

*GOD'S TEN
COMMANDMENTS*

are

*THE PRINCIPLES OF
GOD'S LAW*

Central Highlands Church of God

The Ten Commandments

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God's Ten Commandments Are The Principles Of God's Law

The Ten Commandments are God's spiritual ruler. They show us how we measure up spiritually against the basic points of God's Law. They can reveal areas in our lives where we need God's help.

The Ten Commandments also form the basis for a healthy society's moral and legal structure. Genuine application of these laws to all areas of a society would lead to true civilization.

The Ten Commandments are based on the two great principles that Jesus states in the book of Matthew, chapter 22, verses 37 to 40:

'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like it:

'You shall love your neighbour as yourself.'

On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

The first four of the Ten Commandments show us the basis for establishing a correct relationship with God. (See Exodus chapter 20, verses 1 to 11) The fifth commandment involves our relationship with our parents and also with God as our ultimate parent. (Exodus 20:12) The final five commandments provide the basis for building good relationships with our neighbours. The full text of the Ten Commandments is given here:

The Ten Commandments

And God spoke all these words, saying:

- 1** I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me.
- 2** You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the

The Ten Commandments - God's Spiritual Ruler

earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, Jehovah your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

- 3 You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain, for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.
- 4 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Jehovah your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.
For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.
- 5 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which Jehovah your God is giving you.
- 6 You shall not murder.
- 7 You shall not commit adultery.
- 8 You shall not steal.
- 9 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
- 10 You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbour's.

And all the people observed the thunderings, the flashes of lightning, the sound of the ram's horn, and the mountain smoking; and the people saw it, they trembled and they stood a long way off.

Then they said to Moses, "You speak with us, and we will hear; but do not let God speak with us, lest we die."

And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid; for God

has come to test you, that His fear may be on your faces, so that you may not sin." Exodus 20:1 to 20

Do You Deserve To Die?

The Bible says that disobeying God's Law is sin and leads to eternal death (1 John 3:4, Ezekiel 18:20 to 22). Do you know the basics of His Law? Are you keeping God's Law? Do you think Christ removed the need to keep the Ten Commandments?

God commands us to keep these laws. If you are to restrict your attention to the words of the Ten Commandments alone, one can see that they only require respect. They do not insist that we actually **love** God or our neighbours, but merely teach us how to be fair to them. Jesus says God wants far more than this from us, as we read in Matthew above. But did you know that what Jesus said was nothing new? The command to love Jehovah comes directly from Deuteronomy 6:5, while the command to love our neighbours is quoted from Leviticus 19:18. Remember, God does NOT change. He gave us His Law for our good (Deuteronomy 6:1-4). If we love Him, how can we not want to please Him by obeying His Laws (1 John 5:3, John 14:15, Deut 11:1)?

Yet there are some who think that we do not need to do even this minimum amount. They say that the Ten Commandments do not apply to Christians, thus destroying the basis of God's Law.

Jesus Christ confirms that we should keep God's Law. He says:

Do not think that I came to pull down the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to pull *them* down but to fulfill *them*.

Truly, I say to you, until heaven and earth pass away, *there* is no way one letter or one dot will pass from the law until all is implemented.

Thus whoever removes one of these commandments *in* the least, and teaches men so, he shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven. But whoever does and teaches *them*, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

For I say to you, that if your righteousness does not exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, there is no way

you will enter into the kingdom of heaven. Matthew 5:17 to 20

Opponents of God's Law often claim that the Apostle Paul has done away with the requirement to keep God's Law. However, Paul himself, in Romans 2:25 to 29 clearly shows that fulfilling the Law is a desirable thing which should go beyond the letter, all the way to the Spiritual intent of the Law. Paul restates this theme in Romans 7:6, emphasising in verse 12 that "the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good."

James chapter 2 shows that we must have faith, but that our faith is made perfect when it is combined with good works (see vs 22). Let us not merely keep the letter of God's Commandments, but fulfil the spirit of His Law.

It is also good to remember that Jesus Christ is the Word of God (John 1:1) and is thus the one who spoke the Ten Words (the literal Hebrew name for the Ten Commandments). I Corinthians 10:1 to 4 clearly states that it was Jesus who was with the Israelites throughout the Exodus. This means that the laws given at Mt Sinai are part of Christ's commandments. In John 14:15 Jesus says: "If you love me, keep my commandments." (Another of our articles titled *Free to Obey God* explains how God enables us to live a new and joyful life free from sin and exposes the twisted arguments used by many supposedly Christian leaders to deceive their followers into disobeying God).

