

The TENDER Commandments
The One Commandment to Rule them All pt.2

INTRODUCTION:

Can we name the Ten Commandments???

How about the
Atheist Ten Commandments

What if, instead of climbing Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments from God, Moses had turned to the Israelites and asked: Hey, what do you guys think we should do?

Considering the Hebrews' bad behavior in the Bible, what with the coveting of neighbors' wives and murdering their own brothers, that might have been a disastrous idea.

But in our own more enlightened age, we're perfectly capable of crowdsourcing our own commandments -- or, at least, that's what a new project would have us believe.

Lex Bayer, an executive at AirBnB, and John Figdor, a humanist chaplain at Stanford University, delivered their own 10 "non-commandments" in a book they co-wrote: "Atheist Heart, Humanist Mind." Bayer said the book forced him to clarify and articulate his own beliefs, and he thought others could benefit from doing the same.

"A lot of atheists' books are about whether to believe in God or not," he said. "We wanted to consider: OK, so you don't believe in God, what's next? And that's actually a much harder question."

<http://www.cnn.com/2014/12/19/living/atheist-10-commandments/>

Here are the "Ten Non-Commandments" chosen as the winners:

1. Be open-minded and be willing to alter your beliefs with new evidence. (why?)
2. Strive to understand what is most likely to be true, not to believe what you wish to be true. (what is truth?)
3. The scientific method is the most reliable way of understanding the natural world. (can that be scientifically verified?)
4. Every person has the right to control of their body. (except the unborn)
5. God is not necessary to be a good person or to live a full and meaningful life. (how do you define good without God?)
6. Be mindful of the consequences of all your actions and recognize that you must take responsibility for them.
7. Treat others as you would want them to treat you, and can reasonably expect them to want to be treated. Think about their perspective. (sounds like they borrowed from the bible)
8. We have the responsibility to consider others, including future generations. (says who?)
9. There is no one right way to live. (except to believe that there is no one right way to live- this statement is a self-contained contradiction)
10. Leave the world a better place than you found it. (**define better? That's what Hitler thought he was doing**)

NOTE THE CHRONOLOGICAL ARROGANCE in the view that "we are more enlightened." REALLY???

When did that happen? Days of the slave trade, WWI, WWII and the Holocaust, 1973 allowing abortions up to the 9th month, the exploitation of women and children in the porn and sex trade of today.

If we were to crowdsource morality based on Internet hits the #1 value or commandment would be "Thou shalt exploit women and children and men through pornography" because it get more views than many other leading website combined.

What they DON'T ACKNOWLEDGE is how our society today has been influenced by 3000 years of being exposed to the Ten Commandments. The reason we are "more enlightened" is because we've had the Ten Commandments.

As we continue, my prayer is that in this series, we'll all understand that **The Ten Commandments ARE NOT ABOUT WHAT God WANTS FROM US, BUT WHAT HE WANTS FOR US.**

Remember that THE Ten Commandments ARE SOMEONE WE MEET BEFORE THEY ARE SOMETHING WE OBEY.

The context of the Ten Commandments is to be understood as a Covenant commitment ceremony, ie. Like a wedding.

Years ago, I heard Randy Pope from Perimeter Church preach on the Ten Commandments and his wedding illustration has forever influenced my understanding and presentation of this passage.

FIRST, There is an Engagement, and then the Stipulations are spelled out in the wedding service.

The Engagement. Ex.19:3-6

Exodus 19:3-9 3 And Moses went up to God, and the Lord called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob and tell the sons of Israel: 4 ' You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you to Myself. 5 'Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; 6 and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.'

Remember the relationship between Christ and his church / God and his people is symbolized by the relationship of husband and wife. The two parties make vows and there are stipulations given for the good of the relationship.

"Forsaking all others, I commit myself to you, til death do us part."

The Stipulations For Marriage

Ex. 20:1-17 Exodus 20:1-2 1 Then God spoke all these words, saying, 2 " I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall have no other gods before Me.

Stipulations Relating To Loving

LOVE FOR God IS SINGULAR - EXCLUSIVE

God (with other commandments we'll see it must be Spiritual, Sincere, and Safe-Guarded

We saw last week that The FIRST COMMANDMENT is that God must be number one, and that love for God is exclusive. God doesn't want a "Ricochet Romance or Pin Ball Love."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XjDYROYuB7w> (Teensy and Weensy)

Today I want to revisit this command and consider the implications in terms of the duties it requires and the impact it has on our lives. In our Presbyterian / Reformed Tradition we are blessed with the efforts of those who have gone before us, so I'd like to benefit from them this morning by taking a look at some insights from the WCF LC

WCF LC - Question 104:

What are the duties required in the first commandment?

