

# The Ten Commandments

The Bible reveals the written transcript of God's will in the form of the Ten Commandments. Let us explore the richness of God's law.

"I have more understanding than all my teachers: for Thy testimonies are my meditation."—Psalm 119:99.

We will be taking a deeper look at the last six commandments. The Bible tells us that "the commandment [is] holy, and just, and good" (Romans 7:12). When the Bible says that the commandment is holy, what does this mean?

"For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness."—1 Thessalonians 4:7.

God has called us to holiness; this means that it is His will for us to be holy. Just prior to this, Paul states:

"For this is the will of God, even your sanctification."—1 Thessalonians 4:3.

Thus, we see that sanctification and holiness are the same; they are found in obedience to the Ten Commandments. It is a requirement, for anyone who desires to see God, to be holy.

"Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord."—Hebrews 12:14. Also see Psalm 119:165.

The Ten Commandments consists of eight things to abstain from and two things to perform. The language of this law can be summed up as: "Don't despise God" and "Do not hurt others." The language of the law birthed an understanding that persisted until the time of Christ: "Whatsoever you would not want done to you, do not do it to others." This accurately depicts the language of the law. However, Christ summed up the law as follows:

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."—Matthew 7:12.

Though the law largely consists of commands to inaction, God says the fulfillment of it is found in action. So what if we turned all the commandments into calls to action instead of calls to inaction? "Thou shalt not kill" would become "Thou shalt give life." How can mortal man give life to others?

"Death and life are in the power of the tongue: and they that love it shall eat the fruit thereof."—

Proverbs 18:21.

It would seem that this command also calls us to use our tongues to give life and healing; and this is no new idea.

"There is that speaketh like the piercings of a sword: but the tongue of the wise is health."—Proverbs 12:18.

The Bible directly links our words to the health of others. We are not suppose to speak words that pierce and hurt others.

"A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit."—Proverbs 15:4.

This verse directly compares a wholesome tongue to the tree of life and a perverse (corrupt; obstinate; cantankerous) tongue to a breach (a crack, break, or rupture) in the spirit or piercings (causing pains) in the heart. Whether we give life or death to others is greatly affected by the use of our tongue. A quick study on the Hebrew word for "wholesome" gives these two Bible texts:

"Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health [wholesomeness] to the bones."—Proverbs 16:24.

"My son, attend to My words; incline thine ear unto My sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health (wholesomeness) to all their flesh."—Proverbs 4:20-22.

If we would obey the command of God, we must speak only pleasant words, especially the words of God. These last two Bible texts perfectly illustrate that the Ten Commandments are not merely a list of things we shouldn't do; calls to action are hidden within them. Let us look at a few more verses about the tongue:

"An hypocrite with his mouth destroyeth his neighbour."—Proverbs 11:9.

If we destroy our neighbors with our mouths, the Bible says we are hypocrites. It makes an even stronger statement than this:

"A lying tongue hateth those that are afflicted by it; and a flattering mouth worketh ruin."—Proverbs 26:28.

This is a very significant statement, considering

2 what John says about hatred:

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.”—1 John 3:15.

Would it be a stretch to say that whoever lies to his brother is a murderer?

“Ye are of your father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.”—John 8:44.

Jesus said that Satan is the father of lies and a murder since his first lie. In a psalm, David asked God:

“Who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour.”—Psalm 15:1-3.

It is the holy who see God; it is said of them:

“In their mouth was found no guile.”—Revelation 14:5.

How about “Thou shalt not steal”? This command would become “Thou shalt give what is thine own.” Did not Jesus give the following command?

“Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.”—Luke 6:38. (“Withal” means with the same measure, in the same way.)

Christ taught that we should give to others for their benefit. This groundbreaking doctrine is no new idea. There are a great deal of blessings associated with giving. Foremost, God promises to restore whatever you have lent to the poor.

“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will He pay him again.”—Proverbs 19:17.

Whenever we give of ourselves to those who are needy, Christ takes it personally. He shall say:

“Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me.”—Matthew 25:40.

There are many who, instead of throwing it away, give their old junk to people who are more needy than themselves. Do these people remember that they are giving these things to Christ? Christ says:

“For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?”—Matthew 5:46.

We are commanded:

“Give to every man that asketh of thee; and

of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again.”—Luke 6:30.

