

We are in a time when Religious Liberty is a topic that is often discussed. We are asking; can or should the government tell us, for the expressed reason of the safety of others, not to meet in worship? Some are saying yes and others no. Instead of answering this we are going to look at some passages that advise us on the balance of what laws to follow. Romans 13:1 (NKJV) says;



“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.”

Paul is saying that we should follow

the governing authorities since God has set them in their place. On the other hand, during a time of persecution when the disciples were imprisoned, and then escaped and continued what they were imprisoned for, we have this verse as their reasoning, Acts 5:29 (NKJV) which says;

“But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: ‘We ought to obey God rather than men.’”

We know there will come a day, some say that day has already begun, when our religious freedoms will be taken away. We should protect our freedoms until that day and, in the meantime, follow the laws set up by Man. Then, when that day comes we obey God’s law instead of Man’s. The question we must ask ourselves is; are God’s will and Man’s law in harmony?

May God protect our freedoms for as long as it is His will,

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UPLIFT

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We’d love to hear from you!

General Comments/Questions:
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LOCAL
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Wheat Crackers

2.5 c. whole wheat flour
5 T. brown sugar
1-1/4 t. sea salt
1/2 c. almond milk
1/2 c. oil (vegetable)
1 t. vanilla
Poppy seeds

In a mixing bowl, thoroughly combine flour, brown sugar and salt. In a separate bowl, combine milk, oil and vanilla. Then, mix all ingredients, except poppy seeds, together and knead thoroughly. Roll out onto a lightly oiled 11” x 15” baking sheet (press firmly to a uniform thickness of about 1/8 inch). Sprinkle poppy seeds on top and then give a final roll to gently press seeds into top of dough. Cut into 1” X 3” strips. Bake at 300 degrees for 35 to 40 minutes. Yields 33 crackers.



“And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.”

Isaiah 65:24

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“Jesus Is a Socialist!” They Say

●●● *Lyle Keeney*

Debate long enough with a socialist and he’ll eventually make that assertion (I should know, I used to be one). There’s even a bumper sticker with words to that effect. I’ve seen it. It’s red, with the Soviet hammer and sickle. If a person didn’t know better, it almost even seems plausible. Karl Marx described the socialist ideal as, “From each according to his abilities, to each according to his need”. It does sound sort of “Christian”, doesn’t it?

But under any socialistic political system it is not the heart of the individual seeing a need and deciding to be charitable. Instead, people’s “abilities” and “needs” are determined by a clique of bureaucrats, and redistribution is accomplished by force of law. It’s a system of centrally planned, universal coercion.

By contrast, one of the hallmarks of God’s law, of God’s system, is free will. The Bible refers to God’s law as “The Perfect Law of Liberty”, for

indeed if God’s law were generally understood, appreciated and upheld, there would be maximum liberty in the world!

Those who view God’s law as unfair or overly restrictive are those who would replace God’s “Perfect Law of Liberty” with a form of slavery in which we all, in effect, belong to the state and are treated, essentially, as livestock.

You can read through all of the Ten Commandments and see that each one is being opposed by modern, popular society. Today let’s pick just one, the tenth commandment, and see how it compares with the claims of socialists, who say, “What’s yours is ours.”

We already have, “Thou shalt not steal”, “Thou shalt not murder”, and “Thou shalt not commit adultery” but the Tenth takes all of those things much farther, beyond mere actions and straight into the heart and mind

Continued inside...

Randy's Ramblings

●●● Randy Eastman

JUSTICE.
MERCY. CHARITY.



She sat in the courtroom awaiting her trial. Her eyes were filled with fear and even from a distance you could see the anguish that gripped her entire being.

It was New York City during the depression. A hard existence anywhere at that time, but especially hard in the inner city. The mayor of New York at that time was Fiorello LaGuardia. He was a small man, standing only 5 feet 2 inches tall, but he was a man with a heart as big as the city he served. As mayor of New York, one of LaGuardia's favorite pastimes was to preside as judge over night court.

On this particular evening a woman stood before him. The charge, stealing food. As the young woman poured out her story, she began to weep. She had no job, no money, and her children were hungry. In desperation she had tried to steal something for her children to eat and she had been caught. As LaGuardia listened to her his heart was moved. He longed to pardon her, to set her free. But he had taken an oath to uphold the laws of New York. He longed to show mercy, but he knew he must execute justice. The gavel crashed down upon the bench, "Guilty, ten dollars or ten days in jail". Then that great small man stood to his feet, reached into his pocket, pulled out his wallet, and laid ten dollars on the bench and announced, "Fine paid". She was free.

Long ago our first parents committed a crime against the law of God's universe and since then, every son and daughter born to Adam and Eve throughout the last six thousand years have been partakers in that crime. You can read all about it in the Bible, in the 3rd chapter of the book of Genesis. And like our story, our penalty has also been paid. In Galatians 3:13 it says *"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."* *"Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed"* (1 Peter 2:24 NKJV).

The woman in our story was free, free from the law that would have had her pay for her crime. But neither the law nor the penalty was set aside, someone else paid for her crime. That reprieve did not give her a license to go out and continue stealing. And so it is with us. We have been given another chance, not to continue in sin, but to live in righteousness. And why did God do this? *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16).

