

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

STUDY AND DISCUSSION GUIDE

FOR

INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES AND GROUPS

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The Ten Commandments

Lesson 1 – Introduction

LAW (Hebrew , *tórâ* “teaching, instruction”; Greek *nomos*). A term employed almost 200 times in the Bible and signifying the revealed will of God with respect to human conduct. ¹

True / False

- ___ Laws define right and wrong.
- ___ Laws distinguish right from wrong.
- ___ There is always a penalty for violating a law.
- ___ Crime doesn't pay.
- ___ If I'm willing to pay the fine if caught, then it's OK to drive above the speed limit.
- ___ God wrote The Ten Commandments on stone tablets, using his finger. [Exodus 24:12; 31:18]
- ___ God spoke The Ten Commandments directly to the people. [Exodus 20:1]

The “Old Testament Laws” can be placed into three categories:

1. Civil – related to laws of public behavior and penalties
2. Levitical – related to the worship of God
3. Moral – related to right and wrong

These laws were given to a specific group of people at a specific time. Which of these, if any, might apply to us today? _____

Read Romans 3:20. What is the purpose of the law? _____

Read Galatians 3:19-25. What is the purpose of the law? _____

The Ten Commandments are recorded in two passages in the Bible.

1. Exodus 20:1-17
2. Deuteronomy 5:6-21

List each of the Ten Commandments, using one of the above passages.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

Draw a ↑ beside the commandments that directly relate to our behavior toward God, and a → next to the commands that directly relate to our behavior toward others.

- ____ relate toward God
____ relate toward others

Circle any of these laws that you have broken.

Read James 2:10. Which of these statements best describes you?

- ____ I have kept the whole law.
____ I may have broken a few laws, but it's not really that bad.
____ I am guilty of breaking all of God's law.
____ I'd like to know more about this.

How does this make you feel?

- ____ Confused ____ Guilty ____ Defiant
____ Grateful ____ Afraid ____ Indifferent

Read Matthew 22:36-40. How did Jesus summarize these 10 commandments?

1. _____
2. _____

Footnotes:

1. New Unger's Bible Dictionary

The Ten Commandments

Lesson 2 – The Supremacy of God

Exodus 20:2-3 (NIV): “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.”

What are some things that only God can do?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Create | <input type="checkbox"/> Make a mistake |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Know everything | <input type="checkbox"/> Create something from nothing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Forgive your sins | <input type="checkbox"/> Know who’s been naughty and nice |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Never make a mistake | <input type="checkbox"/> Make a rock so heavy he can’t lift it |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Raise the dead | <input type="checkbox"/> Know what every sparrow is doing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____ |

Before giving His first commandment – “you shall have no other gods before me” – God reminded His people of recent history – being brought out of Egypt. What are some of the “unusual” things that happened during their rescue?

- Moses was raised as Egyptian royalty, but then became a shepherd in the wilderness.
- God called Moses from the wilderness to return to Egypt and appear before Pharaoh.
- Moses performed many signs before Pharaoh.
- Many plagues afflicted Egypt.
- Samson killed thousands with the jawbone of a donkey.
- The people fled through the Red Sea, which then drowned much of Pharaoh’s army.
- The Cubs won the World Series.
- Water came from rock when the people needed water.
- The people were fed with manna and quail.

When God reminded His people, “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery,” what might He have wanted them to understand?

- Only a real God could have done these things.
- I am better off here with God than I was as a slave in Egypt.
- None of the other “gods” we’ve heard of could have done these things.
- _____
- _____

Miracle: In general terms miracles may be defined as supernatural manifestations of divine power in the external world, in themselves special revelations of the presence and power of God. ¹

Put it in your own words: what is the purpose of the miracles that God has done? _____

What do you think? Considering all of the world religions, how many gods exist? _____

How do we show that something is a priority in our lives?

_____ Thoughts	_____ Activities
_____ Actions	_____ Time
_____ Feelings	_____ Attitudes
_____ Money and other resources	_____ _____

Read 1 John 5:3. How do we show our love for God? _____

A burden is something that is “oppressive or worrisome”². According to 1 John 5:3, are God’s commands oppressive or worrisome? Yes | No

According to 1 John 5:3, is putting God first in our lives oppressive or worrisome? Yes | No

Who benefits by obeying God’s commands?

_____ Me	_____ God
_____ Others	_____ No one

Who benefits by making God the number one priority in life?

