

## THE TEN (10) COMMANDMENTS

(Exodus 20: 3-17)

The Ten Commandments are laws that were given by God for guidelines for daily living. They are part of a covenant between God and his people. (Exodus 34:28; Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4).

These laws are often called the Decalogue, from the Greek word which means “ten words.”

Many believe the Ten Commandments are not relevant in this century. God wrote these commandments with his own finger (Exodus 19:6, 20:17) and because of that fact alone, they will always be relevant. These laws originate from God and from his eternal character; therefore their moral value cannot change.

The Ten Commandments coupled with the teachings of Christ are the best guidelines for practical daily living known to man.

#1 – THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER gods BEFORE ME. (Exodus 20:3)

This first commandment was that Israel worship the one and only True and Living God. The old adage says, “Lord of all or not at all.” The words “before me” literally means, “in opposition to me.” He demands and deserves absolute loyalty. Because he is sovereign, there is no one or nothing that can be compared to him. He is our provider, our protector and the very sustainer of our life. When we think about idolatry, we usually think of bowing down to statues or images, however, anyone or anything that we put before God, is an idol. An idol can be a car, a job, a person or even a cause. He should be first in our lives.

#2 – THOU SHALT NOT MAKE UNTO THEE ANY GRAVEN IMAGE, OR ANY LIKENESS OF ANYTHING THAT IS IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR THAT IS IN THE EARTH BENEATH, OR THAT IS IN THE WATER UNDER THE EARTH: (Exodus 20:4)

The worship of God is a spiritual experience, not a material experience. He is not a God that has been carved into wood, stone or anything visible or tangible. He is not to be worshipped as the Sun, Stars or Moon. (He made them). The bible says that “God is a Spirit, and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.” (St. John 4:24). Israel had many contacts with people who worshipped images, including replicas of their earthy rulers. In fact, while Moses was on the mountain receiving the commandments from God, Israel was making a golden calf. (Exodus 32:4)

God is a jealous God and therefore it brings him divine displeasure when we try to replace him with that which is false. Devotion should be given exclusively to him for he has done for us what no other god can do. He is sovereign and thus he alone is worthy of our praise, worship and allegiance.

#3 – THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN; FOR THE LORD WILL NOT HOLD HIM GUILTLESS THAT TAKETH HIS NAME IN VAIN. (Exodus 20:7)

The name of the Lord is sacred and should not be used in a casual or even vain, empty manner. To do so is very insulting and degrading. Many people use profanity and the name of the Lord in the same sentence. Although in this 21<sup>st</sup> century, people use the name of the Lord very carelessly and callously, his name is above every name and should be uttered with respect and understanding. The Bible declares that his name is exalted above EVERY name and at his name every knee should bow and every tongue shall confess that he is Lord. (Philippians 2:10)

#4 – REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY TO KEEP IT HOLY. (Exodus 20:8)

The word Sabbath means rest. But God did not only intend it as a day to rest from labor, but it was to be a day of worship as well. There should be a special time when we set aside all thoughts of materialistic gain and self-centeredness and focus exclusively on God. God himself set the pattern by ceasing from His labors after creating the world. In Christianity, we recognize that every day is the Sabbath because every day is a day that we should live in holiness and purity, but we do set aside at least one day a week, typically Sunday, where we devote our time and energy to worship and magnify him and honor him with praise, prayer and with his word.

\*It should be noted that regardless of what day people choose as their special day of worship or to have service, it is unto the Lord and is acceptable to him.

#5 – HONOUR THY FATHER AND MOTHER; THAT THY DAYS MAY BE LONG UPON THE LAND WHICH THE LORD THY GOD GIVETH THEE. (Exodus 20:12)

God established parents as the authority figures in the family unit. Children often get their first impression about God from their parents. Parents who serve God faithfully are able to set great examples for their children. Children who want to please God will love and respect their parents. \*Parents must realize that God has not called them to be their children's friend but to be the authority figures for their children, leading them to an experience with Christ as soon as possible and to teach them reverence for God and his work. Violation of this law was a capital offense in the Old Testament. (Exodus 21:17, Leviticus 20:9, Proverbs 20:20)

#6 – THOU SHALT NOT KILL (Exodus 20:13)

God created us in his image and likeness. He is the one that breathed life into our being and allowed us to become living souls. Therefore no one has the right to take a life from another.

#7 – THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY (Exodus 20:14).

God instituted the family before he instituted the church. The moral fabric of our society is decaying as a result of a breakdown in the family. His word clearly states "**Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled....**" (Hebrews 13:4.) The marital vow is a holy commitment and should not be violated by sexual unfaithfulness under any circumstances. A husband and wife share intimacy in a way that is sacred and exclusive. Therefore to take another's spouse and commit adultery is a sin. Adultery is a horrible sin because it breaks the covenant between a husband and wife. Scripture has proven that when adultery is committed, more often than not, other sins follow. Sometimes adultery is accompanied with lies, deceit, sexually transmitted diseases, pregnancies, and worse. The Bible gives an example of what things could possibly happen when adultery is committed. In the case of King David, all of the above occurred. He committed adultery with Bathsheba. That one act of adultery led to lying, impregnating another man's wife, and ultimately murder. That is why the Bible clearly states, "Let every man have his OWN wife."

#### #8 – THOU SHALT NOT STEAL (Exodus 20:15)

Stealing involves taking something that does not belong to you. It could be a spouse, a car, or anything that is not yours. God is a God that provides for his children, therefore when we live by his standards, coupled with his favor and blessings, stealing is not necessary. He is more than able to supply all of our needs. God wants us to work honestly and lawfully for the things that we need.

#### #9 – THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST THY NEIGHBOR.

It is the will of God that we strive to live in peace. The word of God says, ..... “Seek Peace and pursue it.” Synonymous with that scripture is the scripture that says, Live peaceably with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord. (Hebrews 12:14). To bear false witness basically is to lie. To speak things of people which are not true. There are many people who are incarcerated because of someone who bore false witness against them. There are many relationships that have been destroyed because of false witnesses. God requires that his people be honest and truthful. That is also the criteria for good relationships.

#### #10 – THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOR’S HOUSE, THOU SHALT NOT COVET THY NEIGHBOR’S WIFE, OR HIS MANSERVANT, OR HIS MAIDSERVANT, OR HIS OX, OR HIS ASS, OR ANYTHING THAT IS THY NEIGHBOR’S.

Covetousness is defined as an intense desire to possess something (or someone) that belongs to another. This sin stems from greed and self-centeredness. The bible is literally full of warnings against this sin. Some such scriptures are: (Joshua 7:21, Romans 7:7, 2 Peter 2:10, just to name a few.

When someone fully trusts God, there is no need to focus on that which belongs to another. God has promised to supply ALL of our needs. He also promises us that if we would seek his kingdom and all his righteousness that all that we need would be added unto us. (St. Matthew 6:33). Jesus warns us in scripture: “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses. (Luke 12:15)

