

First Thing First

Scripture: Exodus 20:1-17
(09-06-26 Pastor Tony Hao)

Few years ago, some humanists came up with ten “new commandments” for our age:

1. Be open-minded.
2. Strive to understand what is most likely to be true.
3. The scientific method is the most reliable way of understanding.
4. Every person has the right to control their body.
5. God is not necessary to be a good person or meaningful life.
6. Be mindful of the consequences of all your actions.
7. Treat others as you would want them to treat you.
8. We have the responsibility to consider others.
9. There is no one right way to live.
10. Leave the world a better place than you found it.

Would you trade this “new” for the “old”? Why study the Ten Commandments? obey?

The God of the Ten Commandments is revealed not just as the Lord, but as the “Lord your God”. We are his treasured possession. This God of absolute power is not a capricious tyrant, not some cranky deity who wields raw and unbridled authority without any regard for his creatures. He is a personal God, and in Christ he always is for us. He is on our side. He is our Father. He gives us commands for our good.

We often think of the Ten Commandments as constraining us—as if God’s ways will keep us in servitude and reaching our potential. We forget that God means to give us abundant life and true freedom. The Ten Commandments are not prison bars, but guardrails. When you drive on a switchback on a mountain pass, do you curse the guardrails that keep you from plunging to an untimely death? No, someone put them there at great expense, and for our good, that we may travel about freely and safely. The Ten Commandments are not instructions on how to get out of Egypt. They are rules for a free people to stay free.

GROWING DEEPER (Reflection & Application)

1. Review the “New Ten Commandments” the moral code of our culture. How do they differ from the biblical Ten Commandments?
2. Read Exodus 19–20. Why do these chapters in Exodus mark a high point in the life of Israel?
3. How is God revealed both in the giving of the Ten Commandments and in the content of the commandments? What application can we make from this?