

CALVARY CHAPEL OF PHILADELPHIA

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY

KINDERGARTEN

TEACHER'S PACKET

SUNDAY MORNING

Study 21

The Ten Commandments



The Ten Commandments

The Objective is the key concept for this week's lesson. It should be the main focus of the study.

These are the key verses that you will find helpful in teaching your study this week. The "Main passage" is the basis of the study, where the other verses support the objective of the lesson.

There is a memory verse for the students that relates to every study. If a student can memorize the verse for the following week you may give them a prize from the "reward box" found on your cart.

An introductory activity or question that will settle the class, draw their attention to the study and prepare their hearts for God's Word.

Objective The goal of this lesson is to have the students learn the Ten Commandments and what they mean.

Key Verses

Exodus 20 (Exodus 19 gives the background of how God gave Moses the commandments).

Ephesians 6:1-3

Matthew 5:21-22

Hebrews 13:5

Memory Verse - Exodus 14:31a (January memory Verse)

"Thus Israel saw the great work which the LORD had done in Egypt; so the people feared the LORD,"

Hook

Ask the students what they would do if there were no laws. Ask what they think would happen. What would people do if there were no laws? Then ask why they think we have laws.

In today's lesson, God is about to give laws to the children of Israel. Ask the students if they know the name of the most important rules (the Ten Commandments). Explain that "commandments" is another word for "rule" or "law."

What does the Bible say? This is where we will read a passage or series of passages that teach on the subject of the day.

The interpretation/exegesis of the passage. What does this passage mean? How does this passage apply to my life?

BOOK

Now that God had brought the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt, God needed to show the people of Israel what it meant that they were going to be His special people. Part of that included God giving Israel laws to live by. God gave them hundreds of laws, but the most important of these were the Ten Commandments, which are found in Exodus 20. This lesson will look at the Ten Commandments and what each of them means.

LOOK

The First Commandment said that Israel was to have no other gods before the Lord (verse 3). This means that we are not supposed to worship anyone or anything other than God. In the Israelites' day, that would have been idols. For us, it might be money, toys (possessions), friends, or even family. Anything we give more time, energy, and love than we give to the Lord is a false god. The Second Commandment forbids idols, or false images of God (verses 4-6). While there are some distinctions between the first two, for the kids' sake, this is reinforcing the first: no other gods besides God.

The Third Commandment forbids the misuse of the Lord's Name (verse 7). This includes several things, including using God's Name as a curse (e.g. "Oh my God"). God's Name is holy, and we are to treat it with respect. The Fourth Commandment commands Israel to keep the Sabbath holy (verses 8-11). The Sabbath was a day set aside for Israel not to do any work. While Christians are not required to keep the Sabbath the way that Israel did, we still set apart Sunday as a special day when we go to Church and worship God.

The Fifth Commandment tells us to honor our father and mother (verse 12). God views our obedience to our parents as a serious matter. In the New Testament, Paul points out in Ephesians 6:1-3 that this is the first commandment to include a promise: long life. We are first supposed to obey our parents because God says it is the right thing to do, but the second reason is because it is beneficial for us. Our parents are wise and know what is best for us because they have been in our place before. Even if we don't understand, we ought to obey. This commandment includes not just obedience, but also doing things that bless them such as cleaning your room without being told, not talking bad about them behind their back, etc. This is a good commandment to emphasize with the kids.

The Sixth Commandment bans murder (verse 13). While it is easy to think that we don't break this one, Jesus says in Matthew 5:21-22 that if we are angry at someone without a cause or insult someone, we have committed murder in our heart. It is wrong not only to actually kill

LOOK (Continued)

people, but even to wish they were dead. The Seventh Commandment, which forbids adultery (verse 14). You should not spend much time here, but it would be good to say that husbands and wives should stay married.

The Eighth Commandment says not to steal (verse 15). This verse isn't just talking about bank robbers and house thieves. If we take something that doesn't belong to us without asking, that is stealing. It could be a friend's toy, a snack from someone, money from our parents, etc. If it doesn't belong to you, you need to ask first.

The Ninth Commandment tells us not to lie (verse 16). This includes saying things that are not true, telling half-truths (a lie with truth mixed in), not saying the whole truth (leaving something out), and anything else that comes short of the full truth. For example, if a child were to hit his brother, it would be a lie to flat-out deny it ("I didn't hit him"), say something misleading ("I didn't *punch* him" but you did hit him), or mix a lie with the truth ("I hit him but it was an accident" when it really wasn't).