“When thou makest a dinner or a supper, call not thy friends, nor thy brethren, neither thy kinsmen, nor thy rich neighbours; lest they also bid thee again, and a recompence be made thee. But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind: and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee: for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.”—Luke 14:12-14.

Many professed followers of Christ are little more than unfaithful stewards, spending their Master’s resources upon themselves and their friends. One can cultivate a reputation for being magnanimous (showing a courageous spirit, nobility of feeling, and generosity) but really be burying their talent in the earth. The gift of riches does not profit if it is not properly invested and there is no eternal harvest. The gained cars, houses, stocks, bitcoins, and reputations are destroyed, and the owner, having buried his talent in the filth of the world, with nothing to show for it, stands before God. Christ points to the law and says, “You were commanded to live your life to benefit others. I gave you resources; I gave you wealth; I gave you health; I gave you a strong mind; I gave you time to win people to My kingdom. Instead you wasted them upon the lusts of the flesh, the lusts of the eyes, and the pride of life.”

“And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.”—Matthew 7:23.

Please note, this command is not a call to support the lazy and indolent.

“We commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat. For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies.”—2 Thessalonians 3:10-11.

“But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”—1 Timothy 5:8.

God calls us to support specific classes of people, like the widows and the fatherless and others we are called to help:

“Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ.”—Galatians 6:2.

Bearing the burden of another rarely consists in throwing money at a problem until it is gone. It is often a commitment that involves toil and hardship. To use a common illustration: God doesn’t want us to give people fish, but to teach them how to fish.

“Thou shalt not commit adultery” would be-

come “Thou shalt be faithful to your spouse.” Jesus tells us:

“He that is faithful in that which is least is faithful also in much: and he that is unjust in the least is unjust also in much.”—Luke 16:10.

Faithfulness is a trait of character that can only be developed in little things. Those who are unfaithful in the little things will be unfaithful in the big things too. Faithfulness begins in the mind; if we cannot be faithful in our thoughts, we will not be faithful in our actions.

“I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.”—Matthew 5:28.

Marriage is often used to illustrate our covenant relationship with God. Those who wish to be faithful to their spouse must first be faithful to God. This demonstrates the words of James:

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”—James 2:10.

If we break one of the last six commandments, we have also broken the first four. Those who are faithful to God, when tempted to be unfaithful to their spouse, will say “How then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:9). No man alive is above adultery; he would have to be stronger than Samson, wiser than Solomon, more righteous than David, and have more faith than Abraham. But every child of God can inherit the faithfulness of their Heavenly Father if they so desire. There are many unrighteous people who must forsake their thoughts; they cannot deceive a God who can read every thought and intent of the heart.

“Thou shalt not bear false witness” would become “Thou shalt bear true witness of thy neighbor.” We are told that “a true witness delivereth souls” (Proverbs 14:25). If we would obey the law, we must tell people where they stand in the sight of God. We must give an account for every person we leave unwarned.

“When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand.”—Ezekiel 3:18.

Every person who receives the gospel is duty bound to share it. We are to preach Christ, “warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus” (Colossians 1:28).

The reason persecution slumbers is because we are not being the salt of the earth. Salt is used to prevent corruption, thus preserving food. If we do not warn people, we are as salt that has lost it’s

savor (taste or smell of something). We are outcasts of heaven and of society. A verbal warning is not always necessary; often our actions, themselves, are louder than words. But let none make this an excuse to not lift up their voice like a trumpet. Through our actions and words, we must bear true witness of our neighbors and of each other. A trumpet is used to illustrate the startling, piercing things we must say in warning. The Word of God is as a sword that pierces the heart, discerning the thoughts and intents of the heart. (See Hebrews 4:12). The trumpet is not used to illustrate how many people should hear what another has done.

“He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth very friends.”—Proverbs 17:9.

“Thou shalt not covet” would become “Thou shalt be content with the things you have.” God has made us priests. He says, “Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood” (1 Peter 2:9). The Levites were priests of God, and it was said of them:

“Wherefore Levi hath no part nor inheritance with his brethren; the Lord is his inheritance, according as the Lord thy God promised him.”—Deuteronomy 10:9.