We will expand on each of God's Ten Commandments, because they teach us how He wants us to live. Obeying Him will give you a satisfying and challenging life.

We will also see that no one except Jesus Christ was able to always keep God's Laws, placing all of us under a death sentence. Jesus has provided the only way that our transgressions can be forgiven, thus saving us from destruction. However, our salvation requires genuine repentance -- remorse and a deep desire to turn away from sin and towards God. Then God will cleanse us and give us his Holy Spirit and the ability to keep His Law.

The result of repentance is spoken of by God in Ezekiel 36:25 to 31:

"Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols.

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you;

I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

"Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God.

"I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses. I will call for the grain and multiply it, and bring no famine upon you.

"And I will multiply the fruit of your trees and the increase of your fields, so that you need never again bear the reproach of famine among the nations.

"Then you will remember your evil ways and your deeds that were not good; and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight, for your iniquities and your abominations.

Who Is God?

God's First Commandment Says:

"I am Jehovah your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me." Exodus 20:2-3

God's Name is revealed to Moses in this passage, after Moses has been attracted by the burning bush:

Then Moses said to God, "Behold, when I come to the sons of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is His name?' what shall I say to them?"

And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And He said, "Thus you shall say to the children of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.' "

And again God said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel: 'Jehovah God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me

to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to generations of generations.' Exodus 3:13 to 15

When God says He is the "I AM", He is saying He is the one all-knowing being who is responsible for all things. Jehovah is God's name. It means 'Self-existing Creator'. Just as He freed the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, He, through His son Jesus Christ, can free us from our bondage to sin.

Remember the former things of eternity, for I am God, and there is no other God, there is none like Me, declaring the end from the beginning, and from the past things which were not yet done, saying, 'My purpose shall stand, and all My desire I will do, calling a bird of prey from the sunrise, from a far land the man *who will* do My purpose. Yes, I have spoken it. Yes, I will bring it *to pass*. I have formed *it*. Yes, I will do it.'

Isaiah 46:9 to 11

When Jehovah says that He alone is God, He does not mean that all gods are simply different aspects of himself. The confrontation between Elijah and the priests of Baal given in 1 Kings 18:17 to 46 illustrates this clearly. Note Elijah's challenge to the Israelites and God's instructions:

And Elijah came to all the people, and said, "How long will you falter between two opinions? If Jehovah is God, follow Him; but if Baal, then follow him." But the people answered him not a word. 1 Kings 18:21

"You shall totally destroy all the places where the nations which you are dispossessing served their gods, on the high mountains and on the hills and under every green tree. And you shall smash their altars, shatter their sacred pillars, and burn their wooden pillars with fire; you shall cut down the carved images of their gods and destroy their names from that place.

"You shall not do these things *which are* against Jehovah your God. Deuteronomy 12:2 to 4

Contrary to current popular opinion, the New Testament also distinguishes sharply between Jehovah and the gods of the pagans. The Apostles Paul and Barnabas confirmed this when they rejected an attempt by pagans to worship them as the gods Zeus and Hermes. This occurred after God healed a crippled man through them. Paul said to them:

"Men, why are you doing these things? We are also men with the same feelings as you, and preach the good news to you that you should turn from these vain things to the living God, who made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all things that are in them, who in bygone generations allowed all nations to walk in their own ways.

"Yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good, gave us rain from heaven and fruitful seasons, filling our hearts with food and gladness."

And with these sayings they could barely restrain the multitudes from sacrificing to them. Acts 14:15 to 18

And about that time there arose not a little disturbance about the Way.

For one, by name Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, provided not a little business for the craftsmen.

He assembled the workers of similar business and said: "Men, you understand that we make our prosperity out of this business. And you see and hear that not only at Ephesus, but through almost all Asia, this Paul has persuaded and perverted many people, saying that those which are made with hands are not gods.

"But not only this, our business is in danger of falling into disrepute, and also the temple of the great goddess Diana is going to be counted as nothing and her greatness diminished, whom all Asia and the world worship."

Hearing this, they became full of anger and cried out, saying, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" Acts 19:23 to 28

There is no doubt that the craftsmen were well aware that the Christian God was in direct opposition to the goddess they were manufacturing.

He alone is the true God. Worshipping other gods or making gods of power, possessions, rock stars, or even ourselves cannot save us from eternal death.