_____ Me	_____ God
_____ Others	_____ No one

Based on what you spend most of your time doing and thinking about, what would you say is currently the top priority in your life? _____

Footnotes:

1. New Unger’s Bible Dictionary

2. Merriam-Webster OnLine

The Ten Commandments

Review

Write the commandments that have been studied so far.

1. _____

The Ten Commandments

Lesson 3 – A Picture’s Worth Only a Thousand Words

Exodus 20:4-6 (NIV): “You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.”

Exodus 2:4-5 (The Message): “No carved gods of any size, shape or form of anything whatever, whether of things that fly or walk or swim. Don’t bow down to them and don’t serve them...”

What do you think of this common expression: “A picture’s worth a thousand words.”

_____ True _____ False _____

Do you recognize the picture to the right? What is it? ¹

What are some things that you can learn by looking at this picture?

- _____ The model was a woman
- _____ The model’s name was Mona Lisa
- _____ The model’s name was Lisa Gherardini
- _____ The picture is called Mona Lisa
- _____ The painter was a man
- _____ The painter was Leonardo da Vinci
- _____ Mona Lisa was a happy woman
- _____ Mona Lisa was a mother
- _____ Mona Lisa had dark hair
- _____ It was painted in Italy
- _____ It is currently on display at the Louvre in Paris
- _____ “Mona” means “My Lady”, so we might call the portrait “My Lady Lisa”
- _____ What Lisa Gherardini looked like
- _____ What Lisa Gherardini acted like
- _____ What Lisa Gherardini believed about God
- _____ What Lisa Gherardini liked to eat



How well acquainted are you with Lisa Gherardini after looking at this portrait?

0 ---- 1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6 ---- 7 ---- 8 ---- 9 ---- 10

(not at all)

(very well)

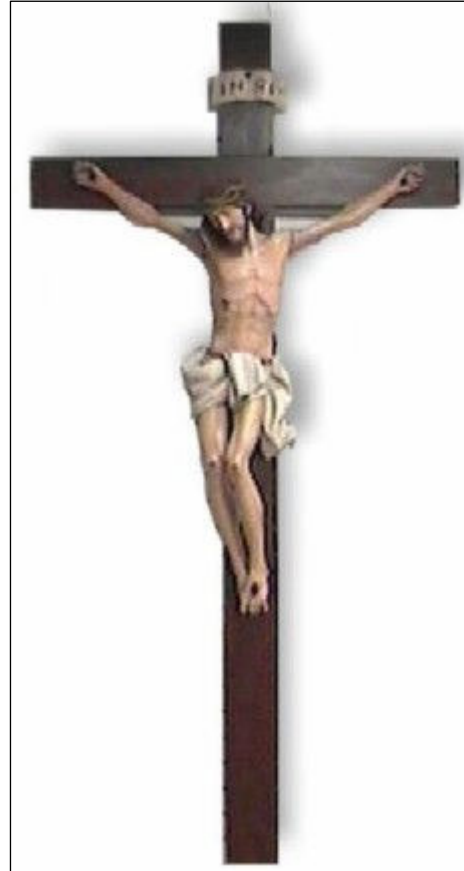
Do you recognize the wood carving to the right?

What is it? ² _____

A crucifix depicts Christ's death on the cross. It might be a sculpture, a carving, a picture, or a piece of jewelry.

What does the crucifix reveal about Jesus?

- He died on a cross
- He is God
- He rose from the dead
- He is King of Kings
- He was involved in the creation of the world
- He's wimpy, and vaguely feminine
- He's white
- He loves you
- He died to redeem you



How well does this image represent Christ?

0 ---- 1 ---- 2 ---- 3 ---- 4 ---- 5 ---- 6 ---- 7 ---- 8 ---- 9 ---- 10

(not at all)

(very well)

Read Exodus 32:1-6. While God was teaching Moses on the mountain, the people became anxious, having neither the presence of God nor their leader. They wanted something that they could see that would represent God.

Do you ever wish that God was more tangible?

- Yes
- No

God’s people wanted a tangible God. Therefore, Aaron made an idol in the shape of a calf. Was this calf to represent the true God, or a false God? Verse 5 suggests that Aaron may have intended the calf to represent the true God.

What do you think? Is a calf a good representation of God?

_____ Yes

_____ No

Why or why not? _____

What are some of the dangers of using images of God?

