

END-TIMES ISSUES



#132 Commandment #8 – Two options for life.

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

1

It's so-o-o-o easy to sin!

From the time we were born, the world, with its values, have been teaching us how to do so.

- ✚ If our salvation was based on our efforts to change and to do good... ⇒ We would have absolutely *no hope* ever for being saved.
- ✚ Our hope is based on Jesus' righteousness, not ours. ⇒ God sees his success, not our failures.
- ✚ However, if Jesus' righteousness is present, we will want to be like him. ⇒ We will pursue doing what is right, because he *changes* the hearts of his people.

And **everyone who has this hope** in Him **purifies himself**, just as Christ is pure.

1 John 3:3 (BSB)

2

It takes effort to stop sinning!

From childhood, we have developed habits that make it easy to respond in sinful ways.

- ✚ This includes not only blatant, obvious, visible sins ... ⇒ ... it also includes hidden sins and even "good" things done with the wrong motives.
- ✚ We need to build-up new habits, based on Scripture. This takes time. ⇒ Just as our sinful habits are the result of *many* individual choices to sin, godly habits will be the result of many individual choices to obey God.
- ✚ We need to start by developing thinking patterns based on Scripture. ⇒ Change takes time; but *it will never occur if we aren't willing to start!*

3

IT CAN TAKE A WHILE TO REPLACE OLD HABITS WITH NEW ONES.

IF YOU'VE PRACTICED LOOKING THIS WAY 100,000 TIMES...

IT WILL TAKE A WHILE TO DEVELOP A HABIT OF LOOKING IN SOME OTHER DIRECTION.

BUT IT CAN BE DONE!



4

>> IT TAKES EFFORT TO OBEY THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT! <<

- The world is permeated with distorted values – some obvious, some deceptively similar to the truth (but *not* the truth).
 - ✓ We are *surrounded* by these influences – so much so, that the world's message often sounds perfectly legitimate and correct.
 - ✓ It is only as we develop a renewed mind, that we can begin to see the difference. **THIS WILL BE AN ONGOING PROCESS.**

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)

WHEN A PERSON THINKS SOMETHING IS TRUE (RIGHT OR WRONG), IT WILL INFLUENCE HOW HE LIVES.

5

OTHER ISSUES THAT COULD MAKE IT DIFFICULT TO OBEY.

- Our ability to obey this commandment can be influenced by a wrong understanding of other commandments.
 - ✓ For instance, the *Fifth* Commandment teaches us about the proper relationship of authority to those under authority. (Each has responsibilities and obligations toward the other.)
 - » The world violates these relationships; and many *churches* go along with whatever the world says. This can result in sinful interactions between those involved!
 - » Yet we might not even realize it's sinful, if our understanding of the Fifth Commandment is incorrect!
- Our ability to obey this commandment can become complicated when another entity usurps or "steals" that responsibility.
 - ✓ How should we respond, if (for example) the government claims authority in an area where God says the *family* is responsible?
 - ✓ At the same time, "stolen" responsibilities are sometimes the result of people *choosing* to surrender their own responsibilities!

6

- "What if Scripture seems to say something that goes *against* what I've always believed is true?" (This can happen in many situations – and can actually be good. It's the only way our views can change!)
- ✓ Unless it is very clear, it's best to see if similar concepts exist in other Scripture passages, as well as concepts that might say something different. (The goal is to prevent misinterpretation.)
- ✓ Our danger is to go from one error to the "opposite" one.
 - » In some matters, it is a clear issue of truth vs. error.
 - » In other matters, the problem is that we're neglecting *half* of the issue, when we need to pay attention to the *full* issue.
- "How should I respond when all of society (and perhaps even the church) is trying to *force* me go the *wrong* way?"
- ✓ These situations can be quite difficult. You may have to do what you can, the best you can. You may have to try to minimize the wrong (even if you can't completely undo it).
- ✓ You'll have to do what you can, and commit the results to God.

7

**THE WORLD IS UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE EVIL ONE:
and God's people know it.**

We know that we are of God, and that
the whole world is under the power of
the evil one.

1 John 5:19 (BSB)



In the last century...

