



"A Do It Yourself!"

*Guided Study
of*

***The Ten
Commandments***

'Rules to Live By'

*Presented by
The Discipleship Ministry*

The Ten Commandments

Rules to Live By

The Discipleship Ministry

The Discipleship Ministry exists to fulfill the Great Commission of Jesus Christ to "Make Disciples of All Nations"!

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"A Do It Yourself Guided Study of The Ten Commandments"
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"A Do It Yourself Guide"

Purpose:

The **Guided Study** was developed to help Christians learn Scriptural Principles and Truths directly from the Word. Based on the Bible Study Method, each lesson guides the student through the steps of Observation, Interpretation and Application. The end result for the student is a more thorough knowledge of Scripture. Another important consequence is the personal application of God's Word to specific areas of the student's life resulting in spiritual growth.

Use:

The **Guided Study** is best used in a Group setting. Being part of a Study Group not only helps our motivation to continue in the Word, but also guards us from erroneous Interpretations. Group members help guard one another from incorrect and unsound interpretations by evaluating each other's interpretations in light of established Hermeneutical Principles and Biblical Truths.

Group members may choose either to complete the lessons ahead of time and discuss their answers together, **or** to do the lessons together when they meet. Be sure to have a good study Bible and reference materials available which ever method you choose to follow!

Preparation:

Before beginning this Guided Study, familiarize yourself with the **Bible Study Method and Principles for Biblical Interpretation** by completing **Discipleship Study 3** available at www.BibleStudyCD.com. For further study, read:

"The Joy of Discovery" by Olletta Wald

"Protestant Biblical Interpretation" by Bernard Ramm

Doing It Yourself

PRAY that God will guide you to His Truth and keep you from error! In a continuing attitude of prayer and dependence upon God, print a copy of an entire *Guided Study Lesson*, and begin.

Text

The Bible passages are from the **New American Standard Bible** (1995 updated edition) because it is one of the most accurate modern English translations available. The text is reprinted as a **structural diagram** to facilitate the discovery of key words and phrases, and their relationships to each other.

Observation

To discover what the Bible **Says**, **read** the Bible text several times and **mark** specific key words and/or phrases to highlight what you observe. (Read pages 7-11 in Discipleship Study 3) Suggested observations are provided for you to mark in the text. However, *how* you "**mark**" the text is up to you. Consider the following ways John 3:16 has been marked below:

“For God so loved the world
 that He gave His only begotten Son,
 that ~~whoever~~ believes in Him
 [should not] (perish)
 but have everlasting life.”

Colored Highlighters
 Underline
 Circles and Boxes
 Brackets or Parenthesis
 Arrows

Interpretation

Questions help us discover what the original author **Meant** when he wrote the text. They reveal the *meaning, significance and implications* of key words or phrases. It will be necessary to access other resources, including a Bible dictionary, commentaries and a Bible handbook to discover the meaning of words and gain a better understanding of the **history, geography and culture** that impact the meaning of a passage. Parallel verses will be examined to gain further Scriptural insight into the passage. (see pages 12-18 in Discipleship Study 3)

Principles & Truths

An indispensable skill in Bible Study is the ability to discern **Biblical Principles** in Scripture that transcend time, place and culture. By discovering these Principles, Scripture is then stated as spiritual, moral and ethical truths by which we should live. (see page 21 in Discipleship Study 3)

Example: Principles from John 3:16

1. God loves every person in the world.
2. God's Love is expressed in the giving of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ.
3. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ has everlasting life.
4. Whoever does not believe in Jesus Christ will perish.

Applications

The purpose for Bible Study is not just to be informed, but to be **transformed** by the Word. After discovering what the passage *Says and Means*, we must discover what the passage **Means to Us**. (See pages 19-20 in Discipleship Study 3)

In this section, review what you discovered in your **Observations and Interpretations**, as well as the **Principles** you developed. From these, use the acronym **SPACE** to determine the following:

- | | |
|---------------------------|--|
| S ins | <i>Are there any Sins that I need to personally Confess to God?</i> |
| P romises | <i>Are there any Promises of God that I can personally claim for my life?</i> |
| A ttitudes/Actions | <i>Are there any Attitudes or Actions that I need to adopt or avoid?</i> |
| C ommands | <i>Are there any Commands of God that I need to Obey?</i> |
| E xamples | <i>Are there any Examples for me to follow?</i> |

List these applications and prayerfully apply each one. Continually **meditate** on the Truths and Principles you discerned from the Passage in order to **transform your mind, your heart and your will**, until your life is conformed to God's "good, acceptable and perfect will"!

Example: Applications from John 3:16.

1. Believe God loves me!
2. Believe in God's Son, Whom God gave to me, that I might have Everlasting Life.
3. Share God's Love and Promise of Everlasting Life to Everyone in the World, that they might believe and not Perish, but have Everlasting Life!

Content

(To study a Lesson, simply print the pages listed.)

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The Ten Commandments: An Introduction

Read Exodus 19:1-25 in one sitting using your favorite translation or paraphrase. The Ten Commandments is actually a covenant or an agreement between two parties: God and the nation of Israel, in which each commits to a promised action.

1. What was Israel asked to commit to (v 5)? _____

2. What did God commit Himself to (vs 5-6)? _____

3. What is the significance of the preparation God required of the people (vs 10-17)?

4. What do you think the atmosphere among the Israelites was when they saw God descend upon the mountain in fire (v 18)? _____

5. In spite of all this, how do you explain the Israelites' actions in Exodus 32:1-6?

6. What significance might this have for us? _____

The First Commandment

What do you think God desires from us more than anything else?

- Our Sunday mornings.
- Our possessions.
- Our best effort.
- Our complete love and devotion.

Do you remember what Jesus Christ said when He was asked what the greatest commandment was? Read His answer below.

"Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?"

And He said to him,

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

"This is the great and foremost commandment.

Matthew 22:36-38

- Circle what our primary response to God must be.
- Underline the three phrases that explains how we must love God.
- Circle the key word common to each phrase.

How would you interpret what Jesus is saying? _____

Jesus taught that the primary thing God desires from us is our complete love and devotion; not our weekly attendance at a worship service, nor our offerings, nor even our commitments and efforts to serve Him diligently. He knows that all of these are important but will fall short absent the full devotion of our 'heart ... soul, and ... mind.'

And this is where the Ten Commandments begins. First things first, for the first commandment is the foundation for the other nine.

The First Commandment

- 2 "I am the LORD your God,
who brought you out of the land of Egypt,
out of the house of slavery.
- 3 "You shall have no other gods before Me.

Exodus 20:2-3

- Underline who God proclaimed Himself to be (v2).
- Circle what 'you' shall not have' before God(v3).

Love is Not a Feeling

Contrary to contemporary songs, love is more than a superficial emotion in response to an attractive face or personality. True love is under the control of our will and chooses to esteem someone or something valuable and precious.

In light of the Love God has given us through the sacrifice of His Son, it is impossible not to esteem Him to the highest degree. For when you come to Know His Love for you, you will come to Love Him. And when you come to Love Him, you will want to Obey Him. If you don't want to Obey God, maybe it is because you don't Love Him. And if you don't Love God, maybe it is because you don't Know Him!

Don't wait to 'feel' that God is the most important Person in your life. By an act of your will, and in light of His unsurpassing Love for you, make Him the preeminent Person in your life right now!

God desires that our Obedience to Him be the result of our Love for Him!



1. What is the significance of God identifying Himself in verse 2? _____

2. What does this Commandment mean? _____

3. Why do you think God made this the first commandment? _____

4. How was this commandment relevant to the Israelites who were emerging from 400 years in Egypt? _____

5. How does the 'great commandment' taught by Christ relate to this one?

The First Commandment is prefaced with a declaration from God. To the Israelites, He declares Himself to be the 'LORD (their) God'. As you may already know, when the word LORD appears in the upper case in many Bibles as it does in this verse, it is translating the proper name for God (called the Tetragrammaton) and expressed in the letters YHWH.

In the Bible, names have meaning and significance. When Moses asked God in Exodus 3:13 what His name was, God replied 'I AM WHO I AM'. This is the intrinsic meaning of God's name. He is the Self-Existent One! And He alone was the reason Israel escaped bondage in Egypt ... not the cleverness of man nor luck.