The letter of the first commandment simply requires us to accept the Jehovah is the only True God. However, as Jesus made clear in the quote from Matthew, God actually wants us to not merely accept Him, but to love Him with all of our being. This is the spirit of the law.

Should We Worship Idols?

God's Second Commandment Says:

"You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, Jehovah your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments. Exodus 20:4 to 6

People who disobey God usually raise children who also disobey God, bringing His wrath on them too. Thankfully, God's mercy far overshadows His wrath.

God prohibits making **any** images for worship and bowing down to the images.¹ He expressly forbids any use of images that are supposed to represent Him:

¹By this God does not forbid the creation of works of art which do not represent Him and are not made to be worshipped, as shown by the beautiful decorations used on the garments of the High Priest (Exodus 28) and the cherubim on the ark and the almond blossom design on the lampstand (Exodus 37).

"To whom will you liken me, and make me equal and compare me, that we should be alike?...They hire a metalworker, and he makes a god. They fall down, yes, they worship...yet it cannot answer nor save..."

"Remember this...I am God, and there is no other. I am God and there is none like me." Isaiah 46:5-10

"Thus says Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts: I am the First and I am the Last; and besides Me there is no God.

And who is as I am? Let him declare it and set it in order before Me, since I appointed the ancient people. And the things to come, and yes, which shall come, let them show these things.

Do not be alarmed nor afraid; have I not told you since that time, and declared it? You are My witnesses. Is there a God besides Me? Yes, there is no other Rock; I know not one.' "

Those who make a carved image, all of them worthless, their precious things shall not profit; and their witnesses - they do not see; neither do they know, that they may be ashamed.

Who has formed a god or cast an image for no profit?

Isaiah 44:6 to 10

Note that in Exodus 20:4, Jehovah God expressly forbids making images of things in heaven (thus excluding the making and worship [some cults call this worship 'honouring' or 'adoring'] of images claimed to represent Him, Jesus, Mary, the saints or angels), things on earth (thus excluding the worship of 'nature', animals, trees, crosses, rocks or crystals, etc.) and under the water (thus excluding the worship of fish, sea serpents, etc.)

The Spirit of this Law is to worship Our Father in Heaven alone as God, to give to Him all the love and respect He deserves, and to understand that He is greater than anything we can make or imagine.

Is Profanity Acceptable?

God's Third Commandment Says:

"You shall not take the name of Jehovah your God in vain,

for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain." Exodus 20:7

God does not like people abusing His name, nor the name of His son, Jesus Christ. He is the source of our existence, and worthy of respect. Profaning His name is unnecessary and puts one under His condemnation. Such behaviour is offensive to all people who love God.

This commandment covers more than the use of God's name as a curse. God's Name is trampled on when a person makes a promise in God's name which he (or she) later does not keep. This sin often harms more than one person, as shown in Leviticus 9:11-13: 'You shall not steal, nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another. And you shall not swear by My name falsely, nor shall you profane the name of your God: I am Jehovah. You shall not defraud your neighbour, nor rob him.'

Two examples of how seriously God regards misuse of His Name are given here:

Then he said to me, "This is the curse that goes out over the face of the whole earth: 'Every thief shall be expelled,' according to what is on this side of the scroll; and, 'Every perjurer shall be expelled,' according to what is on that side of it."

"I will send out the curse," says Jehovah of hosts; "It shall enter the house of the thief and the house of the one who swears falsely by My name. It shall remain in the midst of his house and consume it, with its timber and stones."

Zechariah 5:3

Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord.' But I say to you, do not swear at all: neither by heaven, for it is God's throne nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair

white or black.

But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'; for whatever is more than these is from the evil one. Matthew 5:33

Has God Set Aside A Specific Day For Worship?

God's Fourth Commandment Says:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of Jehovah your God. You shall do no work in it: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.

For in six days Jehovah made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore Jehovah blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

Exodus 20:8 to 11

God has set apart the seventh day of the week as a reminder of His creative works. He gave us this day as a day for us to rest, just as He rested after creating our universe. (Genesis 2:2 &3) He also commanded us to gather together to worship Him on the Sabbath. (Ie- the Holy Convocation spoken of in Leviticus 23:3) It reminds us how we were set free from slavery to sin, just as the Israelites were set free from slavery in Egypt. (Deuteronomy 5:15) It is a sign between God and His people. (Exodus 31:12 to 17) Only urgent, undelayable work should be done on this sacred day. God's Sabbath goes from dusk Friday to dusk Saturday².

