

The Ten Commandments - Principles for a Satisfying Life

“And God spoke all these words, saying: I am the Lord 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”

“You shall not make for yourself and craved images, 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, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing mercy to thousands to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”

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

“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; you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your manservant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is with in your gates. For six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the seas, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

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

“You shall not murder.”

“You shall not commit adultery.”

“You shall not steal.”

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

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his manservant nor his maidservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s” Exodus 20:1-17

These 10 commandments fall into 2 sections:

The first section is Commandments 1 through 4. They teach us about our relationship to God.

The second section is Commandments 5 through 10. They teach us about our relationship to Others.

The first section reveals our responsibility to God.

The second section reveals our responsibility to others.

The first section teaches a reverence for God.

The second section teaches a respect for others.

The first section teaches us to love God.

the second section teaches us to love others.

The first section is vertical, relating to God in heaven.

The second section is horizontal, relating to people on earth.

The first section deals primarily with doctrine while

the second section deals with ethics.

“We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future of all our political institutions upon the capacity of mankind for self-government; upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to control ourselves, to sustain ourselves, according to the Ten Commandments of God.”
President James Madison, father of our Constitution

These 286 words found in 17 verses make up the foundation for our Christian life. Without the Ten Commandments we are a people, a culture, and a country without a moral compass. Here we learn what God expects of us. (These principles are not out dated, they are up to the minute. They are very functional. When applied to our life that make us a good and decent people. For the person who decides to practice them they will begin to find true satisfaction in life. Solomon said at the conclusion of trying all that the world had to offer that the whole of man, what makes life worth living, what brings satisfaction to life, is to fear God and keep His commandments.

The Ten Commandments begin with a Preamble . A preamble tells you who is writing the document and the authority that is standing behind it. In verses 1 and 2 we find some of the most important words a human being can ever read or hear. It says "And God spoke all these words, saying I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Many people say that the greatest question of all questions is: Is there a God? I think a greater question than that question is "if there is a God has He spoken and can I know Him personally?" In verses 1 and 2 we find that God has spoken and that He can be known personally.

He is the God of Revelation. (And God spoke) He is the God of Reality. (I am the Lord your God) He is the God of Redemption. (Who brought you out of bondage)

What do we learn from each commandment?

From the first commandment - "You shall have no other gods before me" - we learn who we are to worship. Based on the statement "I am the Lord" we have who is to be worshipped. Many feel that this command is first in position because it is first in priority. Deciding which "god" to worship is very important. Everyone worships a god. The question we face is we will worship the God who created us or the god(s) we create.

The idea here is that we, as the people of God, are not to bring before God's face any other gods. You see God has many enemies but He will have no rivals. God expects from His people that they will be totally devoted to Him and Him only. We are to worship only the true living God. Nothing is to be placed in front of God.

In helping us understand what is it to have a god or What is God let me give you Martin Luther's answer. Martin Luther said, "a god is that which we look for all good and in which we find refuge in every time of need. To have a god is nothing else than to trust and believe him with our whole heart. As I have often said, the trust and faith of the heart alone makes both God and idol. That which your heart clings and entrust itself is, I say, really your God."

What are our false god's?

From the second command - "You shall make no graven images we learn how to worship God. In the first command we are told who to worship. In the second command we are going to be told how to worship.

In the first command we have a statement that prohibits false gods.
In the second command we have a statement that prohibits false worship.

What is being dealt with in this first command is polytheism, the worship of many gods. The first command taught us that worship of God was singular. The second command teaches us that worship is spiritual. God is a spirit and He is to be worshipped in spirit and in truth. We are not to make an image of God and bow down and worship that image calling it God. Days after the Israelites hear this command they made a golden calf. In Exodus 32 Aaron was pressured by the people to make the people an idol. They needed to see something physical. Ex. 32:4 reads these are your gods, O Israel, who brought you out of Egypt." You see they sought to represent a spiritual God in a physical way.

Idolatry is the attempt to represent a supernatural God in a natural way. It perverts the worship of God. Instead of worship the God who created us we are worshipping the god we create.

Ps. 115:3 says "Our God is in heaven; He does whatever He pleases. Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men's hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak, Eyes they have, but they do not see. They have ears, but do not hear. Noses they have, but they do not smell. They have hands, but they do not handle. Feet they have but they do not walk, they do not mutter through their throat. Those who make them are like them, So is everyone who trust them."