The word translated 'gods' is the Hebrew 'elohim'. And yes, it is the identical word used for the One True God throughout the Old Testament text. It is a generic word used to refer to deity, both true and false, things god like, angels and even human rulers and judges. The context determines the meaning.

The 'gods' We Worship

Make a list of things in your life, or that you notice in other people's lives, that often become 'god's'.

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Did you think of putting 'ourselves' as one of the things we worship. It probably ranks as the number one 'god' we place before the One who is God in Truth! Other things may be our possessions, social status, jobs, cars, money, hobbies, homes, friends, family, self reliance, philosophy, education, intellect, food, pleasures, etc.

1. How do we make gods of these objects in our lives? _____

2. Why do we make gods of these things? _____

3. Why is it harmful to worship these objects in place of God? _____

Why Worship the One True God

1. Because He is God! When God revealed His name to Moses as "I Am Who I Am", He showed Himself to be absolutely wise. Knowing of the name of something or someone is the acquisition of some measure of control over that thing. To know the name of an object is to begin unraveling the mystery of the unknown by placing it in a category of the known. (Note the Sciences' meticulous categorization of natural phenomena.)

Our 'gods' may even be things we would normally think of as being good, such as church activities and ministry. Do not forget that Jesus' staunchest opponents were the religious people of His day. They had made their religious activities their 'god' such that they failed to recognize the true God when He appeared right before them! Don't let your love for God be eclipsed by busyness for Him.

Note:

The truth is, we all (atheists included) believe in 'gods' ... things to which we choose to give our love, our devotion and our lives. They may be living or non-living, concrete or abstract, real or imagined. It doesn't matter. There is a compulsion in all of us to worship ... whether it be a thing, another person or even ourselves.

But unless the object of our worship is the Only True God, our worship is in vain. In the end it will be found empty and a complete waste of our time, energy and effort.

The only object worthy of our worship is the One True Eternal God, for He alone can save and satisfy for eternity!

However, **God's revealed Name** gives us no satisfaction. His Name simply reveals that **He Is ... Eternal, Independent** and completely **Self Sufficient**. Instead of less mysterious, God's Name makes Him more so. He is God because He Is!

The reason we ought to worship God solely and supremely is because not to do so would defy the truth of His Person. No one likes being deceived by others, but those who choose to worship other gods in place of the One True God have the unfortunate distinction of having deceived themselves!

2. Because God Alone Is Life! Proverbs 16:25 advises: "**There is a way which seems right to a man, But its end is the way of death.**" There is no disappointment greater than having come to the end of your life only to discover that you journeyed on the wrong path. Things on which you bet your life prove empty, and a life thought to be a success ends up as a loss. Jesus revealed the right path when He said, "**I Am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life...**" in John 14:6.

The First Commandment keeps us from a life lived in error, and places us on the Way of Truth concluding in Life Everlasting. It is the perfect initial step for all who desire to walk after God.

**“There is no one like You among the gods, O Lord,
Nor are there any works like Yours.
For You are great and do wondrous deeds;
You alone are God.**

Psalm 86:8,10

The Second Commandment

What do you see when you think of God?

- An old man with a long white beard.
- A radiant giant sitting on a glorious throne.
- An eternal flame.
- A brilliant light piercing the darkness.

Perhaps because we live in a physical world containing visible and tangible things, we are tempted to visualize the Person of God. It seems easier to believe in something you can see and touch. As the saying goes, 'Seeing is Believing!'

However, with God, the opposite is true. He reveals Himself to those who first believe.

Exodus 20:

- 4 "You shall not make for yourself an idol,
or any likeness
of what is in heaven above or
on the earth beneath or
in the water under the earth.
- 5 "You shall not worship them or serve them;
for I, the LORD your God,
am a jealous God,
visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children,
on the third and the fourth generations
of those who hate Me,
- 6 but showing lovingkindness to thousands,
to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

- Circle what we should not make for ourselves.
- Underline in what likeness we should not make them.
- Circle what we are prohibited to do.
- Underline why God prohibits this.
- Underline what God 'visits' on the children.
- Circle to what generations He will do this.
- Circle what God will show to those who love and obey Him.

Why do you think God forbade us from making a physical idol? _____

MEMORIZE!

Verse 4

 Psalm 115:4-8
Isaiah 40:18-26

The Reason Behind the Commands

It is important to understand that God's commandments were given, **not** to make our lives miserable, difficult or restricting but, **because He loves us** and desires to keep us from calamity, deception and failure. God wants our best, and His commandments keep us from decisions that will take us down the wrong path in life.

One path He wants us to avoid going down is the one that leads to a wrong perspective of Himself. Notice what Jesus tells the Samaritan woman concerning God.

"God is spirit,
and those who worship Him
must worship in spirit and truth."

John 4:24

- Circle how Jesus describes God.
- Underline how we must therefore worship Him.

Prior to this verse, the woman told Jesus that her people worshipped God on Mount

Gerizim. In light of this, what is the significance of Jesus' statement? _____

How does Jesus' statement about God relate to the second commandment? _____

Archaeology reveals that the record of man's history is strewn with images and carvings of deities and personages of worship. They cover the spectrum from animals, small and large, to humans who have ascended the pedestal to demigod status. In Papua New Guinea, carvings of terrifying visages were said to contain spirits that the possessor (usually tourists purchasing artifacts) could potentially be oppressed by. In Hawai`i, even the stones on sacred volcanoes are best left in their place lest the innocent souvenir collector experience unexplained sickness after returning home.

There is within us a natural propensity to sanctify certain objects as **special** (ie good luck charms) or **sacred** (ie. holy items or persons) and to project into them powers that belong only to the LORD. These 'idols' may even be **secular** in nature as we idolize certain personal qualities (ie. athleticism, musical talent, beauty, etc.) and the power of inanimate things (riches, status, degrees, etc.). Whatever we place on a pedestal, whatever they may appear to be, **when we gain our security, our significance or our self worth from them, they become our gods** and we have succeeded in crafting an idol.

We may not call it worship, but worship it is, for the place which they take up in our hearts is reserved for One only ... the Creator and LORD of all heaven and earth.

 2 Corinthians 3:17
1 Timothy 1:17

The Samaritans were descendants of a mixed race consisting of the intermarrying of Jews and Gentiles brought to Samaria during the Assyrian invasion of the northern kingdom. Because of the mixing of Gentile and Jewish blood, the Samaritans were looked down upon by other Jews. And because the Samaritans were ostracized, they developed a corrupted form of Judaism that held to worshipping God at Mount Gerizim, not at the Temple in Jerusalem.

The Danger of Idolatry

There is a danger in replacing the Creator with created things. Paul outlines that danger in his epistle to the Romans.

- 20 For since the creation of the world
His invisible attributes,
His eternal power and divine nature,
have been clearly seen,
being understood through what has been made,
so that they are without excuse.
- 21 For even though they knew God,
they did not honor Him as God or give thanks,
but they became futile in their speculations,
and their foolish heart was darkened.
- 22 Professing to be wise,
they became fools,
- 23 and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God
for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds
and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.
- 24 Therefore God gave them over in the lusts of their hearts to impurity,
so that their bodies would be dishonored among them.
- 25 For they exchanged the truth of God for a lie,
and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator,
who is blessed forever. Amen.

Romans 1:20-25

- Underline what is clearly seen in God's creation. (v 20)
- Circle what those who are able to comprehend God's creation are. (v 20)
- Underline what they did not do. (v 21)
- Circle what they became. (v 21-22)
- Underline for what they exchanged the glory of God. (v 23)
- Circle what God therefore gave them over to. (v 24)
- Circle what for what they exchanged God's truth. (v 25)
- Circle what they chose to worship and serve. (v 25)

From the passage above, explain how one ends up rejecting God and embracing His creatures in His stead. _____

How does the rejection of God as Creator result in the increase of lust and impurity? _____



Jeremiah 10:8-15

The Evolution Trap

As people embrace the lie that is the theory of evolution as taught in the schools, their faith in the Creator God is diminished, and thinking themselves wise, they become fools. Without faith in God and His moral laws, they begin to trust in themselves, their own wisdom and goodness, which will ultimately fail when God's wrath is poured out at the Judgment. (see Romans 1:18)

When we reject God as our Creator, we also reject the high view He has for mankind. Instead of viewing others as God's creations, our darkened hearts begin to view others as objects to use and manipulate for our own purpose and pleasure. Our sin nature becomes inflamed by the lusts of our eyes, of our flesh and our egos so that, uncurbed, other people simply become the means to fulfill our selfish ends.