Answer: The duties required in the first commandment are, the knowing and acknowledging of God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly, by thinking, meditating, remembering, highly esteeming, honoring, adoring, choosing, loving, desiring, and fearing of him; believing him; trusting, hoping, delighting, rejoicing in him; being zealous for him; calling upon him, giving all praise and thanks, and yielding all obedience and submission to him with the whole man; being careful in all things to please him, and sorrowful when in anything he is offended; and walking humbly with him.

This is LOVE LANGUAGE and an expression of the heart of worship. The command shouldn't be seen as a negative, but as a positive. God isn't simply saying, "don't have other gods", he is also saying, "YOU GET ME; enjoy me; I am your God, you are my people. You get the joy of walking with and glorifying me." **LOVE'S DELIGHT EMBRACES LOVE'S DEMANDS.**

QUESTION 4: How ought we to worship and glorify God ? (Keeping God First)

ANSWER: We ought to worship and glorify God:

1. In our **MINDS**, by thinking, meditating, remembering, and highly esteeming of him.
2. In our **WILLS**, by choosing him for our chief good, and devoting ourselves to his service.
3. In our **HEARTS**, by loving him, desiring him, fearing him, believing and trusting in him, grieving for our sins against him, hoping in him, delighting and rejoicing in him
4. In our **LIPS**, by calling upon him, and speaking well of his name.
5. In our **LIVES**, by yielding all obedience unto him, being zealous for his glory, careful to please him, fearful of offending him, and by walking humbly before him

WHAT First Commandment Living LOOKS LIKE: - ENJOYING God (Crabb)

To enjoy God

1. Consider where you are in your journey. Psalm 139: 23-24

God reminds them where they are and where they have been as he instructs them for the future.

Be willing to be honest; pretend about nothing. Get honest feedback from those who know you and love you.

In his Institutes of the Christian religion, John Calvin opens with speaking about knowing God and knowing yourself.

CRABB – "it is the failure to discover where we are at any moment that keeps us from realizing where we most want to go."

EX: remember the men in the hot air balloon – they didn't know where to go because they didn't know where they were.

A CLUE that we're on the right track – "Self-discovery that is led by God's spirit always generates brokenness, deepens humility, and energizes dependence and gratitude." - Crabb

2. Be aware that a fork in the road is always before you Psalm 73:28 ²⁸But as for me, the nearness of God is my good; I have made the Lord God my refuge, That I may tell of all Thy works.

The choice between enjoying God and using God is always there – especially when things go wrong in life. You can choose between trying to handle it to have a better life or drawing near to God and then engaging your problem with His energy and wisdom.

Problems reveal whether God is first or whether a better life is first.

3. Develop God centered goals

What were the goals of the Israelites? Food, water, land, security
What did God call them to? Himself – a relationship of love, trust and dependence – of knowing HIM.

The default mode of indwelling sin is to chase after material affluence, personal and physical comfort, and an ability to effectively arrange for the life we want.

God has different goals in mind for us: “I brought you to Myself to make you a holy nation.”

3 God CENTERED GOALS

**Encounter HIM; Grow in spiritual community; and
Personal transformation so that we reflect the nature and character of Christ.**

EX: X-MEN if you make eye contact then your life gets sucked out; When we behold God and his glory, we get transformed

4. Trust and make use of the God-given means of grace for growth.

When we're honest about who we are and where we are, then we see our need for grace. Receiving grace always requires humility and the death of pride and self-sufficiency.

The means of grace are worship, prayer, meditation on God's Word, fellowship, service, and relying on the work of the Holy Spirit.

5. Cultivate a prayer life that corresponds to 1st Commandment Living

See the Lord's Prayer – God is central

“if we live for blessings, we pray a certain way”

“if we live to know God, we pray another way.” - Crabb

Psalm 73:25ff

When the “nearness of God is your good” then you can always have your good because God's nearness is always possible, despite our circumstances – Romans 8: 38 For I am convinced that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height, nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

EITHER the nearness of God is your good, or something else is, and whatever that is will always be at risk. You can be separated from it – ultimately by death.

“if the nearness of God is your good, you pray a certain way”

“if something else is your good, you pray another way.”

LUTHER'S PRAYER GARLAND AND TEN COMMANDMENTS

Have I done anything simply out of love for Christ?