_____ An image is an incomplete representation of God.

_____ Over time, we may “forget” God’s attributes not shown in the image.

_____ We may focus too much on what is represented in the image.

_____ The image (whether carving, painting, jewelry, stone statue) may become more important than God.

_____ It may give the wrong impression to unbelievers.

_____ God says not to do it.

_____ It might represent a false God instead of the true God.

_____ It’s not good for me.

_____ _____
_____ _____

“No image constructed by human hands could ever accurately represent the totality, the transcendency, and the majesty of God.” — Bill Hybels³

Footnotes:

1. Mona Lisa, by Leonardo da Vinci, on display in the Louvre
2. From the Conrad Moroder Art Studio, www.moroder.com
3. *Engraved On Your Heart*, Bill Hybels, page 27

The Ten Commandments

Review

Write the commandments that have been studied so far.

1. _____

2. _____

The Ten Commandments

Lesson 4 – The Name of the Lord

Exodus 20:7 (NIV): “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.”

Exodus 20:7 (The Message): “No using the name of God, your God, in curses or silly banter; God won’t put up with the irreverent use of his name.”

Fun Fact: The phrase “the name of the Lord” occurs 99 times in the NIV version of the Bible.

What are some ways to misuse the name of God?

- Cursing
 - Swearing or oath-taking
 - Referring to God disrespectfully
 - Referring to God lightly
 - Saying “God bless you” after some one sneezes
 - Saying “Oh my God” when you’re surprised or shocked
 - Saying “Oh my gosh” when you’re surprised or shocked
 - Claiming that something is from God or about God when it really isn’t
-

If you hear a stranger misuse the name of God (either in real life, or in a movie or book), what do you think?

- That person must not be a Christian.
 - I wish that he’d stop that and be quiet.
 - Was that really necessary?
 - There’s some one that I don’t want to get to know.
-

Do you react differently when a friend, instead of a stranger, misuses the name of God?

- Yes
- No

Explain your answer: _____

Read Matthew 6:9. Jesus taught that the name God is to be _____.

Hallow, Hallowed – to set apart, consecrate; to make sacred. ¹

Read Leviticus 24:10-16.

What was the crime? _____

What was the sentence? _____

Who was the judge? _____

What do you think of that crime and punishment?

____ Whoa. It seems pretty harsh to me.

____ It reveals how important this topic is to God.

____ I need to be careful.

____ _____

Why might people misuse the name of God?

____ They don't know any better.

____ They hear it all the time, and kind of picked it up.

____ They don't really think about it; it's just a habit.

____ They get angry and lose control.

____ They really are angry and want to misuse God's name

____ _____

Which of these statements best applies to you?

____ I've been misusing the name of God and need to stop.

____ I sometimes misuse God's name.

____ I rarely misuse God's name.

____ I never misuse God's name.

____ I've gotten so use to hearing God's name be misused that it doesn't really bother me anymore.

____ It really bothers me when I hear others misuse God's name.

____ _____

Read Luke 6:45. What is the true source of evil words? _____

What is the only remedy for an evil heart? _____

(Hint: Read Ezekiel 36:26 and 2 Corinthians 5:17)

One of the ten commandments relates to the proper use of God's name, so we know that it is important enough to make it into "the top 10". Jesus taught that God's name should be "hallowed" – honored and respected. If you aren't characterized by respecting God's name, then you can be assured that Jesus wants to help you change. Whether it's a matter of breaking a bad habit or receiving a new heart, Jesus can bring change into your life and your words.

Footnotes:

1. New Unger's Bible Dictionary

The Ten Commandments

Review

Write the commandments that have been studied so far.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

The Ten Commandments

Lesson 5 – A Special Day

Exodus 20:8-11 (NIV): “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

Exodus 20:8-11 (The Message): “Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Work six days and do everything you need to do. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to God, your God. Don’t do any work – not you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your servant, nor your maid, nor your animals, not even the foreign guest visiting in your town. For in six days God made Heaven, Earth, and sea, and everything in them; he rested on the seventh day. Therefore God blessed the Sabbath day; he set it apart as a holy day.”

In this, the fourth command, God instructs:

DO r _____

DO keep it h _____

DO NOT w _____

One of the meanings of “holy” is “set apart, distinct, different.” Thus, God instructed His people to treat the seventh day as different than the other six days. One way was work. His people were not to work on the seventh day. Something else is implied, and exemplified by Jesus in Luke 4:16. What was Jesus’ habit on the seventh day? _____

What happened there? _____

What day of the week is the first day of the week?