A second danger is found in *Psalm 135:15,18*.

- 15 The idols of the nations are *but silver and gold,*
The work of man's hands.
- 18 **Those who make them will be like them,**
Yes, everyone who trusts in them.

- Underline what idols are the work of.
- Circle what those who make them will be like.
- Underline who else will be like the idols.

How do people become like the things they idolize? _____

Can you cite any examples that illustrates this truth? _____

The principle expressed in the above passage is at once frightening and encouraging. It is **frightening** for those who idolize things or other people, for when they become implanted in their hearts, they will take root and grow and eventually take over their very lives. Examples range from the fictitious character of **Ebenezer Scrooge** to the real life personage of **Howard Hughes**. Notice how people begin to imitate those they idolize, while those who idolize money seem to become as cold and hard as the metal they worship.

But the principle can be an **encouragement** as well, for when Christ is planted into a person's heart, He, too, will take root and begin to grow, until His likeness is seen in that very person!

Therefore, we must be careful what we choose to idolize, for ...

*that which we idolize
is that which we become!*

There is an old story that when Abraham was a boy, he assisted his father, Terah, who crafted idols. One day, after being left alone in the shop, Abraham destroyed all of the idols except one. When his father returned and saw the carnage, he scolded his son and blamed him for the destruction. In his defense, Abraham pointed to the one unbroken idol and said, "But father, that idol destroyed all the others."

"Don't be stupid, son," Terah chided. "How can that idol destroy all the others. I made it myself out of wood!"

With that statement, Abraham had made his point and God's light was kindled in his young heart.

Would we all come to that state of enlightenment, to the realization that nothing made by human hands can replace the Only Creator, God and LORD of all!

The Third Commandment

"You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain,
for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.

Exodus 20:7

Many people think that **taking the LORD's Name in vain** simply means to **use God's Name as a profanity**, or to **make an oath in His Name but not fulfill it**. Both are true, but God's prohibition is much broader than that ... and far more serious.

The LORD's Name is not merely a label we use to distinguish Him, but much more. **It represents God's Person, His Authority and Glory**. To take His Name in 'vain', or as 'nothing', then, is to take God Himself as nothing! And that has grave consequences. Consider the following ways this Commandment is violated by nonbelievers and believers alike.

Defying God's Authority

Sandwiched in one of David's incredible Psalms extolling the Deity's omni presence, knowledge and power, is a section that almost seems out of place. It echoes the 'imprecatory psalms' that call God's punishment on evil doers, and introduces David's prayer of self-scrutiny. But it also gives us a glimpse into what it means to take the LORD's Name in vain.

'For they speak against You wickedly,
And Your enemies take Your name in vain.
Do I not hate those who hate You, O LORD?
And do I not loathe those who rise up against You?'

Psalm 139:20-21

- Circle how 'they' speak against God.
- Underline what God's enemies take.
- Underline who David loathes.

How does defying God's authority relate to taking His Name in vain? _____

The Name of God represents **His authority**. It is what is implicit when we pray in the Name of Jesus. We come to God in prayer, not by our own authority, but by the authority that is inherent in the Person and Name of God's Son.

So when a person takes God's Name in vain, he is proclaiming that God's authority is empty and weak, and need not be heeded. I shudder to think what it will be like on the Day of reckoning when we will be called to account.

Have you taken God's Name in vain by defying His authority? Are you now doing anything that you know God is not pleased with? Then make yourself right with Him now and, like David, ask God to lead you 'in the everlasting way'. Otherwise, you can be sure that God will honor His threat and not leave you 'unpunished'!



David's Heart

David was called a man after God's own heart' (1 Samuel 13:14; 1 Kings 15:5). Here, his heart is filled with anger toward those who blaspheme God, indicative of the anger of God toward them.

Fearing God

(Proverbs 9:10)

The reason some so easily defame God's Name is their lack of fear of Him. This lack results in foolish acts and thinking. But I assure you that those who do not fear God now will learn what it means to fear Him at the Judgment, but by then, it will be too late!

Denying God's Authority

Maybe you would not put yourself in the category of those who 'Defy God's Authority'. After all, you believe in God and even try to help others to faith in Him as well. You believe in His Word and freely share it with those around you. But listen to what Paul said to the religious Jews who believed in God's Word.

- 22 You who say that one should not commit adultery,
do you commit adultery?
You who abhor idols,
do you rob temples?
- 23 You who boast in the Law,
through your breaking the Law, do you dishonor God?
- 24 For "THE NAME OF GOD IS BLASPHEMED AMONG THE GENTILES
BECAUSE OF YOU,"

Romans 2:22-24

How would you describe the people Paul is addressing in this verse? _____

How is God's Name blasphemed because of them? _____

When we claim to know God's Word, but fail to live in accordance to it, we are guilty of denying God's authority, and cause unbelievers to blaspheme or speak evil of God. Perhaps you have personally witnessed this phenomenon and heard the criticism of some who view believers as hypocrites? They are seeing people who, though believers in God, are denying His authority over their lives.

Maybe instead of actively defying God's authority, we are passively denying it's right over us. We love God's Word and share it with others, but do not practice it for our own lives. We are, in effect, taking God's Name in vain and are guilty of causing others to do the same!

Abusing God's Authority

The Hebrew word translated 'vain' in Exodus 20:7 can also be translated 'false', as in Deuteronomy 5:20.

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Deuteronomy 5:20

How does replacing the word 'vain' with 'falsehood' affect the meaning of this commandment? _____



Lamentations 2:15-16
Ezekiel 36:20-23
Matthew 18:7

Hypocrisy

One of Jesus' favorite words was the word 'hypocrite'. He denounced them! He spoke out against religious hypocrisy for it defamed the Name of God and caused others to do the same.

The Greek word for hypocrite referred to an actor, a performer or a counterfeit. There are many who profess to be Christians, but their lives contradict their words.

However, do not be quick to judge, for only God knows what is truly in a person's heart. He may simply be an immature or a carnal Christian. In either case, it is imperative that he gets right with God lest he finds himself a counterfeit Christian!

It is possible to serve God and do so falsely. Near the end of His Sermon, Jesus spoke some of the most troubling words for the ears of His followers.

- 21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,'
will enter the kingdom of heaven,
but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven
will enter.
- 22 "Many will say to Me on that day,
'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name,
and in Your name cast out demons,
and in Your name perform many miracles?'
- 23 "And then I will declare to them,
'I never knew you;
DEPART FROM ME,
YOU WHO PRACTICE LAWLESSNESS.'

Matthew 7:21-23

- Circle where not everyone who says to Jesus 'Lord, Lord' will enter.
- Underline who will enter there.
- Underline three things that 'many' will say to Jesus 'on that day'.
- Circle what Jesus will 'declare' to them.
- Circle what Jesus says they practice.

What is the significance of the truth in verse 21? _____

What does the list of activities in verse 22 seem to indicate about the 'many'? _____

How would you explain Jesus' response in verse 23? _____

It is sobering to learn that even miraculous ministries done in Jesus' Name can be carried out in deceit, and even addressing Jesus as 'Lord' is no guarantee of genuine faith. It is not the manifestation of service in Jesus' Name, but a life of faithful obedience to God that gains God's pleasure. We may fool those around us, but will never deceive the One who looks into our hearts to discern our true motives.

Unless we take seriously the danger of 'taking God's Name in vain', we risk hearing Jesus declare to us, 'I never knew you'. God forbid!



