEOPLE-focus:** Attempting to build each other up – Romans 14:19; an example is found in the context. (See also Romans 1:11-12.)

⇒ **Living for self – incompatible with salvation.**

- ✓ The purpose of Jesus' death: so that we wouldn't live for self, but for Christ – 2 Corinthians 5:15.
- ✓ If we are saved, we have been crucified with Christ, and our old self no longer has power over us – Romans 6:6.
- ✓ To follow Jesus, we must deny self, not affirm it – Matthew 16:24; Luke 14:26.
- ✓ There are many other "self-affirming" character qualities (not listed here) that God says are sinful; and we cannot have them as a part of our lives.

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⇒ "Self-focuses" that are *forbidden* (and must be *replaced*, as described in the passages).

- ✓ *Do not seek your own good*, but the good of others; follow Jesus' example – 1 Corinthians 10:24, 33; 11:1.
- ✓ *Do not please yourself*, but bear with the failings of weak brothers; build them up (like Jesus did)– Romans 15:1-3.
- ✓ *Don't live for your physical desires*; be willing to suffer as Christ did, and do the will of God – 1 Peter 4:1-3.
- ✓ *Don't live focused on possessions, pleasure and ease*; be rich toward God, instead – Luke 12:15-21. \*

\* Note: In the Old Testament era, faithfulness to God as a *nation* would result in blessings and wealth as a *nation*. But this did not always hold true to people as *individuals*. On the *individual* level, *wicked* people sometimes seem to be blessed, while *righteous* people sometimes seem to experience only trouble and affliction. See Psalm 73. (The person described in Luke 12:15-21 fits in this second category.)

⇒ Attitudes to have/things to do (regarding one's self):

- ✓ *Delight in your weaknesses*, so that Christ's strength can be more visible – 2 Corinthians 12:10.
- ✓ Be willing to be a "slave" to others, so that they might be saved (see context) – 1 Corinthians 9:19-22.

⇒ Salvation and Christ's love will have an effect on the way we think:

- ✓ We will *not evaluate or think of people the way the world does* – 2 Corinthians 5:16.
- ✓ We are not to live like the unsaved: we are *not to have a futile way of thinking*, – Ephesians 4:17. [Romans 12:2 tells us that we need "renewed" minds.]

⇒ A warning about self-love in the "last days":

- ✓ People will be *lovers of themselves and lovers of pleasure*, rather than lovers of God; many other sinful characteristics are also mentioned – 2 Timothy 3:1-5.

**VERDICT OF "WITNESS #3"**

- There really isn't anything here that would support the "self-love" teachings that some are promoting.

**THE FINAL VERDICT: ALL WITNESSES AGREE!**

- There are some legitimate ways that a person can focus on self, but it is *never* the #1 focus. Nor is it isolated from love for God and neighbor – *which are always given the priority*.
- Scripture has a lot to say about "self" and its interaction with everything – God, neighbor, self, "stuff" – but what it says is NOT what the self-love teachers want you to believe.

**WHAT THEY WANT YOU TO BELIEVE IS COMPLETELY OPPOSITE OF THE FOCUS THAT SCRIPTURE HAS!**

**IT'S SO OPPOSITE!**

Even when there's "half-truth"... the rest of it is lie!  
And eventually, the lie wins.

Those who promote such views tend to leave out HALF of the GOOD NEWS message – the part about sin, judgment, wrath, and the need for repentance ... thus preventing their hearers from receiving the genuine GOOD NEWS THAT LEADS TO SALVATION.

★ READ GALATIANS 1:8-9!! ★

★ ★ **OUR MISSION:** ★ ★

**Take the "BIBLE CHALLENGE"!**

See if you can find *any* Scripture passages that – taken within context – teach something different than what we have found.

**IF you can't find any ...**

Then consider what Scripture DOES say about us and our Eighth Commandment obligations.

★ **THEN, TRUSTING GOD FOR THE ABILITY,** ★  
 ✚ **DO WHAT IT SAYS!**  
 (Philippians 2:12-13)

Credits

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The CATECHISM (in modern English, accessed 9/16/25):

- Heidelberg – <https://www.crcna.org/sites/default/files/HeidelbergCatechism.pdf>.

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