The Tenth and Final Commandment says not to covet (verse 17). Explain that coveting means wishing that someone else's things were yours. The Bible teaches us that we are to be content (Hebrews 13:5). After all, since we have Jesus, what else could we need? If we get something nice, that is fine, but if not, God wants us to spend time being thankful for what we do have rather than wishing for what we don't have. In addition to the Fifth Commandment, these final three (stealing, lying, coveting) would be good commandments to spend some extra time on.

What is my response to this passage of Scripture? How should my life change according to what this passage teaches me? What are the practical things I can do throughout the week to make this true in my life?

TOOK

Review the lesson by going through the commandments and having the students explain them in their own words.

Pray: Thank God for His great love for us and ask Him for help as we respond to that love by obeying His commandments.

Parent Question: How many of the 10 Commandments can you remember? What do they mean?

FURTHER STUDY

Exodus 20 Commentary by David Guzik

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

A. Four commandments regarding our conduct before God.

1. ([Exodus 20:1](#)) Preface to the Ten Commandments.

And God spoke all these words, saying:

a. **And God spoke:** It is proper to believe that **God spoke** these words to Israel as a whole, as they assembled together at the foot of Mount Sinai. There, *God answered him* [Moses] *by voice* ([Exodus 19:19](#)), as Moses stood among the people at the foot of Mount Sinai.

b. **God spoke all these words:** The following laws were not invented at Mount Sinai. A few aspects of the Mosaic Law show new revelation, but for the most part it simply clearly and definitely lays out God's law as it was written in the heart of man since the time of Adam.

i. "It is wrong to steal, or murder, or covet, not primarily because these sins are forbidden by the Decalogue. They are forbidden by the Decalogue, because they were previously forbidden by conscience; and they are forbidden by conscience because they are forbidden by the nature of things; and the nature of things is God." (Meyer)

ii. "It has been well said that the commandments are God's nature expressed in terms of moral imperatives." (Cole)

iii. In his book *The Abolition of Man*, C.S. Lewis explained how there certainly is a universal morality among men. He gave concrete examples of how all cultures in the past were able to agree on the basics of morality because these principles are implanted in the heart and mind of mankind.

iv. All cultures have said murder is wrong, and kindness is good. All agree that we have particular obligations to our family. All say that honesty is good and that a man cannot have any woman he wants. They agree that stealing is wrong, and that justice is good. There are no cultures where cowardice is good, and bravery is bad.

d. **God spoke all these words:** We *need* God to morally instruct and guide us. Though these principles resonate with the human conscience (both individually and collectively), they are certainly *not* the only influence upon our thinking and behavior. We *need* to know that there is a God in heaven who expects certain moral behavior and that there are consequences from obeying or disobeying these commands.

e. **God spoke all these words:** The Bible tells us that the law is holy, just, and good ([Romans 7:12](#)). It tells us that every good and perfect gift comes from God ([James 1:17](#)). These commandments are *good* gifts that came to Israel and humanity at Mount Sinai. The Ten Commandments are good because:

- They show the wise moral guidance and government of God.
- They answer the need of mankind for moral guidance and government.
- They give us a way to teach morality.
- They would make the world so much better if obeyed.
- They are good for all humanity; some of the Law of Moses is specific unto Israel, but the Ten Commandments are universal.

- They are good when they are promoted and held as ideals, even when they are not perfectly obeyed.

- i. "The 'ten words' are at once the beginning and the heart of the Mosaic revelation." (Cole)

- f. **God spoke all these words:** It is important for us to know, understand, receive, and obey all of these commandments in a fully Biblical perspective, also taking into account what the rest of the Book of Exodus the New Testament also tells us about the law of God.

- i. The Ten Commandments were never given with the thought that one might earn heaven by obeying them all perfectly or adequately. The covenant God made with Israel at Mount Sinai was much bigger than the law, though that was its first and perhaps most dramatic aspect. Another aspect of the covenant was *sacrifice*, which was given because both God and Israel knew that it was impossible for them to keep this law perfectly, and they must depend on the sacrifice of an innocent victim as a substitute for the guilty law-breaker. In this sense, the Ten Commandments were like a mirror that showed Israel their need for sacrifice.

- ii. These Ten Commandments can also be summarized as Jesus did in [Matthew 22:35-40](#): *Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" Jesus said to him, "'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets."* This simplification doesn't eliminate the Ten Commandments; it fulfills them, showing us the heart and desire of God for His people. The problem is that we haven't kept the two commandments either, much less the ten.

- iii. More importantly, we know that Jesus Himself was the only one to ever keep the law perfectly — either in the ten or the two. He never needed to sacrifice for His own sin, so could be the perfect sacrifice for our sin. Wonderfully, *His obedience is credited to those who put their love and trust in Him*. [Romans 8:2-3](#) puts it this way: *For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.* This is God's amazing promise to those who repent and believe on Jesus.