False Prophets
Jeremiah 23:13-32

Prove the Gifts

Some churches become overly enamored with the gifts of the Spirit and the Signs and Wonders that accompany them. Don't get me wrong. I, too, believe in the spiritual gifts, but I also know how enticing they can be to display for our own glory! The apostle Paul taught us to 'not despise prophetic utterances' but he also cautioned us to 'examine everything carefully'. (1 Thessalonians 5:20-21)

Before you exercise your God given gift, make sure it is God who is directing you to use it.

Aligning with Our Enemy Against God's Authority

As if the above defiant acts were not severe enough, 'taking God's Name in vain' will also align us with our most bitter enemy, the devil! Consider what Scripture says concerning satan's counterfeit messiah, the Antichrist, in the passage below.

- 5 There was given to him a mouth speaking arrogant words and blasphemies, and authority to act for forty-two months was given to him.
- 6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemies against God, to blaspheme His name and His tabernacle, *that is*, those who dwell in heaven.

Revelation 13:5-6

- Underline what pours out of the Antichrist's mouth.
- Circle what he blasphemes.

The ultimate ravager of this commandment is satan who seethes at even the mention of God's Name. That is why blasphemies will pour forth from the mouth of his incarnate counterfeit. The devil desires nothing more than to defile God's holy Name. And when we break this commandment, we only make him smile, and his job easier!

‘...at the name of
Jesus
every knee will bow...’



Daniel 7:8,11,25,36

The Fourth Commandment

You may have already observed that the first three commandments deal strictly with our relationship to God. Many erroneously believe that the Ten Commandments are strictly civil laws governing our relationships with one another. But they encompass the whole of a person's life and place the highest priority on our relationship with the LORD, for He is the foundation of all moral, ethical and civil laws.

The Fourth Commandment is the pivotal law which bridges the commandments dealing with God and the remainder which deal with Man. Viewed in its historical context, it was revolutionary, for its purpose was the physical and spiritual refreshment of the working population, freeing them from their bondage to labor in order to rest one day each week, no matter their station in life. And its basis and model was God Himself! Observe it below.

- 8 "Remember the sabbath day,
to keep it holy.
- 9 "Six days you shall labor and do all your work,
10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God;
in it you shall not do any work,
you or your son or your daughter,
your male or your female servant
or your cattle or your sojourner who stays with you.
- 11 "For in six days
the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them,
and rested on the seventh day;
therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.



MEMORIZE!

Exodus 20:8-11

- Underline what we are to remember. (v 8)
- Circle how we should keep it. (v 8)
- Circle how many days we are to labor. (v 9)
- Circle which day is the sabbath. (v 10)
- Underline for Whom it is a sabbath. (v 10)
- Circle what shall not be done on the sabbath. (v 10)
- Underline who is commanded not to work. (v 10)
- Circle how many days it took God to make all of Creation. (v 11)
- Circle what God did on the seventh day. (v 11)
- Underline what God did with the seventh day. (v 11)

The commandment, simply stated, is to 'remember the sabbath day' and 'to keep it holy'. The word 'sabbath' means 'to rest; to cease; to cause to cease'. It is imperative to always observe the context of a word in order to determine its specific meaning. In this context, 'sabbath' embraces all facets of the meanings: being a day of 'rest' as God rested after six days of creation, being a day when our labors 'cease', and being the seventh day, it causes the week to cease.

Observe the Sabbath
or Die

Exodus 31:13-14

The penalty for violating the Sabbath was death. So serious was it in God's eyes. For the Sabbath was a sign of the covenant God established between Himself and His people. To violate the Sabbath was to violate God's covenant as well!

The Basis for This Commandment

Interestingly, God appeals to **the creation account** as the basis for this commandment. By so doing, He is establishing the historical truthfulness of the first chapter of *Genesis*. Current thinking believes that the universe and all living creatures were established by purely naturalistic processes, and regards the creation account as a simple explanation by a primitive society. **God has trumped that kind of thinking!**

As a non-Christian zoology major, I too believed that the Theory of Evolution, which states that all living things evolved from simple life forms, which themselves emerged millions of years ago from the non-living ooze of the primordial earth, was the best explanation for the existence of the variety of living things around us. But after examining the evidence, it became clear that **the Theory of Evolution** is in fact **the most deceptive 'bait and switch' scheme ever foisted upon the minds of students.**

After presenting evidence of **micro changes** which are observed in nature, scientists unethically and erroneously conclude that such evidence proves the **macro changes** that must occur for Evolution to be true, changes that have **not** been observed in nature nor in the fossil record. No need to mention the complete lack of evidence for the emergence of life forms from inanimate material. Yet educators around the world continue to preach this theory, some of them admitting, because the alternative is unacceptable to them.

For more information on this subject, visit the following websites:

<http://www.origin-of-life.net/>

<http://www.scienceministries.org/>

<http://www.drdino.com/index.jsp>

A Day for Rest

This commandment may be the easiest to do, but deceptively difficult to obey. How many times have we used this God given gift to squeeze in an extra day of work? (Note that God is not against work, for He expected us to be so involved for six days.) Observe the following passage which foreshadows the fourth commandment.

- 1 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed,
and all their hosts.
- 2 By the seventh day God completed His work which He had done,
and He rested on the seventh day
from all His work which He had done.
- 3 Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it,
because in it He rested from all His work
which God had created and made.

Genesis 2:1-3

Why did God rest on the seventh day? _____

Why does He want us to rest on the seventh day? _____

God knows, if we do not, that our minds and bodies need regular rest in order to operate at peak efficiency. Our physical, psychological, emotional and spiritual welfare depends on periods of refreshment which God has commanded us to take.

For sure, this imperative was revolutionary in a time when masters required their servants to work 7 days a week, and most working people did the same. The fourth commandment supplants that work schedule with one that values the worker more than the work. However, we have reverted back to viewing people, not for who they are, but for what they can do for us. Today, we don't seem to have enough time to get everything done that needs to be done ... or at least that's what we think. **Work has become a god to many**, and the source of their significance, security and self-worth. This commandment seeks to guard us from that mistake.

God is saying through this commandment that if we can't complete our work in six days, then **we're too busy** because we're busier than God Himself! There is something wrong and we need to rethink whether we are taking on too much or whether we are doing too many nonessentials. One thing is true, and that is that God values us more than what we can do for Him. If we will obey His command and place Him first in our lives, He will ensure that all our needs will be added unto us.

A Day for Spiritual Renewal

It is not enough to 'remember' the sabbath, we must also **'keep it holy'**. The word 'holy' means to set aside for sacred purposes. God did not intend the sabbath to be a day for carnal pursuits, entertainment and revelry, but to devote ourselves to things sacred rather than secular things which monopolize our time during the week. It is to be a day when we can focus on the Creator in order to gain the proper perspective and foundation for the dizzying things that encompass our lives during the other six days.

God specified precisely what He had in mind for the Israelites as He applied this command for them.

- 1 The LORD spoke again to Moses, saying,
- 2 "Speak to the sons of Israel and say to them,
'The LORD'S appointed times
which you shall proclaim as holy convocations--
My appointed times are these:
- 3 'For six days work may be done,
but on the seventh day there is a sabbath of complete rest,
a holy convocation.
You shall not do any work;
it is a sabbath to the LORD in all your dwellings.

Leviticus 23:1-3

- Underline what the seventh day is. (v 3)
- Circle what sacred thing the sabbath is defined as.
- Circle to whom the sabbath is.
- Underline where the sabbath is to be celebrated.

A 'convocation' is a meeting called for a sacred purpose. The Israelites celebrated the Sabbath in the Temple, in the synagogues and in their houses. Friday afternoons were spent cleaning their homes in preparation for the Shabbat service when, as a family, they shared a special meal as the setting sun signaled the start of the Sabbath day.

Christians have partially kept that tradition, though on the first day of the week instead of the seventh. But we must always be careful of turning that day into a string of busy church activities that distract from God. Otherwise, like Martha, we will have allowed the good things to keep us from the best! (Luke 10:38-42)

‘Remember ... to keep it holy!’

There are various explanations as to why the Christian Church chose to transfer the day of 'holy convocation' to **Sunday**, ranging from celebrating the day of Christ's resurrection to the decision to separate the Church's identity from her Judaistic roots. There are, however, no Scriptures specifically explaining nor endorsing this change.