God's Sabbath was not given just to the Israelites, as this passage shows:

² This is true in the region from Israel west to the International Date Line. The areas east of Israel to the IDL begin their Sabbaths after they have begun in Israel. Due to the incorrect placement of man's IDL, this means the Sabbath in this region begins at dusk on Saturday and finishes at dusk on Sunday. This is actually the seventh day of the week for this region.

Thus says Jehovah: "Keep justice, and do righteousness, for My salvation is coming near, and My righteousness *is* to be revealed. Blessed is the man who does this, and the son of man who holds on to it; keeping from defiling the Sabbath, and keeping his hand from doing every evil."

Do not let the foreigner's son who joins himself to Jehovah speak, saying, "Surely Jehovah has separated me from His people"; and do not let the eunuch say, "Behold! I am a dried-up tree."

For thus says Jehovah: "To the eunuchs who keep My Sabbaths, and choose things I am pleased with, and take hold of My covenant, I will even give to them in My house and within My walls a hand and a name better than that of sons and daughters; an everlasting name I will give them that shall not be cut off.

And the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to Jehovah, to serve Him, and to love the name of Jehovah, to become His servants; everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath, and takes hold of My covenant; even them I will bring to My holy mountain, and make them joyful in My house of prayer. Their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on My altar; for My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations." Isaiah 56:1 to 7

That the Sabbath extended into the New Testament era is illustrated by this passage from Hebrews:

Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. For we who have believed do enter that rest, as He has said: "So I swore in My wrath, they shall not enter My rest," although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in

this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works"; and again in this place: "They shall not enter My rest."

Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, again He designates a certain day, saying in David, "Today," after such a long time, as it has been said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."

For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day.

Therefore there remains the keeping of Sabbaths for the people of God.

For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall after the same example of disobedience. Hebrews 4:1-11

The Sabbath rest mentioned in this passage also refers to the Thousand Years of Peace spoken of in Revelation and God's Annual Sabbaths. This is another aspect of the Sabbath: it reminds us of the coming peace in God's Kingdom and of how our redemption from our sinful works through Jesus Christ is making it possible for us to live in that beautiful rest.

The Spirit of the Law again requires us to go beyond merely resting and attending a religious service. We can do the above and still regard the Sabbath as an annoying interruption to our worldly activities. Instead, let us remember that the Sabbath is a special time that God has blessed for the purpose of allowing us to draw closer to Him and deepen our relationship with our Creator and Saviour. As God reminds us in Isaiah 58:13, His Sabbath is intended to be a delight. Jesus also confirms this when He says that God made the Sabbath for man's benefit (Mark 2:27).

Our free booklet entitled *The Sabbath in Scripture* provides further detail on these topics.

Should We Honour Our Parents?

God's Fifth Commandment Says:

"Honour your mother and your father, that your days may be long upon the land which Jehovah your God is giving you."

Exodus 20:12

We owe our very existence to our parents. They have nurtured us and taught us all our basic values. They deserve our respect, and our help as they grow older. It is also good to remember that God is ultimately everyone's father.³ Obedience to this commandment leads to strong, healthy families, and by extension, to a strong and stable society. As is the case with all the other commandments, this commandment is repeated in the New Testament:

Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. "Honor your father and mother," which is the first commandment with a promise: "that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth."

And you, fathers, do not provoke your children, but nurture them in the discipline and admonition of the Lord.

Ephesians 6:1-4

Paul shows that it is also necessary for parents to act in an honourable manner towards their children.

Jesus shows honour for his mother even when he was dying on the stake at Calvary, when he arranges for one of his disciples to care for her:

3 Unlike some parents, Jehovah God always has time for us and is always looking after us, even though there will be times that we have difficulty understanding why he has allowed something horrible to happen to us or someone we love. We must trust his promise that all that he does is for our good, and know that after the resurrection we will understand why these things were necessary.

Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold your son!"

Then He said to the disciple, "Behold your mother!" And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home.

John 19:25-27

Disobedience to parents and those placed in authority leads steadily to the total disintegration of our society. God does not promise to sustain such a population.

Again, the letter of this commandment only requires us to respect our parents. But the spirit of this law is to do all we can to help them, support them and show them how much we love them.

Are You A Murderer In Your Heart?

God's Sixth Commandment Says:

"You shall not murder."

Exodus 20:18

God's definition of murder, and his method of dealing with murder, is very different from what is accepted by our nation today.