Have I refrained from doing anything out of love for Christ?

Every commandment becomes a four-strand garland of prayer –

Unpack these in your quiet time or small group...

Instruction – what does God demand of me?

Thanksgiving – what does this command teach me about a reason to give thanks to God?

Confession – what do I need to confess?

Prayer of petition – how should I pray?

FIRST COMMANDMENT AND ROOTS, BRANCHES, FRUIT



The 10c show us the Nature of God, so we can sink our ROOTS INTO HIM
They show how we are to RELATE TO THE OTHER BRANCHES
They show what the fruit of Loving God and Others looks like.

Don't let focus on the "rules" keep you from engaging in the drama of God's saving work for the people of Israel, and ultimately through Christ

EX: at a sporting event you don't sit and read the rule book. You engage in the drama of the game. BUT if the game has no rules, it is chaos. The rules give structure and drama to the game.

So to, the rules, or Ten Commandments, give structure to our engagement with God.

ABC'S OF COMING TO FAITH

INDICATIONS THAT YOU'RE NOT KEEPING God FIRST:

1. There is an "IF" in your obedience: "God I'll obey if you do....." then look at the other end of the "if" and there is your real God; there you'll find the things you really want and are just using God in order to get.

2. WORRY

3. Another indication is that I live as if there is something better than knowing God; there is something that we're willing to sell God out for. WHO ME? MOI? Certainly not!!

Money, approval, success, winning, food, a private fantasy life, a relationship with the right person, popularity, power, comfort, control, morality, image, clothes, furniture, cars, etc.

Have you ever lied, stretched the truth just a bit, cheated – even just a bit, to get any of those things? Do you ever find yourself pre-occupied with any of those things? Or felt under their control? Even just a bit?

Then you've sold out God. You've violated the FIRST COMMANDMENT. And the reality is that we do it more than we want to admit – the message of the bible is that "we are bigger sinners than...."

4. We value the blessing over the Blesser

God establishes a relationship and the guidelines for how to keep it running smoothly, but the OT shows that no one wants it. The people want a good life more than they want intimacy and dependence on God. We are no different today. Just like faithless Israel we want the good life more than we want to show how good God IS. Our hearts know the same struggles with idolatry – **we value the blessing over the BLESSER.**

EX: Your kids behave poorly – Do you work to figure out the thing that will help them behave better, or do draw near to God first, then move toward them with the Holy Spirit's passion and wisdom? The former is a strategy that values your kids more than God.

EX: Something has gone wrong in your marriage, in a relationship, at work, at church, etc. – Do you work to figure out the thing that will solve the problem, or do draw near to God first, then move toward the problem with the Holy Spirit's passion and wisdom?

Lastly what are you supposed to do about it?

N-U-R

Name - find the need under the need. What are the blessings you really want, that you insist you must have, unconditioned conditions, lords. Name them, see them as idols, call them idols, recognize them as false gods

Unmask – Here's why you need to unmask it; generally an idol is something that is very attractive to you, unmasking it means seeing it for the ugly thing that it is. It is a slave master it is a bondsman, it has a whip over you. Look at it and say "you have been pushing me around for years, you have your chains on me, you want to destroy me, I will never be able to satisfy you!" See the slavery of it.

Rejoice - Believing Jesus is your savior and not that. That's the essence is it not? You have to be able to say Jesus you are my justifier and not this, Jesus you are my peace and not this, Jesus you are my master and not this, Jesus you are my savior and not this.

Ex. 20 right after that he qualifies it saying, "for I am a jealous God" isn't that good news? Do you know what he is saying? He's saying I love you so much that I can't bear to see you in the arms of these idols, I know that only in my arms are you going to be happy. Have you ever cared for someone a great deal, and it just tears you up seeing them in the arms of someone who is abusing them?

What does it mean to rejoice in Jesus, to be ravished in Jesus, what does it mean let your imagination be captured by Jesus? It's a joy of being here in worship, it's a joy of being in prayer daily, it's a joy of being in community with other Christians going through the same thing. This great joy involves the discipline of grace.

LET THE nearness of God be your good, then move out with God's agenda on your heart. This is how Christ lived, and he is the only one who has ever fully obeyed the Ten Commandments.

WELCOME after Call To Worship

At first glance this commandment seems so simple and easy: “You shall have no other gods before me.”

Only 8 words, but if you unpack them they are rich and profound. This command is the first one because it is the fountainhead of all the others; everything else in the Law flows out of this.

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