The Fifth Commandment

The Fifth Commandment is the first dealing strictly with our relationship with one another and targets the first primary relationship we all experience, our relationship with our parents. Observe it below.

Honor your father and your mother,
that your days may be prolonged in the land
which the LORD your God gives you.

Exodus 20:12

- Circle what you are to do to your father and mother.
- Underline why God commanded them to do this.

What does 'honor' mean? _____

How do we honor our parents? _____

How would honoring their parents cause the Israelites' days to be prolonged in the land?

Did you notice that there are no qualifications to this command, such as 'honor your parents if they're worthy of it'? This commandment is to be obeyed no matter how 'good' or 'bad' our parents are or have been. Why? Because in God's sovereign wisdom, He has established the family as the foundation for human society and the parents as His delegated authority in that institution. To dishonor our parents, then, is to dishonor God, defy His authority and reject His sovereign plan.

But what does it mean to 'honor' our parents?

Honoring Our Parents Means Respecting Them

It has become fashionable in some places to 'dis', or disrespect, others including parents, resulting in a breakdown of the family. But this commandment prohibits this growing trend. Study [Leviticus 19:3, 32](#) below.



Glorify Your Parents

The Hebrew word for honor can also be translated 'glorify', and is used to describe how men are to bring glory to God. We can honor our parents by living in such a way as to glorify, not disgrace, them.

- 3 'Every one of you shall reverence his mother and his father,
and you shall keep My sabbaths; I am the LORD your God.
32 'You shall rise up before the grayheaded and honor the aged,
and you shall revere your God; I am the LORD.

Leviticus 19:3, 32

- Underline what everyone shall do.
- Circle what you shall do to 'your God'.

The word '**reverence**' means to '**fear or respect**'. To honor our parents is to have great respect, and even fear for their God given place of authority in the family. This point is made even more evident when you know that the Hebrew word for 'reverence' in verse 3, referring to our attitude toward our parents, and 'revere' in verse 32, referring to our attitude toward God, are **the same**.

Why is reverence for our parents so important to God? Because without it, you will be unable to fulfill the next step outlined below.

Honoring Our Parents Means Obeying Them

Respecting our parents is only the first part of the intended result ~ **obedience**. For God it is an imperative for children to obey their parents. Study the passage below.

Hear, my son, your father's instruction
And do not forsake your mother's teaching;

Proverbs 1:8

- Circle what sons are to hear.
- Circle what they are not to forsake.

Why is it important for us to follow our parents' instructions? _____

There was a television show many years ago entitled '**Father Knows Best**' which actually showed the humorous side of the father we would all have liked to have had, played by the very likable actor, Robert Young. Though the show has slipped into nostalgia, its title is still remembered, evoking a sense of a time long past. But it expresses a belief that has a lot of truth in it, especially when '**mother**' is included in the formula.

Why do parents know best? Because **they've already made the mistakes** they are trying to protect their children from! That's what experience is. Not that older people always know what is the right way, but by trial and lots of errors, they have at least learned what **not** to do. And that can save a lot of heartache, and even serious tragedies, for the less experienced. It is a wise child who knows this and who is willing to learn and apply what his parents and elders, who have completed more years in the 'school of life', teach him.

Jesus Honored His Parents

The example was set by Jesus who, at the age of twelve, spent an extended Passover in Jerusalem discussing the Scriptures with the teachers in the Temple, and then returned with His father and His mother to Nazareth until the start of His ministry when He was about thirty years of age. Study the passage of this account below.

- 51 And (Jesus) went down with them and came to Nazareth,
and He continued in subjection to them;
and His mother treasured all *these* things in her heart.
- 52 And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature,
and in favor with God and men.

Luke 2:51-52

- Circle how Jesus 'continued' with His parents.
- Circle how He kept increasing during those years with His parents.

If Jesus, who was God incarnate, lived in subjection to His earthly parents, how much more should we!

Dishonoring Of Parents was a Capital Offense

The Old Testament law revealed the severity of disobeying this commandment. The punishment was no mere probation, nor even limited time in a juvenile detention center, but **execution**. Yes, **death**! Study the punishment, below.

- 15 "He who strikes his father or his mother
shall surely be put to death.
- 17 "He who curses his father or his mother
shall surely be put to death.

Exodus 21:15, 17

- Circle the punishment for anyone who strikes their parents.
- Circle the punishment for anyone who curses their parents.

What is the significance of the severity of the punishment for this offense? _____

Less anyone think that this punishment reflected a sterner and more severe God of the Old Testament, it must be remembered that Jesus Himself confirmed this exact commandment and punishment in **Matthew 15:4**. That parents were to instill a **deep respect for authority** both inside and outside the home was evident. Children who disobeyed their parents did so under the threat of execution by a justice system established by God. He does not tolerate the rebellious child, and neither should we, for **ultimately, the purpose of the Fifth Commandment is security and life ...** for all children, for their families and for their communities.

How would instituting this punishment change your society today? _____

Dishonoring of Parents Will Increase in the Last Days

- 1 But realize this, that in the last days difficult times will come.
- 2 For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, boastful, arrogant, revilers,
disobedient to parents, ungrateful, unholy,
2 Timothy 3:1-2

- Circle what kind of times will come in the last days.
- Contemplate each quality describing what men will be like.

From this passage, what kind of world can we look forward to as the day of Jesus'

return approaches? _____

The last days will see, among other things, the breakdown of the family and the rise in wayward children. When you read the entire list (2 Timothy 3:1-5), it is as though mankind will abandon God's commandments entirely and become a law unto themselves. Evil will be rampant and life for the godly will become almost unbearable. Society will condone all manner of sin and denounce the righteousness of God.

In a reciprocal fulfillment of the Fifth Commandment's promise, the lives of these law breakers will be cut short when Jesus returns as Judge and King to bring eternal punishment upon those who treat His Commands with contempt.

**'Let your father and your mother be glad,
And let her rejoice who gave birth to you.'**

Proverbs 23:25

The Sixth Commandment

The Command is simply stated.

'You shall not murder.'

Exodus 20:13

What is implied by the word murder? _____

What does this command tell you about the Law Giver? _____

God values life. This is evidenced not only by this commandment, but by the punishment administered for violating it. Though there is a sense of premeditation in the English word 'murder', the original Hebrew word is not as specific. It encompasses the premeditated as well as the non-premeditated taking of life. The killing of another person is prohibited no matter the circumstances or reasons, necessitating care and caution in our interactions with one another, and underscoring God's elevated view of human life.

Punishment for Murder

Consider the directive by God given to Noah and his family after the flood.

'Whoever sheds man's blood,
By man his blood shall be shed,
For in the image of God He made man.'

Genesis 9:6

- Underline the punishment for killing another person.
- Circle the reason for this punishment.

What is significant about the reason God demands the life of the murderer as punishment? _____

Why does God require this punishment to be carried out 'by man'? _____



Cities of Refuge

Exodus 21:13

When the Israelites finally settled in the land of promise, God established 'Cities of Refuge' scattered through out the area where people, who accidentally killed someone, could escape and be protected from revenge seeking relatives of the victim. As long as the perpetrator remained in the city, he could not be harmed, unless his crime was shown to be pre meditated.



Exodus 21:12,14

The Standard for Guilt

The severity of the punishment demanded that convictions be sure. To this end, God instituted His standard for guilt.

- 30 'If anyone kills a person,
the murderer shall be put to death at the evidence of witnesses,
but no person shall be put to death on the testimony of one witness.
- 31 'Moreover,
you shall not take ransom for the life of a murderer who is guilty of death,
but he shall surely be put to death.

Numbers 35:30-31

- Circle upon what evidence a person is to be put to death.
- Underline what evidence is insufficient to put a person to death.
- Circle what 'you shall not take' for the life of a murderer.
- Underline what shall 'surely' happen to the murderer.

What is significant about this standard for establishing the guilt of a murderer?

Why did God not allow the paying of a ransom, or bribe, to spare the life of a murderer? _____

The Exceptions to the Rule

There are times when killing is allowed by God. Solomon wrote the following in his great sermonic book, Ecclesiastes, which declared that there is ...