___ Monday ___ Thursday ___ Saturday

___ Tuesday ___ Friday ___ Sunday

___ Wednesday

What day of the week is the Sabbath, the seventh day of the week?

___ Monday ___ Thursday ___ Saturday

___ Tuesday ___ Friday ___ Sunday

___ Wednesday

The first day of the week is Sunday. The last day of the week (that is, the seventh day) is Saturday. Thus, the Sabbath day was Saturday. Why then do we go to church on Sunday? Read John 20:19, John 20:26, and Acts 20:7. Why do we treat the first day of the week, instead of the last day of the week, as our special day? _____

What do you think of that reasoning?

- _____ It's bogus; we should have church on Saturday.
- _____ Makes sense to me.
- _____ The important principle is to set apart one day in seven; it doesn't matter which day it is.
- _____ _____

Read Mark 2:27. Who benefits from the Sabbath Day?

- _____ God does; it must make Him feel better or something.
- _____ We do. Just like His other instructions, God designed it for our benefit.
- _____ _____

God was pretty specific about who shouldn't work on the Sabbath. Fortunately, he didn't mention doctors and nurses and waitresses, since health care and eating out are so important. What do you think?

- _____ God doesn't want one anyone to work on Sunday.
- _____ It's OK to work if you're saving a life, but not if you're serving food.
- _____ But wait, every one's got to eat, so working in a restaurant is OK, but certainly not in a Christian book store.
- _____ The one-in-seven principle is most important, but we can make Sunday "holy" by avoiding some things.

Some communities used to have "blue laws". Do you know what that is? In the general sense, a "blue law" is a law that enforces morality. What do you think?

- _____ That seems an apt description of every law
- _____ I'm confused about what that would be
- _____ _____

In a specific sense, blue laws usually prohibited certain activities on Sunday. For instance, it might prohibit the sale of alcohol on Sunday, prohibit every non-essential store from being open on Sunday, and so forth. What do you think?

_____ Did they really do that? It really used to be illegal for some stores to open on Sunday?

_____ Having a law to make people do what's right doesn't seem like a good idea to me.

_____ You can't legislate morality.

_____ Of course you can legislate morality. All laws are based on some one's morality.

_____ I'm glad that Target and Wal Mart and Hy Vee are open on Sunday.

_____ _____

Make a list of some things you can do to make Sunday be different than the other days of your week.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the LORD. – Isaiah 58:13-14a (NIV)

The Ten Commandments

Review

Write the commandments that have been studied so far.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____

The Ten Commandments

Lesson 6 – Honoring Parents

Exodus 20:12 (NIV): “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.”

This fifth commandment marks a turning point. The first four commandments concern our relationship with God. Once those are established, then the next six commandments relate to our relationship with others. Our relationship with others begins with our relationship with our parents.

Honor — a showing of usually merited respect; respect and esteem shown to another. ¹

Read Ephesians 6:2-3. How does Paul refer to this commandment? _____

What is the promise? _____

What condition must first be met? _____

What do you think? Is this a specific promise to individuals, or is this a general promise to society? Which of the following best describe this conditional promise?

_____ If I honor my father and mother, then I'll live a long time and have a good life

_____ If my society is characterized by children honoring their parents, then my society will prosper

God teaches through this commandment that honoring parents is:

_____ unrelated to the success of a society

_____ a contributing factor to an enduring society

_____ a foundational building block of an enduring society

_____ a good measure of society's health

What signs in our culture do you see that would indicate that children do honor their parents?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What signs in our culture do you see that would indicate that children do not honor their parents?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

What grade do you give American culture on “honoring parents”?

- ____ A
- ____ B
- ____ C
- ____ D
- ____ F

What grade do you give yourself on “honoring parents”?

- ____ A
- ____ B
- ____ C
- ____ D
- ____ F

What are some ways that we can show honor to our parents? The book of Proverbs suggests many ways. Here are just a few.

- Proverbs 1:8 _____
- Proverbs 4:10 _____
- Proverbs 5:1 _____
- Proverbs 10:1 _____
- Proverbs 10:5 _____
- Proverbs 19:26 _____

Make a list of some things that you can do to show honor to your parents, then identify which ones you are doing well at and which one could use some improvement.

