

God's Law is Ingenious

November 18, 2012 ~ "Christian Materialism #6" ~ Ex 20.1-17

Purposes of Each of the 10 Commandments

❖ Let's begin with a review of each commandment / then we'll discuss . . .

1. v3 ~ "You shall have no other gods before Me"

❖ This commandment is best understood with preface included

✧ v2 ~ "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage"

1. God is our Lord ~ We have no say in the matter ~ It's just a fact

2. Yet God loves us ~ And demonstrates His love by saving us . . .

▪ Jews were saved from their captor / We are saved from ours

❖ "Men can choose to ignore the requirements of the law. But God dealt definitively in Egypt and in the Red Sea with those who flagrantly and defiantly reject the rule of His law." ~ "The Sinai Strategy" by Gary North

2. v4 ~ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image"

❖ Man was made in the image of God ~ we are the lesser entity

✧ Man in making an image of God considers God the lesser entity

✧ We also make God an "**it**" (an object) instead of a "**Him**" (a Person)

✧ Us making God an image depersonalizes Him

◆ Whereas God making us in His image personalizes us

❖ This is one way in which we fundamentally differ from God

✧ We lack the ability to create persons ~ We must depend upon God's methods

3. v7a ~ "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain . . ."

❖ This does apply to the flippant or careless misuse of the name of God

✧ Yet there is more to this commandment than that . . .

❖ God has honored us to know His name, to even use His name

✧ YHWH for the Jews and "in the name of Jesus" for us (*16 times in Acts*)

✧ e.g., We dishonor God when we minimize Him as a Person in debate

◆ "He who comes . . . He is . . . and a rewarder of those" ~ **Heb 11.6**

Xition: Let's move on to the 4th commandment (Sabbath) . . .

4. v8 ~ “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy . . .”

- ❖ This commandment hearkens all the way back to creation
 - ✧ A. W. Pink showed that all 10 were present in Garden (*membership class*)
- ❖ Gary North points out that God rested on 7th day – but man on the 1st
 - ✧ This illustrated that all of our work was to be predicated upon God’s
 - ✧ But the Fall changed it / God had Jews work 6 days just like Him
 - ✧ But with Christ’s triumph man again resumed a 1st day rest
 - ◆ This change reflects the restored relationship we have with God

5. v12 ~ “Honor your father and your mother . . .”

- ❖ This commandment is important / it bridges the 2 tables . . .
- ❖ Obedience to parents leads to collective peace for a people
 - ✧ This points to a very important societal principle
 - ◆ Respect for authority is an indicator of a stable society
 - ◆ Disrespect for authority is an indicator of an unstable society
- ❖ We live at a time of great disrespect for authority
 - ✧ We Christians indulge in disrespect for lawful authority
 - ◆ We have lost the art of respectful disagreement
 - Robert E. Lee referred to northern troops as “*those people over there*”
- ❖ “*If parents model disrespect for authority their children will likely disrespect them*”

6. v13 ~ “You shall not murder”

- ❖ Man cannot take the life of another human (*apart from obvious exceptions*)
 - ✧ Exceptions being: 1) war 2) capital punishment, and 3) self-defense
 - ◆ Each exception is clearly taught and modeled in Scripture
- ❖ Man was made by God / He’s a principal in dominion mandate – not an object
 - ✧ Man can be considered property (*not only of God – but of another*)
 - ✧ Man is still made in the image of God and is distinguished from property

7. v14 ~ “You shall not commit adultery”

- ❖ There are many sexual crimes (*acts punished by law*) but only adultery in 10 C
 - ✧ Other sexual crimes flow from an abuse of this one (*one flesh*)
 - ✧ Fidelity in marriage is analogous to fidelity to God in 1st Commandment
- ❖ Men & women unfaithful to one another are then unfaithful to others

Xition: Let’s go to the 8th commandment (Stealing) . . .

8. v15 ~ “You shall not steal”

- ❖ This prohibition against stealing presumes existence of private property rights
- ❖ Proverbs teaches explicitly that property accumulates to the industrious
 - ✧ Socialists & communists refuse to accept that hard work pays off
 - ✧ They simply assert that the system is biased & refuse to participate
 - ✧ Karl Marx inherited much wealth but lost it making unwise investments
 - ◇ He didn’t see that stock investing was supporting the capitalist system
- ❖ We have no “right” to another’s property

9. v16 ~ “You shall not bear false witness . . .”

- ❖ This may be argued to apply to lying generally . . .
 - ✧ But it’s clear target it someone lying to cheat a neighbor
- ❖ Even if a neighbor is hated by all ~ perjury is prohibited
 - ✧ Requiring truth in public testimony is foundational to righteousness
- ❖ Perjury is not just contempt of a court ~ but of God
 - ✧ Biblically the liar is to receive the penalty the accused would have received
 - ✧ In a capital crime the liar would receive the death penalty ~ not a \$ fine

10. v17 ~ “You shall not covet . . .”