- 3a A time to kill ...
8b A time for war
Ecclesiastes 3:3a, 8b

When might these times be? _____

Cite examples in Scripture where God allowed killing. _____

God commended individuals in Scripture who stood up for His righteousness by destroying the irreverent and the blasphemers.

Exodus 21:30 allowed a 'ransom' in the instance where relatives of the deceased, killed by an ox, are willing to accept payment in lieu of the execution of the owner of the guilty ox.

A Time to Kill

Death came into this world through sin. Since then, God has not hesitated to sanction the killing of individuals, as in the punishment for pre-meditated murder to the world wide destruction by His flood. But in all cases, it is to declare God's righteousness and uphold His Holiness.

There is coming a time of judgment when God will pour out His wrath and multitudes will be destroyed. The Holy God will not tolerate sin and leave it unpunished.

The Spirit of the Law

Most people never violate this commandment literally, including the circumstances outlined in the exceptions. But this does not exonerate them, as Jesus explained.

- 21 "You have heard that the ancients were told,
'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT MURDER' and
'Whoever commits murder shall be liable to the court.'
22 "But I say to you that everyone who is **angry** with his brother
shall be guilty before the court;
and whoever says to his brother,
'**You good-for-nothing,**'
shall be guilty before the supreme court;
and whoever says,
'**You fool,**'
shall be guilty *enough to go into the fiery hell.*

Matthew 5:21-22

- Circle who is 'guilty before the court'.
- Circle what exclamation makes on 'guilty before the supreme court'.
- Circle what action makes us 'guilty enough to go into the fiery hell'.

What is the significance of Jesus' teaching? _____

In what ways and against whom might we be committing the very acts Jesus outlines?

It is possible to keep the 'letter' of the law but still be guilty of breaking it in 'spirit'. In God's eyes, the Commandment extends far beyond the prohibition of a specific action, but encompasses emotions and activities that most, if not all, of us are guilty of. We may not have literally murdered someone with our hands, but perhaps we have with our hearts. Jesus says that even our thoughts and attitudes make us 'guilty enough to go into the fiery hell'!

It is worth contemplating the consequences of Jesus' teaching. How many times have we been angry with someone or uttered the words, 'You stupid ...' to or about someone? Would it make a difference if we knew that those actions would instantly and automatically cast us into the 'fiery hell'? Jesus says **that** is what we deserve each time we do them. Let's keep that in mind the next time we get behind behind the wheel of our cars!

Words of Death

The old rhyme may say,
'words will never hurt me',
but we know it's not true.
Words do hurt, and in
God's eyes, even kill. They
are as deadly as bullets
that pierce the flesh, and
even more so, for they tear
into a person's soul.

How many people have
had their self esteem
destroyed by a careless
word, or a dream evaporate
by a harsh critic.

Angry words can
destroy because they are
propelled by the same
emotion that lies at the
heart of murder itself!

So be careful what
words you say. You may
regret them one day.

**'But I tell you that every
careless word that people
speak, they shall give an
accounting for it in the day
of judgment.'**

Matthew 12:36

The Spiritual Root of Murder

Murder, or to be more specific the desire to murder, is not as unexplainable as some may think. No matter the cause, its origin is always in the dark thoughts fomented in the mind by the evil one. As Jesus explained ...

For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries,
fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

Matthew 15:19

- Circle from where proceeds evil.
- Observe and contemplate each of the things fomented in the heart.

"You are of *your* father the devil,
and you want to do the desires of your father.
He was a murderer from the beginning,
and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him.

John 8:44

- Circle who Jesus said was the 'father' of His critics.
- Circle who the devil was from the beginning.

What is significant about Jesus' statement in Matthew 15:19? _____

How does murder originate in the heart? _____

Why does Jesus call the devil 'a murderer from the beginning'? _____

How might the devil be involved in killings among people? _____

Knowing that murder evolves from the heart, how much more important it is to **take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ!** Satan is ever present and willing to enter our thoughts and stir the dark brew from where springs the evil justifications. Be alert, for the original 'murderer' would love to add us to his list of adherents and share his evil deeds. And what are **the first signs** that his intrusion is elevating the temperature of our inner thoughts? The initial bubbles of **angry emotions and words** that can boil over into the physical and unthinkable act of murder.



1 John 3:8-12

The Seventh Commandment

This Commandment deals with the most intimate area of our earthly existence. **God is not against sex.** He created it! But He has established the proper use of His most powerful natural gift to us. **The ability to create new life and a new living being is to be used within the confines of marriage** where every child born can receive the love and protection of a father and a mother within a family unit. To safeguard His purpose, God has issued this Commandment for the welfare of us all.

"You shall not commit adultery."

Exodus 20:14

The Hebrew word for 'adultery' refers specifically to **a man having sexual intercourse with another man's wife or fiancé.** There is another Hebrew word which encompasses a broader range of sexual transgressions which translates to fornication or harlotry, actions which are also condemned by God. But that the word 'adultery' is used in this instance shows that God is especially guarding the institution He ordained in the Garden ~ the marriage of one man and one woman. **Any sexual relationship outside of this union is outside the will of God.**

Under Penalty of Death

The old proverb advises, '**Let the punishment fit the crime.**' If the severity of the punishment is indicative of the severity of the crime, then adultery is a serious crime indeed! Read it below.

*'If there is a man who commits adultery with another man's wife,
one who commits adultery with his friend's wife,
the adulterer and the adulteress
shall surely be put to death.'*

Leviticus 20:10

- Underline with whom the adultery is committed.
- Circle the guilty parties.
- Underline their punishment

Why did God institute such a severe and final punishment for the act of adultery?

Jesus reminded us that the covenant of marriage is more than a legal procedure. In **Matthew 19:3-6**, Jesus taught that in marriage, **God joins one man and one woman** in a union that is **inviolable** by any man. To break this bond is to defy the action of God Himself, and that earns the severest punishment for the violator!



MEMORIZE!



Leviticus 20:10-23

The litany of forbidden sexual sins is long, perverse and incredible. It does boggle the mind what dark deeds man is capable of.

Matthew 19:5-6

5 and (Jesus) said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'?
6 "So they are no longer two, but **one** flesh. **What therefore God has joined together, let no man separate.**"

Adultery of the Heart

As in murder, it is possible to violate this Command without doing so literally. Jesus expands the sphere of this command to encompass the hidden passions of the heart.

- 27 "You have heard that it was said,
'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY';
28 but I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her
has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

Matthew 5:27-28

- Circle how Jesus said one can look at a woman.
- Circle where Jesus said that person 'has already committed adultery'.

Why does Jesus expand the seventh commandment to encompass the heart? _____

What significance does this have? _____

Spiritual Adultery

In Scripture, the act of adultery can transcend the physical into a spiritual act of unfaithfulness toward God as His people violate the covenant that binds them to the Almighty. God spoke through the prophet Jeremiah concerning the northern kingdom of (Israel) unfaithfulness, and foreshadowed a similar fate for the southern Kingdom of Judah who did not seem to learn from her northern sister's experience. Here, God utilizes the Hebrew words for adultery (sexual relations with a married person) and harlotry (all manner of sexual sin) in the same passage.

'And I saw that for all the **adulteries** of faithless Israel,
I had sent her away and given her a writ of divorce,
yet her treacherous sister Judah did not fear;
but she went and was a **harlot** also.'

Jeremiah 3:8

Is it possible for the Christian Church to commit spiritual adultery against God? _____

If so, how, or if not, why not? _____

As believers, we must guard our hearts from both physical and spiritual temptations that seek to draw us into unholy relationships in violation of this Commandment!

Nipping It in the Bud

In the previous lesson, we learned that evil proceeds from the heart (Matthew 15:19). Like murder, the act of adultery does not spontaneously happen, but is nursed in the dark recesses of our passions until it emerges full blown in an act of sin. It is best to nip it in the bud while still an infant thought, for even then, God sees it as evil, and it is best dealt with likewise!

Apostasy Foretold

Both our LORD and the apostle Paul foretold a time when 'many will fall away' and abandon the faith, even delivering up the faithful to arrest and execution.

