



THE GOSPEL

An Eternal Life Hack

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Have you ever thought about how keeping the commandments makes life so much easier?

Last month, some friends and I were catching each other up on our week. One friend shared that he was taking on the burden of his mom's alcoholism recovery. He was just younger than me, and that sounded like the worst task ever.

Later that night, the conversation moved to how expensive smoking is and how someone we knew had been going through a pack of cigarettes a day. (Do the math; it's so much money!) She was trying to quit and was going through withdrawals. Her son was really happy she was quitting, though. His dad had died of a drug overdose, which made any drug use that much scarier for this kid.

Finally, our conversation ended on coffee—how much people drank every morning (and afternoon and sometimes night) and how they missed their lattes now that they couldn't afford them daily.

As I drove home, thinking over all these conversations, I had the thought, "The Word of Wisdom is basically the biggest life hack ever." (If you don't know, a "life hack" is a way to make your life better, live more efficiently, etc. As someone online described it, a life hack is what was formerly known as "a good





idea.”) It’s as if God said, “Here’s a way to save you money, help you stay healthy, protect your kids, and avoid really tough emotional burdens, including your own and others’ addictions.” It’s almost as if God anticipated all the problems we’d be up against and gave us a way to avoid half of them.



With any of God’s commandments, we have the choice to follow them or ignore them. But as I thought of the Word of Wisdom as a set of guidelines from God that both anticipates and protects us from so many challenges, I thought, “What if all of God’s commandments work that way?” What if a loving Heavenly Father, who has experienced this life and its challenges, has given a guidebook to help us navigate the world as painlessly as possible? And what if He gave that to us because He loves us and wants to protect us?

Want to be content with what you have, to be happy and grateful? “Thou

shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house” (Exodus 20:17).

Want to avoid guilt, incarceration, crippling bail and court fees? Want to keep people’s trust and respect—and your job? “Thou shalt not steal” (Exodus 20:15).

Want to stay close to God so that He can guide and direct you and help carry your burdens? “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” (Matthew 22:37).

The list goes on and on. Every single commandment can protect us from heartache, make our lives easier, keep us out of trouble, or just help us find peace. And all with so very little personal cost or inconvenience. (And no hidden fees!)

I certainly don’t want to minimize God’s commandments as mere guidelines or helpful life hacks. They’re much bigger than that. But they’re also really that simple.



Heavenly Father can’t protect us from everything. But as a loving parent, He would like to prepare us and protect us from the cost of our choices—by guiding us to make better ones.

Of course, we can keep the commandments and still have bad things happen. So why bother?

Because we’ll never know what we *are* being protected from through our obedience. Because it helps free us from a life of self-inflicted wounds. Because obedience helps us stay close to God. Because it puts us in position to repent when we choose wrong. Because we trust God to know how to bless and protect us.

The list goes on and on. It is so much longer than the list of reasons *not* to keep the commandments.

For better or worse, God lets me choose how obedient I want to be. I get to choose how much I open myself to the blessings He has for me. So why keep the commandments? Because I want my life wide open to the help God is trying to give. ■