- ___ Obedience (if you are still a child)
- ___ Having a thankful attitude
- ___ Expressing appreciation ✓ doing OK
- ___ Cooperation + needs improvement
- ___ Having a good attitude around home
- ___ Not being presumptuous
- ___ Listening to and considering advice
- ___ Respectful attitude
- ___ Looking for ways to be helpful
- ___ _____
- ___ _____
- ___ _____
- ___ _____

“Children living in the parental home should honor their parents by cooperating with them joyfully, respecting them, and expressing appreciation. Children living outside the family home should make sure their parents’ basic needs are met, ought to include them in family activities, and should communicate their love to them over and over again This commandment tells us that if we want to have a ‘right’ relationship with God, we have to have a ‘right’ relationship with our parents.” — Bill Hybels ²

Footnotes:
1. Merriam-Webster OnLine
2. *Engraved On Your Heart*, Bill Hybels, page 69, 71

The Ten Commandments

Review

Write the commandments that have been studied so far.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____

The Ten Commandments

Lesson 7 – Honoring Life

Exodus 20:13 (NIV and NASB): “You shall not murder.”

Exodus 20:13 (KJV): “Thou shalt not kill.”

“Murder” and “kill” are from the Hebrew word “ratsach”. In Strong’s Concordance, the word number is 7523 in the Hebrew concordance.

The *New American Standard Exhaustive Concordance* defines it as “ratsach (953d); a prim. root; to murder, slay:—killed(1), kills the manslayer(1), manslayer(18), murder(7), murdered(2), murderer(12), murderer shall be put(1), murderers(1), murders(1), put to death(1), slew(1).”

Strong’s Concordance defines it as “A primitive root; properly to dash in pieces, that is, kill (a human being), especially to murder.”

What do you think? In our use of English today, is there a difference between the words “murder” and “kill”?

_____ Yes

_____ No

If yes, what is the difference? _____

Read the following Scripture and identify the crime and corresponding punishment.

<i>Scripture</i>	<i>Crime</i>	<i>Punishment</i>
Genesis 9:6	_____	_____
Exodus 21:14	_____	_____
Exodus 21:22-25	_____	_____
Exodus 21:28	_____	_____
Exodus 21:29	_____	_____
Deuteronomy 19:4	_____	_____

What do you think? Does capital punishment qualify as “murder” and therefore is forbidden by this 6th command?

_____ Yes

_____ No

Read Matthew 5:21-22. What does Jesus compare to the sin of murder? _____

Now read Genesis 9:6 again. What is the motive for respecting life? _____

What is “the letter of the law” of this 6th commandment? _____

What is “the spirit of the law” of this 6th commandment? _____

What are some ways that you can obey this 6th commandment?

_____ Don't murder.

_____ Oppose abortion.

_____ Be a pacifist.

_____ Promote adoption.

_____ Promote social services for unwed mothers.

_____ Don't swat mosquitoes.

_____ Help old ladies cross the road.

_____ Repent of anger.

_____ Be a vegetarian.

_____ Take a vow of silence and live in a monastery.

_____ Honk for peace.

_____ Don't own a gun.

_____ Favor capital punishment.

_____ Oppose capital punishment.

_____ Don't be a cannibal.

The Ten Commandments

Review

Write the commandments that have been studied so far.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____

The Ten Commandments

Lesson 8 – Sexual Purity

Exodus 20:14 (NIV): “You shall not commit adultery.”

Match the following words with their definitions.

- | | | |
|---------------------|----|--|
| ___ adultery | A. | Sex between two persons, when neither are married to anyone |
| ___ fornication | B. | Sex between two people married to one another |
| ___ appropriate sex | C. | Sex between two people not married to each other, when at least one is married |

adultery: voluntary sexual intercourse between a married man and someone other than his wife or between a married woman and someone other than her husband ¹

Read Hebrews 13:4.

[NASB] Marriage *is to be held* in honor among all, and the *marriage bed is to be undefiled*; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

[NIV] Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.

[NLT] Give honor to marriage, and remain faithful to one another in marriage. God will surely judge people who are immoral and those who commit adultery.

If you are not yet married, then you might think that the seventh commandment doesn't have much to do with you. However, what does Hebrews 13:4 suggest about the seventh commandment?

- ___ God wants me to be sexually pure, whether I'm married or not
- ___ God will judge those who commit adultery
- ___ Adultery is just one kind of sexual immorality, and God will judge all sexual immorality
- ___ Adultery is just one kind of sexual immorality, but must be particularly serious to be singled out in the seventh commandment.

Read Leviticus 20:9-16. God lists various kinds of sexual immorality and consequences that were to be imposed. What does the consequence reveal about the seriousness of sexual conduct?