Matthew 24:10 &
2 Thessalonians 2:3

The Eighth Commandment

We have progressed through the Commandments, starting by honoring and respecting God, His Name, His Sabbath, one another's parents, one another's lives, marriages and now possessions. We respect another's possessions by not confiscating nor withholding them from him. Or simply put ...

"You shall not steal."

Exodus 20:15



It is easier said than done, for there are many ways to violate this Command. You do not have to be a bank robber nor a shop lifter to be in violation of God's decree. Any failure to give another person his or her due will mark you a thief just as surely as a burglar who walks away with their entire account. The taking of seemingly inconsequential items from the work place or from an acquaintance will also violate this command. The punishments may differ, but in God's eyes, the transgression is as sure.

'Crime and Punishment'

As mentioned in the previous lesson, God gives us a picture of the seriousness of the Command through the punishment He demands for violating it. Observe the penalties issued for theft below.

- 1 "If a man steals an ox or a sheep and slaughters it or sells it, he shall pay five oxen for the ox and four sheep for the sheep.
- 2 "If the thief is caught while breaking in and is struck so that he dies, there will be no bloodguiltiness on his account.
- 3 "But if the sun has risen on him, there will be bloodguiltiness on his account. He shall surely make restitution; if he owns nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft.
- 4 "If what he stole is actually found alive in his possession, whether an ox or a donkey or a sheep, he shall pay double.

Exodus 22:1-4

- Circle what a thief owes for a stolen ox or sheep that is unrecoverable. (v 1)
- Underline what a thief owes if he is killed during the robbery attempt. (v 2)
- Underline what a thief must do if he survives a robbery attempt. (v 3)
- Circle what he owes if what is stole is recovered. (v 4)

What is learned about God from the punishments listed in the passage? _____

In God's economy, crime really doesn't pay. God does not try to rehabilitate the criminal but metes out a punishment that is meant to dissuade a second attempt. But then, perhaps strict punishment is a form of rehabilitation.

Fitting Punishment

The punishments of God make stealing a losing proposition. At best, the thief loses **double** what he stole, but at worst, he pays with his life! It makes you wonder how crime rates would be affected should our judicial system adopt these more stringent standards of punishment!

Theft by Stealth

There are ways to steal right from under people's noses without them even knowing. It can happen to you and maybe it has. And God is against it!

A false balance is an abomination to the LORD,
But a just weight is His delight.

Proverbs 11:1

- Underline what is an abomination to the LORD.
- Circle what is His delight.

What is implied by 'a false balance'? _____

The Bible is filled with scriptures prohibiting fraud in the marketplace. In three thousand years, greed still tempts men to search for ways to defraud their fellow man. Whether in the supermarket or the stock market, **God condemns any deception that defrauds the buyer!**

The Ultimate Theft

There is no greater theft, save taking a person's life (Commandment Five), than to steal the person himself!

"He who kidnaps a man,
whether he sells him or he is found in his possession,
shall surely be put to death.

Exodus 21:16

- Circle what the theft of a person is called.
- Underline the punishment for this crime.

Why does God require such a severe punishment for this crime? _____

How do you explain the difference between the punishments issued by God and that by our modern systems of justice? _____



Amos 8:4-5
Hosea 12:7
Deuteronomy 25:13-16

Theft in the Name of God

The common portrayal of Jesus the Galilean is of a man who was 'meek and mild.' But the following episode dispels that interpretation. And the thing that elicited such a powerful response from Him was the theft that was occurring in the very Temple of God.

- 12 And Jesus entered the temple
and drove out all those who were buying and selling in the temple,
and overturned the tables of the moneychangers
and the seats of those who were selling doves.
- 13 And He *said to them,
"It is written,
'MY HOUSE SHALL BE CALLED A HOUSE OF PRAYER';
but you are making it a ROBBERS' DEN."

Matthew 21:12-13

- Underline the people Jesus targeted in the temple.
- Circle what Jesus said God's house should be called.
- Circle what they had made it.

How might this kind of theft occur today? _____

Theft by Omission

Perhaps to gain a measure of the notoriety of Barnabas (Acts 4:34-37), who gave the entire funds of a land sale to the apostles., a husband and wife in the early church attempted to mimic his generosity with an important omission.

- 1 But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property,
2 and kept back *some* of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge,
and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet.
- 3 But Peter said,
"Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit
and to keep back *some* of the price of the land?
- 4 "While it remained *unsold*, did it not remain your own?
And after it was sold, was it not under your control?
Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart?
You have not lied to men but to God."
- 5 And as he heard these words,
Ananias fell down and breathed his last;
and great fear came over all who heard of it.

Acts 5:1-5

- Underline what Ananias did that met God's disapproval.
- Circle what Satan enticed him to do.
- Underline what happened to him.

A Disciple and a Thief

John 11:4-6

Judas Iscariot was both a thief and a disciple of Christ. The combination of these two seemingly contradictory qualities led to the betrayal and ended in Christ's crucifixion. Whatever Judas' motives, it was greed that sealed his doom, as it will do to all who succumb to its empty promises.

Supporting your answer with the scripture passage, explain Ananias' sin? _____

Did God take Ananias' life? If so, why ... if not, why not? _____

How would an incident like this affect the church today? _____

God's Advice to Thieves

In a word, **WORK!**

'He who steals must steal no longer;
but rather he must labor,
performing with his own hands what is good,
so that he will have *something* to share with one who has need.'
Ephesians 4:28

- Circle what the one who steals must do.
- Circle what he ought to do with his hands.
- Underline why he ought to work.

How is making an honest living through work a good thing? _____

This commandment refutes the age old axiom 'The ends justify the means.' That axiom is the anthem of thieves who justify their thefts by the lifestyle it affords them. Unfortunately for them, God is concerned with the 'means'! For don't you know ...

... that **the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?**
Do not be deceived;
neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers,
nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, **nor thieves**, nor *the* covetous,
nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers,
will inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10



It is more blessed to give
Acts 20:35
1 Thessalonians 4:11-12
2 Thessalonians 3:6-12

The Ninth Commandment

We now come to a Commandment with a finer screen that should ensnare most, if not all, of us. Perhaps you have never dishonored your parents, nor murdered your harshest critic, nor broken your marriage vow or enticed another to, nor stolen anything that wasn't yours. Perhaps you have arrived at this commandment unscathed by the previous eight. Well, you will probably not leave this one unscarred, for Scripture says you would have to be a perfect person to leave this commandment unbroken.

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor."

Exodus 20:16

What is this commandment forbidding us to do? _____

The scope of this Commandment includes everything from gossip to perjury. Any and every time we say something that testifies falsely, even slightly, about another person, we break this commandment. Some of us are more prone to violating it than others, but we are all enticed by our depraved sin natures to disregard this commandment for the joy of putting another person down. It is an evil delight at best, and a criminal offense at worse!

A Member of God's Hall of Infamy

The violation of this Commandment makes the list of God's 'Seven Deadly Sins'.

- 16 There are six things which the LORD hates,
Yes, seven which are an abomination to Him:
- 17 Haughty eyes,
a lying tongue,
And hands that shed innocent blood,
- 18 A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that run rapidly to evil,
- 19 A false witness who utters lies,
And one who spreads strife among brothers.

Proverbs 6:16-19

How can each of the sins listed be a violation of this commandment? _____

It can be argued that the violation of this Commandment can be associated with almost every one of the list of seven. So despicable is this sin in God's eyes. Would it be the same in ours! And so easy do we find it to break this imperative that we are almost unaware when we do.



Prone to Belittle

Relationships that are prone to untrue words:

- Husbands of Wives
- Wives of Husbands
- Parents of Children
- Children of Parents
- Friends of Friends
- Employees of Employers
- Employers of Employees



Tongues of Fire

No book in the Bible dwells at length on the sins of the spoken word as does the book of James. In his definitive treatment of this topic, he uses several images to illustrate this wayward habit.

