



THE TEN

COMMANDMENTS

Exodus 20

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Have you ever heard of the Ten Commandments? They are found twice in the Bible. First in Exodus 20 and again in Deuteronomy 5. They are laws, given to the children of God, by God Himself. They set the children of God apart from the rest of the world. Some people say that all the current laws we have can find their roots in these laws.

God spoke all these words, saying, “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of bondage.”

1. “You shall have no other gods before Me.”

“Before me” ... meaning “over Me, ahead of Me”. You know what? The Bible tells us some people have been unaware that they have entertained angels. This leaves open the possibility that you might meet or become aware of someone that can do much more than you can. Some people might

consider such a person a god. Such a person might be powerful but not more powerful than God. No person, real or imagined, is more powerful than God. God is a jealous God, and will not have us believing anyone is more powerful than He.



2. **“You shall not make for yourself a carved image.** Not of 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. I tell you that I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon 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.”

We cannot create anything that will look like God, so God says don't even try. He doesn't want us to pray to any image as if it were He. God doesn't want us to create a false idea of what He is really like.

3. **“You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain,** because the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”

“in vain” means “in a worthless or wicked way,” or “for an evil purpose.” It includes false testimony in the name of God in a court of law or in any



phase of life. Some people believe “in vain” means using the Lord’s name in profanity (bad words). Some think it has nothing to do with using the Lord’s name in profanity. I think, “why take the chance.” At the very least, using the Lord’s name with bad words is disrespectful, and shouldn’t be

done. God’s name must never be used in an insincere way.

4. **“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.** Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work. Not you, your son, your daughter, your male servant, your female servant, your cattle, or any stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

The Israelites were to keep in mind that no work could be done on the seventh day of the week (The Sabbath). This is the only commandment with the word “remember”. The word Sabbath means “day of rest.” Some people consider Sunday to be the Sabbath, some consider it to be Saturday. Regardless, it is a day to be dedicated to the Lord. The Lord created the whole earth in six days and rested on the seventh day. Keeping the Sabbath was a sign of a promise between Israel and the Lord. The new testament tells us that the day of rest was made for man and not the other way around.



5. **“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.”**

Honoring your father and mother is being respectful in word and action. It means “to revere and value.” God wants us to honor our father and mother. In the new testament, the Bible says “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honor your father and mother is the first commandment with a promise (so that it may be well with you, and that you may live long on the earth). Honoring parents is the only commandment that promises long life as a reward. Honor is more than lip service.

6. **“You shall not murder.”**

The sixth Commandment forbids the unjustified taking of a human life. It also covers deaths due to carelessness or neglect but is never used when describing killing during wartime or a consequence for having committed murder.

7. “You shall not commit adultery.”

“Adultery” is the “voluntary contact of private body parts between a married person and a person who is not his or her spouse.” God established the institution of marriage as being between one man and one woman. God



created marriage to be the building block of His creation and of society. Marriage is still a sacred union and the foundation for society. The Bible also teaches us that marriage is the way through which God designed the continuance of the human race and the preservation of godly offspring. Part of holy living is sexual purity. Even fantasizing about the contact of private body parts is the same, in God’s eyes, as actually doing it.

Therefore, we must avoid all things that would create unclean thoughts within us.

8. “You shall not steal.”

Stealing is taking away another’s property by force or fraud, without the knowledge and against the will of the owner. Any form of stealing is prohibited and it is a sin. God’s provision for us is enough and we need not to steal. Stealing can take many forms, including cheating someone or even delaying paying someone what you owe. Companies can attempt to steal from people with misleading advertising and shoddy products and services. Employees can steal from their employers by wasting time or doing personal things on company time.

9. “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

There are different views on the meaning of this commandment. Some people interpret the scope in the narrowest possible sense, as only referring to lying in courtroom testimony. Other interpretations view the commandment as referring to any false statement that lessens our

neighbor's reputation or dignity. Still others interpret the commandment in the broadest possible sense, as referring to all lying.

Two or three witnesses were needed to establish a claim under Hebrew law. A false witness could lie under oath during a case. Since judgment based on false testimony could destroy the life or property of an innocent human being, the penalty for being a false witness was very severe. This commandment has a much broader meaning. It also applies to slander. It is possible to bear false witness or slander by spreading false rumors.

10. “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house, you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”

Covet means to want or desire something that is not rightfully yours because the object of our desire already belongs to someone else. Coveting can also include our wanting more than we would deserve or that would be our rightful share.

While Moses was on the mountain, all the people witnessed the thundering, the lightning, the sound of mighty trumpets, and the mountain smoking. When the people saw it, they were afraid of God's presence and stood far off. When they next saw Moses, they said to Moses, "You talk to us and we will listen, but don't let God speak directly to us, because we fear we will die."

Moses said to the people, "Do not fear. God is testing you. Your fear of Him is good so that you do not sin." The people continued to stand far off and let Moses go near to the thick darkness where God was. The Lord said to Moses, "Say to the children of Israel, 'You have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. You shall not make anything to be equal with Me. No gods of silver or gods of gold. You shall not make any gods for yourselves.'"

"You will make an altar of earth for Me, and you shall sacrifice your burnt offerings and your peace offerings, your sheep and your oxen on it. In every place where I record My name, I will come to you, and I will bless you. If you make Me an altar of



stone, do not build it of stone you have used your tools on. If you use your tools on it, you make it unholy. Don't make it where you will have to go up by steps to My altar. I don't want your nakedness to be exposed to it." God gave the children of Israel more laws to help them get along with each other, but we will talk of them later.