- **THE WORLD** has introduced many *perspective changes* and *concept re-definitions* related to the Eighth Commandment.
 - ✗ Changes that are *incompatible* with the Eighth Commandment.
- **MANY CHURCHES** have been totally silent about such issues, unwilling to confront them.
 - ✗ Yet these views *not only change conduct*, but they *cloud one's thinking*, leaving people unable to recognize that they actually are violating the Eighth Commandment!

8

TYPICAL EXAMPLES:

Each of these will influence the way we respond to Eighth-Commandment issues.

- **Understanding the role of families vs. government.**
 - ✓ There are many responsibilities that God gives to *families*, which people today want the *government* to take care of. Once the government begins to control people's lives (in ways contrary to Scripture), it tends to not stop, until the control reaches 100%. It also begins to prohibit people and families from fulfilling their *actual* obligations.
- **Being responsible for one's actions vs. claiming to be a "victim."**
 - ✓ God says that people are responsible for their actions; but today, people want to blame anyone and anything, rather than accepting the consequences of their own conduct.
- **Favoritism vs. justice.**
 - ✓ God forbids favoritism in *any* direction. People show favoritism in *many* directions, and always seem to have excuses to "justify" it.

9

- A "consumer" vs. "producer" mentality.

- ✓ We will use this to illustrate some changes that have taken place.

Consumer vs. Producer

- **BEFORE** approximately 100 years ago...
 - ✓ It was recognized that Scripture taught that humans were created to be *producers* – to fulfil what we have seen is the "positive" side of the Eighth Commandment.
 - ✓ People didn't always do it; but they *knew* that Scripture *condemned* the opposite conduct (often described as "laziness").
 - ✓ Societies that promoted this Biblical concept tended to prosper; those that didn't promote it tended to stagnate and fail.
- **SINCE THEN ...** a view once called "*bad*"... now called "*good*."
 - ✓ It's been only about 100 years since an organized effort began to change people's perception – from "producer" to "consumer."
 - ✓ This has changed the focus of society – *from* a desire to *contribute* to society, *to* an emphasis on personal interests, gratification, etc.

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FOR NEARLY 1900 YEARS:

Christians recognized that God created people to be producers, using their skills and abilities for the good of society – and in doing so, also benefitting self.

- We could illustrate this view with the conduct of a **honeybee**, which benefits the whole hive... and even people.

✗ The Bible's influence often had a strong effect on *all* of society. Even *unsaved* people who opposed the Bible could benefit from it!



11

✗ The Bible's influence no longer impacts society.

IN THE LAST 100 YEARS:

The world has shifted to a materialistic consumer mentality that focuses primarily on self, possessions, pleasures, etc.

- We can illustrate this view with the conduct of a **rat**, which takes, consumes, and leaves things no better (and often worse off) for being there.
- The focus is no longer on "*What can I do to benefit society?*" but "*What can I get out of society, to benefit myself?*"
- Even when people *know* that Scripture condemns such an attitude, they not only continue to do it, but also make excuses to "*justify*" it.

12

WE'RE ACTUALLY NOT THAT BAD!

PEOPLE WHO ACCEPT THE WORLD'S VIEW TEND TO NOT VIEW IT THE WAY **GOD** DOES.

LOOK AT ALL THE FUN WE'RE HAVING!

13

WE COULD ALSO PICK OTHER CREATURES TO ILLUSTRATE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN:

BEING PRODUCTIVE AND EAGER TO SHARE	VS.	A DESIRE TO CONSUME WHAT YOU CAN
ANTS Builds up resources for the whole colony.		LEECHES AND TICKS Interested only in what they can get out of you.

14

WE COULD ALSO USE PLANTS TO ILLUSTRATE THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN:

BEING PRODUCTIVE AND EAGER TO SHARE	VS.	A DESIRE TO CONSUME WHAT YOU CAN
ROSES Beauty, fragrance; provides nectar for food/honey.		VENUS FLYTRAPS Also has nectar (on leaves); but it's only there to lure and to kill.

15

We have to decide...