God says that all intentional murderers are to be put to death, to prevent pollution of our land. He also forbids allowing a rich man to buy his way out of this judgement. (Numbers 35:29 to 34) Rather than jails, God told His people to set up a series of cities of refuge where people who killed someone accidentally could safely stay until their case was heard in the courts. (Numbers 35:9 to 28)

But note that God's idea of an accidental slaying is much more strict than ours:

'These six cities shall be for refuge for the children of Israel, for the stranger, and for the sojourner among them, that anyone

who kills a soul accidentally may flee there.

'But if he strikes him with an iron implement, so that he dies, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.

'And if he strikes him with a stone in the hand, by which one could die, and he does die, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.

'Or if he strikes him with a wooden hand weapon, by which one could die, and he does die, he is a murderer; the murderer shall surely be put to death.

'The avenger of blood himself shall put the murderer to death; when he meets him, he shall put him to death.

'If he pushes him out of hatred or, while lying in wait, hurls something at him so that he dies, or in enmity he strikes him with his hand so that he dies, the one who struck him shall surely be put to death, for he is a murderer; the avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death when he meets him.

'But if he pushes him suddenly without enmity, or throws anything at him without lying in wait, or uses a stone, by which a man could die, throwing it at him without seeing him, so that he dies, while he was not his enemy or seeking his harm, then the congregation shall judge between the manslayer and the avenger of blood according to these judgments.

'So the congregation shall deliver the manslayer from the hand of the avenger of blood, and the congregation shall return him to the city of refuge where he had fled, and he shall remain there until the death of the high priest who was anointed with the holy oil.

Numbers 35:15 to 25

John expands on this commandment in I John 3:15 when he says; "Whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him." Again we see that the spirit of the Law includes the letter (Do not murder) but goes beyond the letter to the root of the problem- we must allow God's Holy Spirit to remove the hatred in our hearts.

If mankind lived by the essence of this commandment, there would be no

more wars, no more racial violence, no more attacks, no more hatred. We would begin to experience the blessings that obeying God brings.

Adultery

God's Seventh Commandment Says:

"You shall not commit adultery."

Exodus 20:14

Adultery undermines the stability of families and spreads disease. God intended sexual intercourse to be a special joy between husband and wife. (Hebrews 13:4) Adultery is a perversion of God's purpose. Pre-marital sex is committing adultery on your future spouse before you are even married. (And it is also forbidden in God's Word as shown in the accounts of Dinah (Gen 34:1-7) and Tamar (2 Samuel 13:1-32).

God says that intercourse is both a physical and a spiritual union. Just as sexual union can transfer physical diseases, it can also transfer spiritual diseases. (1 Corinthians 6:12 to 20). Clearly, casual sexual encounters are not condoned by God.

Homosexuality is also condemned by our Maker as unnatural and corrupt (Romans 1:18 to 32).

The widespread disregard of God's commandments on sexuality and fidelity are rapidly destroying the basic fabric of our society. If our society is to survive, we must immediately stop the media from producing and screening material which presents infidelity and sexual perversion as desirable, or even acceptable, things. As God has warned us, "If we sow the wind, we will reap the whirlwind." (Hosea 8:7)

Request our free pamphlet *Sex, God and Families* for more details on this commandment and interpersonal relationships.

Jesus shows us how to move from the letter to the spirit of this law :

"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' "But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Matthew 5:27-28

God knows that sin begins in our hearts. That is why He wants to place his spirit in us and change us from within. Changing our hearts will change our actions.

Is Private Ownership Wrong?

Some people claim that everything should belong to everyone for the use of whoever needs it. Is this what God believes?

God's Eighth Commandment Says:

"You shall not steal."

Exodus 20:15

As Creator, God regards everything as belonging to Him. He sees us as temporary guardians of His property. As He is generous with us, He expects us to share what we have been given with those in need. However, He does not approve of people taking what they want from others. Possessions, for the most part, are a reward for hard work. Stealing undermines the joy and value of work and destroys trust.

There are many ways to steal. One can steal wages from their employer by not working to their potential. Employers can steal from their employees by not giving them fair wages for their labours. Citizens can steal from their country (and each other) by not paying the taxes they owe. Authorities can steal from their citizens by improper use of the taxes they collect and abuse of their authority.

God condemns all of these practices.

If you are guilty of any of these things, you are under God's condemnation. If you do not turn away from these practices and seek God's forgiveness, He will have to destroy you.

God's method of dealing with theft is to require the thief to return double, and in some cases five times what they stole (See Exodus 22:1 to 4, Leviticus 6:1 to 5).

