

*[A wise and timely commentary from Dennis Prager – Dennis Prager is a Jewish theologian, educator, philosopher, author, columnist and conservative radio host. I diligently read almost everything he writes and recommend that you do the same. Following is his most recent article.]*

## **Still the Only Solution to the World's Problems**

**By Dennis Prager**

There is only one solution to the world's problems, only one prescription for producing a near-heaven on earth. It is 3,000 years old. And it is known as the Ten Commandments.

Properly understood and applied, the Ten Commandments are really all humanity needs to make a beautiful world. While modern men and women, in their hubris, believe that they can and must come up with new ideas in order to make a good world, the truth is there is almost nothing new to say.

If people and countries lived by the Ten Commandments, all the great moral problems would disappear. Or, to put it another way, all the great evils involve the violation of one or more of the Ten Commandments.

Here is the case in brief for the Ten Commandments (using the Jewish enumeration, which differs slightly from the Protestant and Catholic):

### **1. I am the Lord your God.**

There are moral atheists and there are immoral believers, but there is no chance for a good world based on atheism. Ultimately, a godless and religion-free society depends on people's hearts to determine right from wrong, and that is a very weak foundation.

Plenty of people have died in history in the name of God. But many more have been killed, tortured, and deprived of liberty in the name of humanity and progress or some other post-Judeo-Christian value. Religion gave us an Inquisition and gives us suicide terrorists, but the death of God gave us Nazism and Communism, which, in one century alone, slaughtered more than a hundred million people. All the founders of the United States -- yes, all -- knew that a free society can survive only if its citizens believe themselves to be morally accountable to God.

### **2. Do not have other gods.**

The worship of false gods leads to evil. When anything but the God of creation and morality is worshiped, moral chaos ensues.

No one is godless. Either people worship God, or they worship other gods — nature, intelligence, art, education, beauty, the environment, Mother Earth, power, fame, pleasure, the state, the fuhrer, the party, progress, humanity. The list is almost endless. And no matter how noble — and false gods are often noble — when they become ends in themselves, they lead to evil.

### **3. Do not take God's name in vain.**

People have misinterpreted this commandment. They think it prohibits saying something like, "Oh, my God, what a home run!" But the Hebrew literally means "do not carry" the name of the Lord in vain.

In other words, we are forbidden from doing evil in God's name. Only when thus understood does the rest of the Commandment make sense — that God will not "cleanse," or forgive — the person who does this.

Thus, the Islamist who slits an innocent's throat while shouting "Allahu Akbar" is the perfect example of the individual who carries God's name in vain and who cannot be forgiven. These people not only murder their victims, they murder God's name. For that reason, they do more evil than the atheist who murders.

#### **4. Keep the Sabbath day and make it holy.**

Leaving the world one day a week and elevating it above the others is the greatest vehicle to family harmony and to harmony with friends.

One day a week without video games, without parents leaving to go to work or to do their own thing on the computer forces parents and children to spend time together and to actually talk. It even encourages couples to make love. It also weakens the institution of slavery. If even your servants get a day off because God commands it, that means you do not have absolute control over them.

#### **5. Honor your father and mother.**

The first thing every totalitarian and authoritarian movement does is to try to undermine parental authority. That's why it is dangerous, even in a democracy.

Take our universities, for example. Woodrow Wilson, the first progressive president, said, "The use of the university is to make young men as unlike their fathers as possible."

And that is exactly what colleges have been doing for over a half a century. Instead of searching for truth and beauty, the universities have been alienating American youth from their fathers' — and the Founding Fathers' — values.

#### **6. Do not murder.**

If people lived by this commandment alone, the world would enter a heavenly state. At the same time, the commandment has been widely misunderstood. The Hebrew originally prohibits murder, not killing. By mistranslating the Hebrew as "Do not kill," too many modern Westerners have been taught that pacifism is moral and noble. It is neither. It is an accessory to murder, since it prevents pacifists from doing the only thing that stops mass murder — killing the murderers.

The Nazi death camps were liberated by soldiers whose job was to kill murderers, not by pacifists or "peace activists."

#### **7. Do not commit adultery.**

Observance or even near-observance of this commandment alone would end the formation of the underclass. No amount of state aid can do what marriage and commitment to a spouse do to end poverty and almost all social pathologies.

#### **8. Do not steal.**

This commandment prohibits the stealing of people, the stealing of property, and the stealing of anything that belongs to another. The first prohibition alone, if obeyed, would have rendered the slave trade impossible.

Protecting the sanctity of private property makes moral civilization possible. That is why the recent riots in London should frighten every citizen of the U.K. and the West generally. Just as the burning of books leads to the burning of people, so, too, the smashing of windows and the looting of property leads eventually to the smashing of heads.

The rampant violation of this commandment by the governments of Africa is the primary reason for African poverty. Corruption, not Western imperialism, is the root of Africa's backwardness.

### **9. Do not bear false witness.**

Lying is the root of nearly all major evils. All totalitarian states are based on lies. Had the Nazis not lied about Jews, there would not have been a Holocaust. Only people who believed that all Jews, including babies, were vermin, could, for example, lock hundreds of Jews into a synagogue and burn them alive. That similar lies are told about Jews today by Arab governments and by the Iranian state should awaken people to the Nazi-like threat that anti-Semitism still poses.

### **10. Do not covet your neighbor's spouse, property, etc.**

The cultivation of class warfare — i.e., the cultivation of coveting what richer citizens legitimately own — inevitably leads to violating the other commandments, most particularly the ones that prohibit stealing and murdering.

There is only one way to achieve a great society, and it is not by creating a massive state that doles out other citizens' money. It is by cultivating citizens who try to live by these Ten Commandments. They are as relevant today as they were 3,000 years ago.