- iv. The law is a schoolmaster to us ([Galatians 3:22-25](#)). Before God's plan of salvation in Jesus Christ was fully evident, we were *kept under guard by the law* — both in the sense of being bound by the law, but also held in protective custody. The law, through its revelation of God's character and its exposure of our sin, prepares us to come to Jesus — but after we have come, we no longer have to live under our tutor (though we remember the behavior he has taught us).

- v. From the perspective of the entire Bible, we can say that the law of God has three great purposes and uses:

- It is a guardrail, keeping humanity on a moral path.
- It is a mirror, showing us our moral failure and need for a savior.
- It is a guide, showing us the heart and desire of God for His people.

- vi. "The great message of the Christian faith is, therefore, that we are free from the Law's condemnation in order that we may be able to fulfill its obligation by the power of [Jesus] within us." (Redpath)

- vii. "My obedience therefore is not legal, but inspired by love and empowered by God's Holy Spirit. Does New Testament grace allow a lower standard than Old Testament law? The standard under grace is higher." (Redpath)

- viii. The Ten Commandments are often organized into two groups. The first four focus on our conduct toward God, and the next six on our conduct toward one another.

2. ([Exodus 20:2-3](#)) The first commandment: **no other gods before Me.**

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

a. **I am the LORD your God:** In the ancient world (including Egypt), men worshipped many gods. Here Yahweh (**the LORD**), the covenant God of Israel, set Himself apart from any of the other supposed deities.

i. In these first few words, God both reminded and taught Israel essential facts or principles about who He is, about His nature.

- *God is above nature*; He is not merely the personification of fire, or the wind, or the sun, or the sky, or any other created thing.

- *God is personal*; He is not a depersonalized force; He relates with and communicates to man in an understandable way. God has a mind, a will, a voice, and so forth.

- *God is good*; He had done good for Israel and now does good for them in giving these commands, the keeping of which not only pleases Him, but is genuinely best for humanity.

- *God is holy*; He is different than the supposed gods of the pagans, and He therefore also expects His people to be different.

ii. It seems that the *structure* of these commands and covenant were familiar in the ancient world. “Most scholars point to the similarity between this historical prologue (followed by its stipulations, witnesses, and provisions for succession) and the great suzerain-vassal treaty forms of the ancient Near East.” (Kaiser)

b. **Who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage:** Before God commanded anything of Israel He reminded them what He had done for them. This was a clear foundation: because of who God is, and what He has done for us, He has the right to tell us what to do — and we have the obligation to obey Him.

i. “God did not promulgate a code of laws for the children of Israel, while they were in bondage, telling them that if they would obey it, He would deliver them. He brought them out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, and then gave them His law.” (Morgan)

ii. “God’s blessings are binders; every deliverance is a tie to obedience.” (Trapp)

c. **You shall have no other gods before Me:** The first commandment logically flowed from understanding who God was and what He had done for Israel. Because of that, nothing was to come **before** God and He was the only God we worship and serve.

i. In the days of ancient Israel, there was great temptation to worship the gods of materialism (such as *Baal*, the god of weather and financial success) and sex (such as *Ashtoreth*, the goddess of sex, romance, and reproduction), or any number of other local deities. We are tempted to worship the same gods, but without the old-fashioned names and images.

ii. It has been said (perhaps first by John Calvin) that human nature is like an idol factory that operates constantly. We constantly deal with the temptation to set all kinds of things before or competing with God and His preeminent place in our life.

d. **No other gods before Me:** This does not imply that it is permissible to have other gods, as long as they line up behind the true God. Instead the idea is that there are to be no other gods before the sight of the true God in our life. According to Cole, **before Me** is literally, *To My face*.

i. This means God demands to be more than *added* to our lives. We don’t just add Jesus to the life we already have. We must give Him all our life.

ii. Failure to obey this commandment is called *idolatry*. We are to flee idolatry ([1 Corinthians 10:14](#)). Those lives marked by habitual idolatry will not inherit the kingdom of God ([1 Corinthians 6:9-10](#), [Ephesians 5:5](#), [Revelation 21:8, 22:15](#)). Idolatry is a work of the flesh ([Galatians 5:19-20](#)), which marks our old life instead of the new ([1 Peter 4:3](#)), and we are not to associate with those who call themselves Christians who are idolaters ([1 Corinthians 5:11](#)).