And Idol has no life and to the person who makes an idol and worships an idol they have no life.

A story about how Abraham' father did start worshipping the true God comes for the Jewish tradition and it may be true or it may not be but whether it is true or not the point will help us today. The story tells that

Abraham's father Terah was the owner of shop that sold idols in the city of Ur of the Chaldees. One day when he went out on an errand he asked his son Abraham to watch the store. While he was gone Abraham who loved God and wanted his dad to be a believe decided to do something very drastic with all the idols. Over in a corner was a very large idol and in that idols hand was an ax. He took that ax and he went all around that shop destroying everyone of those idols expect for the one in the corner. When He finished he put the ax back into the hands of that very large idol. When his father returned and saw that his shop was destroyed he immediately wanted to know what happened to all of his idols. Abraham simply pointed to the one idol in the corner and said "father, it was that idol. He went crazy and he destroyed all of these idols." Terah responded by saying, "Abraham you and I both know that idols cannot see, they cannot hear, they cannot move, they cannot talk. It is impossible that this idol is responsible for all this destruction because idols can do nothing." To which Abraham responded, "father has your ears heard what your mouth has just spoken."

The third command teaches us Chapter 20 and verse 7 we read these words: "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain." The NIV says that we are not to "misuse the name of the Lord." The living Bible says that we are not to use the name of Jehovah God "irreverently."

Two of the ten Commandments deal with sins of the tongue.

The Third commandment deals with profanity
the ninth commandment deals with perjury.

The third commandment deals with protecting God's name.
The ninth commandment deals with protecting man's name .

The third command deals with holy language while
the ninth command deals with honest language.

if a reverence for God is to be demonstrated then one must begin by respecting God's name.
the purpose of the command is to protect the majestic name of God.

God has taken the time to reveal Himself to us by revealing His names to us. Through His names He reveals His nature and His character. One can find over 300 names in the Bible for God.

The word "vain" here means "empty of content", "void of meaning or meaningless."

One of the chief ways we use God's name in vain is through profanity. The word profanity comes from the Latin and means "to take out of the temple." What God is saying is that we should never take his precious name and use it in an empty way. We should never take it out of the temple and drag it through the mud and the sewer. To do so would be a grievous sin against God. We need to know that God's last name is not damn.

Answer this question, what do you get when you use profanity? I'll tell you. The only thing you get when you use profanity is the judgment of God. Did you hear me? The only thing you get when you use profanity is the judgment of God. You release God's wrath on your life when you misuse His name.

Now you need to know that there is no sin like the sin of profanity.

The Fourth Command

The 1st command teaches us that we are to worship God only.

The 2nd command teaches us that we are to worship God correctly.

The 3rd command teach us that we are to worship God reverently.

This 4th command teaches that we are to worship God regularly.

We are told here that this command calls for two specific responses from us. Number one, there is to a be remembrance of this day. This day is not to be forgotten. It is to dominate our daily calendar. I believe God is saying let your life revolve around your worship of me.

Secondly it is to a be a day of reverence. We are to keep this day holy. Sunday is not just another day, it is not a holiday, but it is to be holy day. While we may work for others and ourselves five or six days a week,

this is a day for rest, for reflection, for spiritual renewal, and for deepening our relationship with God and with family and friends. We are to keep this day differently from all the others. It is a holy day.

A quick overview of this command let's us see that it is the first of only two commands that are stated in the positive.

This command is the longest of the commands as it not only tells us what to do, but gives an explanation and an example.

It also it the broadest of the commands as it does not just cover one aspect of our life but two, that of our work and that of our worship.

Fifth Command - "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you."

Early on a child will idolize their parents: My parents can do anything. As a child gets closer to the teenage years they demonize their parents: my parents can't do anything right. In the later teen years a child will begin to utilize their parents: with the purpose of parents being to provide for our every need and want such as a car, new clothes, college.

I am not sure which stage you are at with you parents. I have over heard conversations that tell me some students are still demonizing their parents. I know many students who are simply utilizing their parents. Today, up front, I want to say to you that your parents are not God, to be idolized. They are not the devil, to be demonized and they are not your personal slaves, to be utilized. By looking at the Word of God today I want us to learn how we should relate to our parents. The fourth stage, the correct stage is for us to finally come to the place where we humanize our parents.

In our study of the Ten Commandments we by now should know that the first four commandments teach us about our relationship to God and the last six teach us about our relationship to others.