Read Matthew 5:27-28. How important does Jesus say your thoughts are?

- Less important than my actions
- As important as my actions
- More important than my actions

Read Matthew 15:19. What is the source of adultery? _____

Is this in harmony with Matthew 5:27-28? Yes No

What is the connection? _____

Consider these statistics ².

- 16.3 average age at which an “evangelical” first has sex
- 16.7 average age at which a “liberal protestant” first has sex
- 13.7% percentage of “young evangelicals” who have had three or more sexual partners
- 8.9% percentage of “other young people” who have had three or more sexual partners
- 18 average number of months that an abstinence pledge delays first sexual activity
- 12% the percentage of those who pledge abstinence that successfully wait until marriage
- “The 16% of American teenagers who say that their faith is ‘extremely important to their lives’ are living chastely.”

What do you conclude from statistics like these?

- Sexual purity is really hard to maintain
 - Sexual purity won’t happen by accident; it will be hard work
 - I need some guidelines and boundaries to help me maintain purity of thought and actions
 - The best time to commit to guidelines and boundaries is before there’s pressure
 - There is a connection between my commitment to God and my actions
 - God helps those committed to Him
 - My commitment motivates me to live right and please Him
-

Read John 8:4-11 and 1 John 1:9. Can God forgive sexual immorality?

_____ Yes

_____ No

Are you committed to sexual purity?

_____ Yes

_____ No, but I'd like to be

_____ No way

Footnotes:

1. Merriam-Webster OnLine

2. World, August 11, 2007, "Sex and the Evangelical Teen", Gene Edward Veith, page 9

The Ten Commandments

Review

Write the commandments that have been studied so far.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____

The Ten Commandments

Lesson 9 – Personal Property Rights

Exodus 20:15 (NIV): “You shall not steal.”

steal: to take the property of another wrongfully; to take or appropriate without right or leave and with intent to keep or make use of wrongfully; to take away by force or unjust means ¹

God permits (and perhaps even encourages) the private ownership of property. Can you think of examples in the Bible of ownership of property? Some examples are shown.

_____	_____	_____
Job was wealthy	_____	_____
Abraham was wealthy	_____	_____
Early church: believers sold property to share with others	_____	_____

Make a short list of some of the things that you own.

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Did you remember to include things like “a good reputation” and “good relationships with others” while making your list?

Put a ✓ by those items above that could be taken from you.

Is stealing ever justified? Mark the following “true” or “false”.

- ___ It’s ok to steal when I want something very much.
- ___ It’s ok to steal from the very rich.
- ___ It’s ok to steal from the very rich if I give to the poor.
- ___ It’s ok to steal from those that aren’t generous with what they have.
- ___ It’s ok to steal in order to feed myself or others.
- ___ It’s ok to steal if I need the money for life-saving medicine.
- ___ It’s ok to steal from my employer if he takes advantage of me.

Do you see an “exception clause” in any of the other commandments that we’ve looked at so far?

1. Have one God
2. Don’t make or worship idols
3. Don’t abuse God’s name Yes No
4. Keep the Sabbath day
5. Honor your parents
6. Don’t murder
7. Don’t commit adultery

Is stealing ever justified? Yes No

Did God give an exception clause? Yes No

Why do you think people tend to rationalize exceptions to this commandment when they are less likely to rationalize exceptions to the others that come before it? _____

Which of the following economic systems respect personal property rights?

capitalism: an economic system characterized by private or corporate ownership of capital goods, by investments that are determined by private decision, and by prices, production, and the distribution of goods that are determined mainly by competition in a free market ²

socialism: any of various economic and political theories advocating collective or governmental ownership and administration of the means of production and distribution of goods ³

communism: a theory advocating elimination of private property; a system in which goods are owned in common and are available to all as needed ⁴

What’s it called when the government takes from the rich to give to the poor?

- collecting taxes
- theft
- redistribution of wealth
- compassionate conservatism

This eighth commandment teaches that we are to respect the personal property rights of others.

How are we to consider our own property?

_____ As less important than eternal life (Luke 12:16-21)

_____ As less important than serving God (Matthew 6:33)

_____ As a resource to help other people (Acts 4:32-35)

_____ As something to be freely shared and given away (Matthew 5:38-42)

_____ To provide for the needs of our own family (1 Timothy 5:8)

Footnotes:

1. Merriam-Webster OnLine

2. Merriam-Webster OnLine

3. Merriam-Webster OnLine

4. Merriam-Webster OnLine

The Ten Commandments

Review

Write the commandments that have been studied so far.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____

The Ten Commandments

Lesson 10 – The Importance of Truth

Exodus 20:16 (NIV): “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.”