Christ is our inheritance; therefore, “let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for He hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee” (Hebrews 13:5). We should not be vainly seeking for more, expecting things to give us greater quality of life. Many feel no contentment because they do not recognize the value of their relationship with Christ. Jesus tells us:

“Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.”—Luke 12:15.

Our quality of life is not dependent on what we have, but on whether or not we know Christ and are partakers of His sufferings. If we have Christ, all our needs will be provided; and if we are content with Him, the Bible says, “Godliness with contentment is great gain” (1 Timothy 6:6). Our things can be taken, our family can pass away, our friends can betray us, and yet we may still say, “The Lord is my portion; therefore, I will hope in Him. I have an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled that fadeth not away and is reserved for me in heaven. Christ is my surety; no man is able to pluck me from His hand. I will hold fast what I have; for I know that my Redeemer liveth.”

“Honor thy father and thy mother” would become “Don’t dishonor thy father and mother.” The book of Proverbs gives us some insight into this command:

“He that wasteth his father, and chaseth away his mother, is a son that causeth shame, and

bringeth reproach.”—Proverbs 19:26.

4 Those who take from their father without giving anything in return are dishonoring him. A son who drives away his mother, when she comes to him for help is dishonoring his mother.

“Whoso curseth his father or his mother, his lamp shall be put out in obscure darkness.”—Proverbs 20:20.

A lamp that is put out in darkness involves a loss of intellect. We are not to curse our parents, even in our hearts. We are told to listen and respect what our parents say:

“Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and despise not thy mother when she is old.”—Proverbs 23:22.

The Bible tells us that in no way should we rob our parents:

“Whoso robbeth his father or his mother, and saith, It is no transgression; the same is the companion of a destroyer.”—Proverbs 28:24.

We rob them by withholding affection and attention, by forgetting them in their old age, and by neglecting to care for them with our own substance.

“The eye that mocketh at his father, and despiseth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley shall pick it out, and the young eagles shall eat it.”—Proverbs 30:17.

This verse means that a person who disrespects and disobeys their parents will face severe consequences, symbolized by being “picked out and eaten by birds of prey,” They will be food in the great feast that God will make for the birds (*Revelation 19:17, Ezekiel 39:17*). But Ephesians 6:1 indicates that we should not disobey God in order to honor our parents. If we are disowned for honoring God, let us not forget Matthew 19:29:

“Every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name’s sake, shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life.”

This command goes deeper than just our earthly parents:

“My son, keep thy father’s commandment, and forsake not the law of thy mother.”—Proverbs 6:20.

We also have a heavenly Father who has given us commandments. He has given us of His substance; every good gift comes from Him. When we take of His, without giving back through tithes and

offerings, He is dishonored. When we curse Him, we go into obscure darkness. And if we mock Him with our eyes, they will be plucked out during the great supper for birds. We have a mother too:

“But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all.”—Galatians 4:26.

The New Jerusalem is the bride of Christ, God’s last-day remnant church that looks to their temple in heaven. If we refuse to labor for our heavenly mother; if we curse her; if we despise to obey her, when we are told to do things in line with what our heavenly Father says; if we rob her of our talents, money, or influence, our eyes will not be safe from those hungry birds. Let none deceive you; respecting the church (in the Lord) is part of the Ten Commandments. I pray our study today has shed some light on the breadth of the law.

“The Lord has taken infinite pains to teach men by giving them His law. This law is to govern the world. It demands perfect obedience from rich and poor, high and low. Its divine requirement is that we love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves. Its principles are binding upon the angels and upon all human intelligences. ‘Sin is the transgression of the law’ [1 John 3:4]. This is the only definition of sin. Without the law there can be no transgression. ‘By the law is the knowledge of sin’ [Romans 3:20]. The standard of righteousness is exceeding broad, prohibiting every evil thing.”—*Letters and Manuscripts (1899), Volume 14, Manuscript 27, par. 1.*

It is evident that Christ came to show men the breadth of His law. He came to teach what had been lost through narrow-mindedness and legalism. May each of us attain unto the perfection of character, attained through faith in Jesus and earnest effort. Truly the law is holy and just and good. Jesus is what perfect obedience to the law looks like. Let’s keep our eyes on Him, so we can be changed into His image.

*For a finished work,*



**Jonathan Taylor**

*Wisdom is justified of all her children. -Luke 7:35*

*More Food for the Little Flock —*