The first "others" that we will encounter in life will be our parents therefore I think the order of this command is very important as it leads off how we are to get along with fellow human beings.

An overview of this command reveals that this commands is different from all the rest in that it does not have any negative words at all. It is completely positive. And it is the only command that contains a promise.

This command outlines very easily dividing into three parts.

It speaks of a special relationship, that of parents and their children.

It gives a specific requirement, that children are to honor their parents.

And it reveals a sure reward, that God will prolong the child's life.

The Word of God says our parents are to be "honored". The word honor literally means that "to be heavy". In other words we are to give weight to our parents. They are to be held in highest esteem. They are to be elevated to a place of importance and reverence. We are to place a high value on our parents. Our parents, throughout our lifetime, not just while we are children or teenagers, but throughout our life time are to receive from us honor.

Moving from obeying to listening. Your parents are going through the transition of being an authority figure who gives orders to that of an advisor who gives their opinion.

Lev. 19:3 says "everyone of you shall revere, that is respect your mother and your father." In Lev. 20:9 "if anyone were to curse his parents they were surely to be put to death."

Number 6 NO MURDER.

command that everybody wants everyone else to obey, especially in regards to themselves. Of all the commands that could be broken against you as a person this has the greatest consequences. Once it is done it cannot be undone.

this command prohibits intentional murder.

Homicide is an Intentional murder, Suicide is Intentional murder and Feticide is an Intentional murder

this command prohibits indirect murder.

Cruelty kills. Corruption kills (alcohol and drugs)

This command prohibits invisible murder.

I John 3:15 whoever hates his brother is a murderer.

7th command In verse 14 we read "You shall not commit adultery"
It is the command that every spouse wants their mate to obey.

Marriage is a precious relationship. Marriage is the preeminent relationship.
God teaches the permanence of this relationship

Hebrews 13:4 is the clearest verse of God's parameters for the practice of sex. Marriage is honorable and the bed is undefiled. But fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

8th commandment "You shall not steal." He recognized personal possession should be protected, therefore He wrote the eighth commandment. It's the commandment we want everyone else to keep when it comes to our possessions.

Three ways to view possessions:

What is yours is mine and I will take it.

What is mine is mine and I will keep it.

What is mine is yours and I will share it.

Eph. 4:28 says Let him who stole, steal no more.

Exodus 20 and verse 16 says "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." For the second time in these ten commandments God deals with a sin of the tongue.

In the third command God gave a command to protect His name, that it is not to be taken in vain.

God, in the ninth command now gives a command to protect man's name.

In verse 7 we had a command that prohibited profanity

In verse 16 we have a command that prohibits perjury

Lying - telling something that is not true and it is something that we all do. And it is something that does not have to be taught. Children will lie and they do it without any lessons at all. We shouldn't be surprised that children lie because Ps. 58:3 says "the wicked are estranged from the womb, they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies."

"Nearly everyone will lie to you, given the right circumstances." Former President Bill Clinton.

You are never more like the devil than when you tell a lie and you are never more like Jesus than when you tell the truth. The devil is a liar. Jesus is the truth.

Prov. 12:22 says, "Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord, but those who deal truthfully are his delight.

Eph. 4:25 says Therefore, putting away lying, each one speak truth with his neighbor, for we are members of one another.

Col. 3:9 says lie not one to another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.

10th command you shall not covet. Deals with attitude, not action. From the inside, not outside. It is considered the invisible sin. The word covet means to desire to have more. Thus this sin deals with a sinful desire as opposed to a sinful deed. Many times the breaking of other commandments follow the breaking of this commandment. The way we respond to this commandment will greatly determine our priorities in life. Instead of having God first in your life you will make the obtaining of possession, position, property and/or prestige your priorities.

Many view the first and the last commandment to be book ends believing that if you get these two right you will then easily obey the others.

Review:

No other gods - Worship the right God.

No graven images - worship the right God the right way.

Do not take God's name in vain - Show reverence for God's Name.

Keep the Sabbath Holy - Worship God regularly.

Honor your parents - First others we come in contact with.

You shall not kill - Commandment we want others to obey when it comes to our life.

You shall not commit adultery - commandment we want our spouse to keep.

You shall not steal - commandment we want others to keep when it comes to our possessions.

You shall not lie - commandment we want others to keep when it comes to our character.

You shall not covet - Commandment that keeps us from breaking other commandments.