- ❖ Quite a list follows (*house, wife, servants, animals, anything . . .*)
- ❖ This commandment is unique ~ it is unenforceable (by civil government)
 - ✧ But violators are known to God ~ God can mete out appropriate punishment
- ❖ I’ll talk more about this commandment shortly
- ❖ For now, we’ll just recognize it as wrong and a confirmation of private property

The 10 Commandments

- ❖ These 10 laws, though narrowly stated, have a very broad scope
 - ✧ Each law expands to cover a broad aspect of life on earth
 - ✧ The boundaries between them are found through application
 - ◇ e.g., Respect for parents or husbands/wives can go too far . . .
 - ◇ Individual freedoms & property rights are softened in community
 - poor laws, harvesting & gleaning, parental rights, condemned house
- ❖ Together they form a solid structure to guide individuals / societies
- ❖ My focus involves 3 aspects: God / property / man

Xition: But why do I refer to the God’s Law as Ingenious?

God, Property & Man in 10 Commandments

- ❖ Hang up visual aid . . .
- ❖ Read through the commandments
 - ✧ Columns reflect the object(s) of the commandments (G, P and M)
 - ✧ Walk through each explaining why **G, P and M arrows**

The Constant Threat of Apostasy

- ❖ 1st Commandment directs our hearts towards God (*God is our North Star*)
- ❖ 10th Commandment directs our hearts away from illicit desires (*fallen nature*)
- ❖ The 1st and 10th Commandments are supernatural
 - ✧ Both commandments address apostasy
 - ◇ The 1st is a bold willful choice
 - ◇ The 10th is a subtle seduction by materialism
- ❖ These 2 c/God and Property point us toward God and away from earth's riches

Materialistic Seduction is a Constant Threat

- ❖ Point out that even commandments relate to Property (**red arrows**)
 - ✧ Explain color of commandment text (**G, P and M**)
 - ✧ Our fight against materialism depends on a right view of **God** and **people**

The Commandments Protect Society (1st through 5th)

- ❖ A refusal to worship God alone and honor His name results in various errors
 - ✧ We can instead worship 1) wives or husbands, 2) family, 3) stuff, or 4) demons
 - ✧ Each distorts true righteousness / leading to an unstable society
 - ◇ A wife worshipping her husband results in abuse
 - ◇ Parents worshipping family results in selfish & spoiled children
- ❖ A failure to honor the Sabbath leads to anxiety and worry / it's all on us
 - ✧ God wants us to recognize our dependence upon Him
 - ◇ If we dishonor God's Sabbath we proclaim independence from Him
- ❖ Honoring parents leads to stable societies / without it they break down
 - ✧ Our parents are worthy of our respect
 - ✧ Our political leaders are worthy of our respect
 - ✧ If we refuse to give respect / we will likely fail to get respect

Xition: How do the 6th through 10th commandments protect society?

The Commandments Protect Society (6th through 10th)

- ❖ All western nations once practiced swift justice
 - ✧ III: “**Thunderstruck**” ~ Creation of wireless & killer’s swift death by hanging
 - ✧ III: **Norwegian** killed 77 people (bomb and guns) ~ 21 year sentence (max)
 - ✧ True justice for murderers slow / But abortion, euthanasia, infanticide fast
- ❖ Adultery is rampant / Many are not choosing to marry / Fornication the norm
 - ✧ Human relationships are to be patterned after God’s (*faithful, dependable*)
 - ✧ God’s longsuffering towards us is how He wants us to act towards others
- ❖ Stealing is moving from the illegal realm to the legal (*redistribution*)
 - ✧ But socialism and communism “**rot the bones**” of a good work ethic
- ❖ Authorities now selectively apply the standard of perjury
 - ✧ Chuck Colson went to jail for years for what Clinton staff did with impunity
 - ✧ President Clinton perjured himself but didn’t even get a slap on wrist
- ❖ Coveting is regarded as a social good / People who lack are victims

God’s Law and Society

- ❖ The principles of God’s Law are at work in our world
 - ✧ We cannot escape the blessings / cursings associated with them
- ❖ God even “**blesses**” nations that honor the “**social**” commandments (5th to 9th)
 - ✧ Though nations do not “**know / acknowledge Him**” He blesses them
- ❖ We (to a great degree) understand, agree with and embrace God’s Law
 - ✧ We see the connection between these laws and a peaceful society
 - ✧ And it frustrates us that many others don’t (*even professing Christians*)
- ❖ But we must not lose heart
 - ✧ We must not become bitter and vindictive
 - ◆ Many of us have not always known these things . . .
 - ◆ We must patiently teach and love people into an understanding of them

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you faultless
Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,
To God our Savior, who alone is wise,
Be Glory and Majesty,
Dominion and Power,
Both now and forever.

Amen.