It's a wonderful story so far, but there is more to it. After the judge paid her fine, he then went on to fine everyone in the courtroom two dollars, "For living in a city" he said "where a woman has to steal food to feed her children, and for failing to do anything about it". It makes me wonder, what will the great Judge of the universe do to those who could have relieved the suffering of the poor and destitute of this world and failed to do it.

Dear friends, we have an opportunity, now more than ever to help those around us. To give a little of ourselves and receive the blessing that only comes by giving. *"Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin"* (James 4:17 NKJV). ●●●

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where actions are motivated; *"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, nor his wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, his ox, his ass, nor anything that is thy neighbor's"* (Exodus 20:17).

This is what we today would call a social contract. It firmly and unambiguously establishes what we now think of as property rights, but it goes much farther besides. It says you must not even WANT that which is not yours. The



wanting (coveting) is the sin, you see, no matter the reason or the imagined purpose behind it (read Jesus' Sermon on The Mount). The Tenth Commandment also establishes free and unfettered trade, or commerce. Let's analyze it piece by piece.

You shall not covet another person's:

- **HOUSE** = property including land and buildings.
- **WIFE** = spouse, marriage covenant, family structure, integrity, harmony.
- **MANSERVANT AND MAIDSERVANT** = employees, workforce (business relationships).
- **OX** = means of production.
- **ASS** = means of transportation.

None of those things belonging to another are any of your business. Don't even think about it. Look elsewhere for your sustenance or your

sense of purpose.

It goes on to say; "...nor anything that is thy neighbor's", because God knows we're all looking for an angle, an excuse, a loophole, exemption, or some way out of keeping the Law. "Nor anything that is thy neighbor's" takes all of that worming and twisting we like so much, and shuts it right down. Covetousness, it could be said, not the "almighty dollar", is the root of all evil, for it is the beginning of all evil deeds.

Those who trend toward socialism, in any of its flavors, brands and stripes, would see the Ten Commandments as a problem, for the Law convicts them, and their various movements, on all counts. It also convicts us as Christians, so that we might see the errors in our own ways. God's law convicts us all. The difference lies in whether you see God's law as oppressive or you love it; whether you'd rather avoid the truth, or willingly accept the pain of realizing that we are fallen beings and then seek to learn of the plan of salvation. As a young man I rebelled against the laws of God and the laws of Man, seeing them only as obstacles, but of course the result was pain and suffering, for myself and for others besides.

It's true that if most of the world loved the precepts of Christ, and lived according to His teachings, there would be an outward appearance similar to the final, ultimate promise of communism according to Marx. However, the motives are totally different because we're acting out of love, and seeking, out of enthusiasm, to share, willingly and voluntarily, that with which God has blessed us in our deeds.

What socialists don't like to admit is that their system, no matter how beautifully imagined, is coercive. Indeed, it is a system which seeks to use coercion at every opportunity and under every guise, rationalization and excuse, whereas Christ's Way is founded in liberty -- Recognizing the

proscriptions in God's law as liberating, no one in Christ's family lives by coveting and then finding an excuse to claim the property of others. The two systems are polar opposites. Socialism is a morbid corruption, a counterfeit, a hideous mockery, of Christianity.

"For the love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows" (1 Tim. 6:10).

One does not contemplate forcible redistribution, or any of the other coercive things which socialism does, without first coveting the wealth, property, or productive or intellectual capacity of another. There is no commonality between the two systems whatsoever.

Socialism says; Envy thy neighbor, covet his property, covet his family, covet his means of production, his creativity and hard work, accuse him, threaten him, and take his stuff by any means necessary, for it never rightly belonged to him in the first place. Is this not standing in the place of God?

Jesus says, Love thy neighbor, and judge him not, lest thou be judged. Be your brother's keeper, meaning by your own choice, because it comes from your heart, which He has softened by His atoning sacrifice. Jesus invites us to "die to self" (cast aside our worldly desires) and live for Him, accepting His sacrifice and His infinite gift of life (John 3:30, Gal. 2:19-21, 1 Cor. 15:31, Gal. 5:24-26). Jesus offers a personal experience to each one individually. Everyone exercises their own free choice.

God could have created us pre-programmed, like machines, to do only His will, but that would be irrational and tyrannical. He wants our relationship with Him to be of our free choice. If your spouse, for example, could be programmed like a robot to "love" you and do everything as you wish, or intimidated into "loving" you, that might be very nice for a short while. Eventually though, you would come to despise that person, having no respect, because forced love is no love at all. True love, or charity if we are talking about serving the needs of our neighbors, comes from the heart, freely given, with understanding and enthusiasm. There is no other kind of love. Any system which denies this will result only in more suffering.

Socialism uses pressure and intimidation, even threats if we don't sacrifice ourselves and live for the ruling class and it's pretexts. It is a system which covets and then mocks the authority of God, wishing to live "free" from His law. It is self-righteousness for the masses; man seeking to save himself; man trying to be God.

The difference is maximum liberty under a system of grace and love verses maximum power of coercion under a system of fear. Choose wisely.

"But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed" (James 1:25).

"So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty" (James 2:12). ●●●