In Ephesians, God shows us how to go beyond the letter of this commandment to the generous spirit which He wants us to develop:

Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labour, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need. Ephesians 4:28

Lying

God's Ninth Commandment Says:

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour."
Exodus 20:16

There are many reasons for a person to want to lie about another person, or indeed about themselves. Common reasons are jealousy, fear, spite, greed and a desire to let someone else take the blame.

God knows the trouble that is caused by people lying about each other and commands us to resist the temptation to take the "easy" way out.

God says:

"He who overcomes shall inherit all things, and I will be his God and he shall be my son. But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters, and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death."

Revelation 21:7&8

Again the Spirit goes beyond the letter. God actually wants us to move from merely not tell lies to standing up and speaking the Truth.

...be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and ... put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness.

Therefore, putting away lying, each one speak truth with his neighbour, for we are members of one another.

Ephesians 4:23 to 25

Do You Want What Belongs To Others?**God's Tenth Commandment Says:**

"You shall not desire your neighbour's house; you shall not desire your neighbour's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbour's."
Exodus 20:17

The first step in stealing is allowing yourself to want something (or someone) that already belongs to someone else. Similarly, allowing yourself to lust for someone who is not your spouse is the first step in committing adultery. Disobeying this command led King David into an adulterous affair with Bathsheba which resulted in the murder of Bathsheba's husband and the death of their first child. Paul said this was the commandment which he was unable to keep. It brought him into condemnation from which only Christ could free him. (See Romans 7:7 to 12) This commandment is the most difficult of the Ten to keep because it cuts to the root of most sin. It deals with our thoughts. The other commandments mostly focus on our actions, which are usually easier to control than our thoughts.

God's method of combatting covetousness is quite simple on the surface:

Let your conduct be without covetousness, and be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you."

So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"
Hebrews 13:5-6

This desirable attitude flies in the face of media advertising, which is designed to foster covetousness. It can only be achieved by the action of God's Holy Spirit working in our lives.

Will Keeping The Ten Commandments Earn You Eternal Life?

Some people think that if they can keep the Ten Commandments, God will be required to give them eternal life. This idea is not supported by scripture. There is nothing we can do to force Jehovah to give us eternal life. It is a precious gift that we can never deserve. However, God does promise you that you will have a long life if you keep the Fifth commandment, as we read above. If you keep all His Law, He also promises you great prosperity:

"Therefore know that Jehovah your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments; and He repays those who hate Him to their face, to destroy them. He will not be slack with him who hates Him; He will repay him to his face.

"Therefore you shall keep the commandment, the statutes, and the judgments which I command you today, to observe them.

"Then it shall come to pass, because you listen to these judgments, and keep and do them, that Jehovah your God will keep with you the covenant and the mercy which He swore to your fathers. And He will love you and bless you and multiply you; He will also bless the fruit of your womb and the fruit of your land, your grain and your new wine and your oil, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flock, in the land of which He swore to your fathers to give you.

"You shall be blessed above all peoples; there shall not be a male or female barren among you or among your livestock.

"And Jehovah will take away from you all sickness, and will afflict you with none of the terrible diseases of Egypt which you have known, but will lay them on all those who hate you.

Deuteronomy 7:9 to 15

However, the only person who ever managed to keep all of God's Laws all of the time was Jesus Christ. As the Apostle Paul says:

But we know that all the Law says, it speaks to those in the Law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may be under judgement before God.

Because by works of law no flesh will be justified before Him, for by the law is the full knowledge of sin.

But now the righteousness of God is revealed apart from law, being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets, the righteousness of God through the faith of Jesus Christ to all and on all those believing.

For there is no difference; for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God, being justified freely by His grace through the redemption in Christ Jesus, whom God set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to display His righteousness, because in His toleration God had passed over the sins that had occurred before, to display His righteousness at the present time, for He is being just and the justifier of the one who has the faith of Jesus.

Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? Of works? No, but by the law of faith.

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from works of law. Romans 3:19 to 28

Let us all seek this saving grace through Jesus Christ. But let us not abuse God's grace by turning his willingness to forgive our sins into a licence to continue in our sins. God places his Spirit in us so we will be able to live righteously (Romans 8:3-5). As John said:

Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments.

For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.

1 John 5:1 to 3

Indeed the Bible assures us that even in the last days leading up to the establishment of God's Kingdom, His people shall still be keeping His commandments despite everything that Satan and his slaves do to stop them:

And the dragon was enraged with the woman, and he went to make war with the rest of her offspring, who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

Revelation 12:17

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