- 2 For we all stumble in many ways.
If anyone does not stumble in what he says,
he is a perfect man,
able to bridle the whole body as well.
- 3 Now if we put the bits into the horses' mouths so that they will obey us,
we direct their entire body as well.
- 4 Look at the ships also,
though they are so great and are driven by strong winds,
are still directed by a very small rudder
wherever the inclination of the pilot desires.
- 5 So also the tongue is a small part of the body,
and yet it boasts of great things.
See how great a forest is set aflame by such a small fire!
- 6 And the tongue is a fire,
the very world of iniquity;
the tongue is set among our members as that which defiles the entire body,
and sets on fire the course of our life,
and is set on fire by hell.
- 7 For every species of beasts and birds, of reptiles and creatures of the sea,
is tamed and has been tamed by the human race.
- 8 But no one can tame the tongue;
it is a restless evil and full of deadly poison.
- 9 With it we bless our Lord and Father,
and with it we curse men,
who have been made in the likeness of God;
- 10 from the same mouth come both blessing and cursing.
My brethren, these things ought not to be this way.



James 3:2-10

Observations

v 2

- Circle what a person is who does not err in what he says.
- Underline what he will be able to do.

v 3-4

- Underline what are compared to the tongue.

v 5-6

- Underline what the tongue does.
- Circle what the tongue is compared to.
- Underline what the tongue defiles.
- Underline what it sets on fire.
- Circle what sets it on fire.

v 7-8

- Circle who can tame the tongue.
- Underline what the tongue is.

v 9-10

- Underline what we do with our tongues.
- Circle what comes out of our mouths.
- Underline James' conclusion.

Why does James say that a person who 'does not stumble in what he says' is a

'perfect man'? _____

How is the tongue a 'fire'? _____

What is the significance of this passage? _____

Fiery Tongues Will End in Fire Revelation 21:8

The Bible prophesied that liars will be cast into the 'lake of fire'. That, of course, includes every person capable of speaking! But those who are truly sorrowful and turn from that sin to Christ will receive His forgiveness and be spared that ultimate fiery torment.

Tongues of Grace

As made clear by James, the tongue can be the source of fiery curses or soothing blessings, each determined by our free will. The apostle Paul exhorts us to choose to bless, not curse.

Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth,
but only such a *word* as is good for edification
according to the need of the moment,
so that it will give grace to those who hear.

Ephesians 4:29

- Underline what should not proceed from our mouths.
- Underline what should.
- Circle what it will give to the hearer.

What kind of word is 'good for edification'? _____

How can words 'give grace to those who hear'? _____

The Last Word

"Boys flying kites pull in their white winged birds,
You can't do that when you're flying words.
Words unexpressed fall back dead,
But God Himself can't kill them,
Once they're said."

Anonymous

 **MEMORIZE!**

 Matthew 12:34-37
Colossians 4:6

 **MEMORIZE!**

The Tenth Commandment

The Ten Commandments outline God's Will concerning our relationship with the LORD, with one another and, in this final commandment, with ourselves. They encompass the totality of life and align us with the absolute Truth of God. This tenth Commandment speaks to our innermost thoughts and passions, an area hidden from others, but open to the omniscient gaze of the Deity. It is last, but not least, for in our hearts is birthed the evil acts that violate the commands of God. The man or woman who will harness their lusts will be a disciple in whom God's Spirit has full reign, and through whom God's will is realized.

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house;
you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or
his male servant or his female servant or
his ox or his donkey or
anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Exodus 20:17

- Circle all the things we are not to covet.

Why should we not covet things that are not ours? _____

Biblical Examples

The Bible provides several examples of how covetousness leads to disaster. It always starts with an innocent glance, but evolves into an ever darker downward spiral of immoral actions.

When the woman saw that the tree was good for food,
and that it was a delight to the eyes,
and that the tree was desirable to make *one* wise,
she took from its fruit and ate;
and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate.

Genesis 3:6

- Underline the first thing the woman did.
- Circle what she saw and believed.
- Underline the second thing the woman did.
- Underline the third thing she did.

Explain how covetousness worked in Eve's life. _____



The Deception

When you study the account of the first sin in Genesis 3:1-7, you will notice that:

1. Eve **misunderstood God's Word** (compare Genesis 2:17 to 3:3). She added the condition of 'touch'.
2. Satan tempted her to **doubt God's Word**. Genesis 3:1,4-5)
3. Eve **believed satan** instead of God, **disobeyed God's Word** and gave in to the temptation (Genesis 3:6).

Sin in the Camp

After their great victory at Jericho, the invading Israeli nation marched on to the smaller city of Ai in Canaan, confident that God would give them victory again. After a resounding defeat, the problem was traced to the sin of one of their members who gave in to temptation and defied the command of Joshua. The guilty man's confession reveals much about the dangers of coveting.

- 20 So Achan answered Joshua and said,
"Truly, I have sinned against the LORD, the God of Israel,
and this is what I did:
21 when I saw among the spoil a beautiful mantle from Shinar
and two hundred shekels of silver and a bar of gold fifty shekels in weight,
then I coveted them and took them;
and behold,
they are concealed in the earth inside my tent with the silver underneath it."

Joshua 7:20-21

- Underline the first thing Achan did.
- Circle the actions that followed.

No One Immune

From the following account, it can never be said that the Bible paints a rosy picture of its heroes. Even the great King David was not immune to the enticements of the flesh.

- 2 Now when evening came
David arose from his bed and walked around on the roof of the king's house,
and from the roof he saw a woman bathing;
and the woman was very beautiful in appearance.
3 So David sent and inquired about the woman. And one said,
"Is this not Bathsheba, the daughter of Eliam,
the wife of Uriah the Hittite?"
4 David sent messengers and took her,
and when she came to him, he lay with her;
and when she had purified herself from her uncleanness,
she returned to her house.

2 Samuel 11:2-4

- Underline what David did from the roof of his house. (v 2)
- Circle what he did after this (v 3)
- Underline who this woman was. (v 3)
- Circle what he did with her. (v 4)

In both instances (Achan & King David), what should they have done after they saw

what was forbidden? _____



Proverbs 6:25-26

Determine What Your Eyes are Allowed to See

In all three examples, problems began with the lust of the eyes. Though you can't always control what you see, you can control what you do next! It is imperative that you decide what you are going to do **before** the temptation hits. It may be too late if you are enticed during a time of emotional or physical weakness when your ability to resist may be impaired. Consider making the following commitments to guard yourself before satan springs his traps.

"I have made a covenant with my eyes;
How then could I gaze at a virgin?"

Job 31:1

- Underline what Job made.

What kind of covenant did Job make with his eyes? _____

- 25 Let your eyes look directly ahead
And let your gaze be fixed straight in front of you.
- 26 Watch the path of your feet
And all your ways will be established.
- 27 Do not turn to the right nor to the left;
Turn your foot from evil.

Proverbs 4:25-27

- Circle where your eyes should look.
- Underline what you should watch.
- Underline where you should not turn.

What is the point of this Proverb? _____

How does preparing ahead of time help you during the time of temptation? _____



My Covenant

When tempted,
I pledge to keep my eyes from evil and
to walk away from things displeasing to God.

Signed _____

Covet the Eternal

- 15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world.
If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.
- 16 For all that is in the world,
the lust of the flesh and
the lust of the eyes and
the boastful pride of life,
is not from the Father, but is from the world.
- 17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts;
but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

1 John 2:15-17

- Underline what we are not to love.
- Circle what is not in anyone who loves the world.
- Underline what is in the world.
- Circle what is passing away.
- Underline who lives forever.

Why should we not covet the things in the world? _____

"For what does it profit a man
to gain the whole world,
and forfeit his soul?"

Mark 8:36



Ending Covetousness

6 But *godliness* *actually* is a means of great gain when accompanied by contentment.

7 For we have brought nothing into the world, so we cannot take anything out of it either.

8 If we have food and covering, *with these we shall be content.*

9 But those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a snare and many foolish and harmful desires which plunge men into ruin and destruction.

10 For the love of money is a root of all sorts of evil, and *some* by longing for it have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs.

1 Timothy 6:6-10



Final Exam

From memory, list the Ten Commandments.

The First Commandment

The Second Commandment

The Third Commandment

The Fourth Commandment

The Fifth Commandment

The Sixth Commandment

The Seventh Commandment

The Eighth Commandment

The Ninth Commandment

The Tenth Commandment