Exodus 20:16 (NLT): “You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.”

Exodus 20:16 (NASB): “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

Scholars say:

- *false*: “**8267**. שקר *šeqer*: A noun meaning a lie, vanity, without cause. This word is used of a lying witness (Dt 19:18); of false prophets (Je 5:31; 20:6; 29:9); of telling lies (Lev 19:12; Je 37:14); and of a liar (Pr 17:4). In other cases, it describes something done in vain (1Sa 25:21; Ps 33:17); or an action without cause (Ps 38:19 [20]; 119:78, 86).”¹
- *witness*: “**5707**. עד *’ēd*: A masculine noun meaning witness, testimony. It refers to someone who will be accepted to bear a true testimony in various situations for various reasons. It also refers to the testimony given, written or oral, such as a covenant (Ge 31:44; Dt 31:19,21); or a symbol established to confirm a covenant (Ge 31:48). The evidence itself may be called a witness (Ex 22:13 [12]). God Himself serves as a witness (Ge 31:50,52; Jos 22:27,28,34; Job 16:19).”²
- “The commandment is not a general prohibition against lies. The wording of the original commandment sets it firmly in the context of Israel's legal system. It prohibits perjury, or the giving of false testimony within the proceedings of the law court. Thus, it establishes a principle of truthfulness and carries implications with respect to false statements in any context. Within any nation, the courts of law must be able to operate on the basis of true information. If law is not based on truth and righteousness, then the very foundations of life and liberty are undermined. If legal testimony is true, there can be no miscarriage of justice; if it is false, the most fundamental of human liberties are lost. Thus, the commandment sought to preserve the integrity of Israel's legal system while guarding against encroachments on personal liberties. The principle is maintained in most modern legal systems—for example, in the taking of an oath before giving evidence in court. But in the last resort, the commandment points to the essential nature of truthfulness in all interpersonal relationships.”³
- “The ninth commandment emphasizes the importance of truthfulness. While the prohibition against false testimony was primarily intended for a court of law, it may be

extended to include any situation in which untrue words are used to harm another individual.”⁴

We might paraphrase the ninth commandment like this: “Do not be a lying witness.” Does this surprise you? That is, did you think that the ninth commandment was “do not lie”?

- _____ Yes
- _____ No

True or False?

- _____ an apple is a kind of fruit
- _____ a fruit is a kind of apple
- _____ giving false witness is a kind of lying
- _____ lying is a kind of giving false witness

So, if the ninth command isn't exactly “do not lie” (as it is most often paraphrased), then is it OK to lie? Read Proverbs 6:16-19, then list seven things that God detests.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____

Circle those that are related, directly or indirectly, to lying.

What was the first sin? (Caution: this is a trick question) _____

How did Satan tempt Adam and Eve to sin? _____

Read John 8:44. How does Jesus describe Satan?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Read John 14:6. How does Jesus describe himself?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Which of the following are lies?

- ___ Not telling the truth
- ___ Not telling all of the truth
- ___ Exaggerating the truth
- ___ Telling the truth in a way that causes another to doubt whether it is true
- ___ Saying one thing and doing another (1 John 2:4)

What do you think? When is lying justified?

- ___ To avoid hurting some one's feelings ("Yes, I just love your new outfit!")
- ___ To avoid personal inconvenience ("Sorry, I don't have time for that right now.")
- ___ To prevent injustice ("No, we are not hiding Jews in our house.")
- ___ To save a life (Exodus 1:15-20)
- ___ To avoid paying taxes ("I didn't receive any tips this year.")
- ___ When it's about Santa Claus ("And this present is from Santa.")
- ___ Never

Jesus described himself as "the truth". He always spoke the truth. As we become more like him, we will be more and more characterized by the truth.