- Are we going to focus on pleasure, riches, security, accumulating material possessions, and anything else we can do, to distract us from loving God and neighbor?
- Whenever the world tells us we "need" something, are we going to go out and buy it – even going into debt, if needed – in order to chase after all that the world offers?

Scripture describes the world's pleasures as "thorns."

★ Do we love the thorns of life so much that we're willing to forfeit the "fruit" of salvation? ★

The "Parable of the Sower," the farmer who planted ("sowed") seeds, illustrates the contrast between these two emphases. →

- We will focus on situations #3 and #4 – the two responses where God's Word was "received" *long-term* (not for just a *short* time). →

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The "Parable of the Sower":
 Do you claim to be saved?
 Is your life controlled by Scripture, or by "thorns"?

- The verses for our focus: Matthew 13:22-23; Mark 4:18-20; Luke 8:14-15. These are parallel accounts, but with slightly different emphases. Example: One account may point to the person's actions, while the other accounts describe the effect of those actions.
- The words used in this description are based on the BSB (Berean Standard Bible) translation. (Others will say the same basic thing.)

The common factor and the difference:

- The **SEED** is the Word of God; BOTH "hear" the SAME Word.
- The **PEOPLE** are the "soil"; but they are different types.* The one is described as "thorny", and the other is described as "good."

* (Our focus here is on human responsibility, not denying the work of God in salvation, and how he changes us.)

17

How each responds to the Word; what each pays attention to:

The THORNY soil (person):	The GOOD soil (person):
- They go on their way in life. (No heart change mentioned.) - They are preoccupied with: ✓ The worries of this life. ✓ The deceitfulness of wealth/riches. ✓ The desire for other things and the pleasures of life. Initial result: The Word is choked-out – <i>strangled</i> – by these preoccupations.	- They have a noble and good heart. (This effects their response.) - They respond to the Word in a way the other person doesn't: ✓ They receive it. ✓ They understand it. ✓ They cling to it. Initial result: They persevere in living-out the Word.

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The FINAL result:

The THORNY soil (person):

- **Characteristics (summarized):** Going on with life; preoccupied with the world...
⇒ With the result that God's Word is *strangled*.
- **Final result:** The Word is *strangled*, and accomplishes nothing; their lives result in nothing.

The GOOD soil (person):

- **Characteristics (summarized):** Having a noble and good heart; an ongoing focus on the Word...
⇒ With the result that they *live-out* God's Word.
- **Final result:** The Word is *lived-out*; their lives are fruitful. The amount of fruit may vary; but it *will exist*.

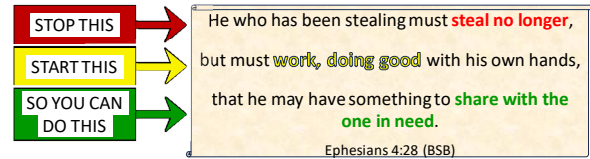
?? Which characterizes you ??

- BOTH types are found in most churches, and could be called "religious."
- But on the Day of Judgment, ONE will be told, "I never knew you."

19

WE HAVE LOOKED AT MANY SCRIPTURE PASSAGES THAT SHOW US HOW GOD VIEWS THIS ISSUE. (We're not going to repeat everything here.)

A BASIC SUMMARY OF THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT:



- ✓ We've seen the wide range of issues that fall under the category of "**stealing**" – which is *anything* Scripture says we *owe* to other people (including the use of our gifts and abilities to benefit others).
- ✓ We've looked at the concepts of "**work**" and "**sharing**," which teach us how to express this love for neighbor (and indirectly, for God).

★ IT'S DEFINITELY NOT THE WAY OF THE WORLD!!! ★

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★ ★ OUR MISSION: ★ ★

- There is so much to this command; for it relates to everything that is a part of "following Jesus"! We've barely touched the surface, as far as application is concerned!
- But when we choose to follow Jesus, we begin to learn how to apply it. (This learning is an *ongoing* process.)

MAKE IT OUR GOAL:

- **TO NOT LIVE:** an irresponsible, lazy, undisciplined, self-focused life!
- **BUT TO LIVE:** a responsible, diligent, disciplined, people-and-God-focused life!

>> In doing so, we will fulfill the Eighth Commandment. <<

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Credits (1)

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