Footnotes:

1. AMG Word Study Dictionary, Old Testament
2. AMG Word Study Dictionary, Old Testament
3. Tyndale Bible Dictionary
4. New Bible Commentary, 21st Century Edition

The Ten Commandments

Review

Write the commandments that have been studied so far.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

The Ten Commandments

Lesson 11 – The Importance of Contentment

Exodus 20:17 (NIV): “You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

Exodus 20:17 (The Message): “No lusting after your neighbor's house — or wife or servant or maid or ox or donkey. Don't set your heart on anything that is your neighbor's.”

covet: “2530. חָמַד *hāmad*, חָמַדָּה *h' mūdāh*, חָמַדָּה *h' mudāh*: A verb meaning to take pleasure in, to desire, to lust, to covet, to be desirable, to desire passionately. The verb can mean to desire intensely even in its simple stem: the tenth commandment prohibits desiring to the point of coveting, such as a neighbor's house, wife, or other assets.”¹

covet: “to wish for earnestly; to desire (what belongs to another) inordinately or culpably; to feel inordinate desire for what belongs to another.”²

Have you ever:

- ___ Wanted something so much that it was all you could think about?
- ___ Wanted something so much that you actually wished that something bad would happen to some one else so that you could get it? (Some one gets fired, loses the starting position on the team, flunks the test, etc.)
- ___ Wanted something so much that you were willing to steal to get it?
- ___ Been unable to be happy for some one else's good fortune because you were jealous?
- ___ Thought that it's not fair that some one else has something and you don't?

If you have, then you understand what “coveting” is.

Bill Hybels writes:

Every year my dad bought a new car, put 40,000 miles on it without changing the oil or having it serviced, and then traded it back to the Ford dealer for a new one.

Every year, the Ford dealer would say, “Well, Harold, can I talk you

into some options this year?"

"Just a heater," Dad would say.

"Well, what about a color?" the dealer would ask.

"Cheap," Dad would answer. "Any color that's cheap. I like cheap colors."

Even Dad's wardrobe reflected his indifference to the material world. For one ten-year stretch, he wore nothing but black slacks and white shirts. And he bought his shoes by the case – all the same style and the same color. When people joked about it, he'd say, "It's one less decision I have to make. I reach into the closet and take the end shirt and the end pair of pants. No muss. No fuss. That's the way I like it." He was so disciplined, so disinterested in frills, so hard to excite ... except when it came to Harley-Davidson motorcycles.

After he got his first thrill of the road on a big bike, within two years we had six of them in the garage – two big ones for Dad, one each for my brother and me, and models for my sisters!

One time a close friend of Dad's asked him if he could borrow his Harley to take on a short trip. Dad had a reputation for being generous with what he owned, so this man – a competent biker – didn't anticipate any problems. However, an uncomfortable silence met his request.

Finally, Dad said, "You can sleep in my house, you can drive my car, you can sail my boat, you can fly my plane – but please, please don't ask to use my Harley!"

I think most of us are a little like my dad. We have one little weak spot. Whether it's a motorcycle, a home, a boat, clothes, books, stamps, jewelry, furniture, art, music, horses, etc., most of us have a weakness that occasionally gives way to runaway desires.³

Do you have such weak spots in your life? What are they?

- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

From your experience, what usually happens shortly after you acquire what you've been consumed by?

_____ It gets scratched or marred.

_____ My love for it wears off quickly.

_____ It breaks.

_____ It isn't as satisfying as I thought it would be.

_____ I find something else to start dreaming and thinking about.

_____ I learn that it was a complete rip-off.

Read:

- Hebrews 13:5
- 1 Timothy 6:7-8
- Philippians 4:10-13

What is the antidote to coveting? _____

How would you rate your contentment?

Discontented 1--2--3--4--5--6--7--8--9--10 **Very Contented**

What do you *deserve* from God? (For a hint, see Romans 6:23) _____

What does God offer you instead? _____

We've identified three weapons that you can use against covetousness:

1. Realism (experience shows that it won't be satisfying)
2. Contentment (with what God has given me)
3. Gratefulness (that I don't get what I deserve)

Which of these do you think will be the most helpful to you? Circle it.

Footnotes:

1. AMG Word Study Dictionary, Old Testament
2. Merriam-Webster OnLine
3. *Engraved On Your Heart*, Bill Hybels, pages 138-139

The Ten Commandments

Review

Write all ten of the commandments that have been studied.

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____
- 4. _____
- 5. _____
- 6. _____
- 7. _____
- 8. _____
- 9. _____
- 10. _____

The Ten Commandments

Conclusion

Read Romans 3:20. What is the purpose of the law? _____

Read Galatians 3:19-25. What is the purpose of the law? _____

Read Matthew 22:36-40. How did Jesus summarize these 10 commandments?

1. _____

2. _____

What is God saying to you? What one or two things stand out from these lessons and the related discussions?

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