3. ([Exodus 20:4-6](#)) The second commandment: **You shall not make for yourself any carved image... you shall not bow down to them.**

"You shall not make for yourself a carved image — any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments."

a. **You shall not make for yourself a carved image:** The second commandment prohibited not only idolatry regarding false gods (overlapping with the first commandment), it also forbids with making an image of any created thing that we might worship (**you shall not bow down to them nor serve them**).

i. Some take this command to prohibit any kind of representation of God, such as with a painting of Jesus or a picture of a dove to represent the Holy Spirit, or any other representation. However, others emphasize that the prohibition is actually in the making of an image that would be or would likely be worshipped (**you shall not bow down to them nor serve them**).

ii. Speaking later of Israel's experience at Sinai, Moses wrote: *And the LORD spoke to you out of the midst of the fire. You heard the sound of the words, but saw no form; you only heard a voice* ([Deuteronomy 4:12](#)). This established the principle that the worship of God was to be *word-based* and not *image-based*.

b. **Or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath:** In that day as well as in our own, worship was tied closely with images — idealized images, or even images in the mind of man. God will not allow us to depict Him with any such image, nor replace Him with another image.

i. The second commandment doesn't forbid making an image of something for artistic purposes; God Himself commanded Israel make images of cherubim ([Exodus 25:18, 26:31](#)). It forbids the making of images as an aid or help to worship. "If the making of cherubim was permitted, then the prohibition of the 'image' will refer only to the making of direct objects of worship." (Cole)

ii. "To countenance its *image worship*, the *Roman Catholic Church* has left the whole of this second commandment out of the decalogue, and thus lost one whole commandment out of the *ten*; but to keep up the *number* they have divided the *tenth* into *two*." (Clarke)

iii. In [John 4:24](#) Jesus explained the rationale behind the second commandment: *God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*. The use of images and other material things as a focus or help to worship denies who God is (*Spirit*) and how we must worship Him (*in spirit and truth*).

iv. Paul reminded us of the danger and futility of trying to make God into our own image: *Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man; and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things*. ([Romans 1:22-23](#))

c. **For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God:** God is **jealous** in the sense that He will not accept being merely added to the life; He insists on being supreme and does this out of love.

i. "God's jealousy is love in action. He refuses to share the human heart with any rival, not because He is selfish and wants us all for Himself, but because He knows that upon that loyalty to Him depends our very moral life... God is not jealous *of* us: He is jealous *for* us." (Redpath)

ii. "'Zealous' might be a better translation in modern English, since 'jealousy' has acquired an exclusively bad meaning." (Cole)

d. **Visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me:** This does not mean God punishes people directly for the sins of their ancestors. The important words are **of those who hate Me**. If the descendants love God, they will not have the iniquity of the fathers visited on them.

- i. “This necessarily implies — IF *the children walk in the steps of their fathers*; for no man can be condemned by Divine justice for a crime of which he was never guilty.” (Clarke)
 - ii. “Children who repeat the sins of their father evidence it in personally hating god; hence they too are punished like their fathers.” (Kaiser)
 - iii. Yet, the focus here is on idolatry, and this refers to judgment on a *national* scale — nations that forsake the LORD will be judged, and that judgment will have effects throughout generations.
- e. **But showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments:** It’s possible for everyone to receive God’s **mercy**; if they will only turn to Him in **love** and obedience.

4. ([Exodus 20:7](#)) The third commandment: **You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.**

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

a. **You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain:** There are at least three ways this command is commonly disobeyed.

- Profanity*: Using the name of God in blasphemy and cursing.
- Frivolity*: Using the name of God in a superficial, stupid way.
- Hypocrisy*: Claiming the name of God but acting in a way that disgraces Him

i. Jesus communicated the idea of this command in the disciples’ prayer, when He taught us to have a regard for the holiness of God’s name (*Hallowed be Your name*, [Matthew 6:9](#)).

b. **For the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain:** The strength of this command has led to strange traditions among the Jewish people. Some go to extreme measures to avoid violating this command, refusing to even write out the word *God*, in the fear that the paper might be destroyed, and the name of God be written **in vain**.

5. ([Exodus 20:8-11](#)) The fourth commandment: **Remember the Sabbath day.**

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who *is* within your gates. For *in* six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that *is* in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”

a. **Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy:** The command is to respect the seventh day (Saturday) as a day of rest (**you shall do no work**). This rest was for all of Israel — for the **son** and the **servant** and the **stranger** — even including **cattle**.

i. This is an important principle that might be too easily passed over. Here God declared the essential humanity and dignity of women, slaves, and strangers, and said they had the same right to a day of rest as the free Israeli man. This was certainly a radical concept in the ancient world.

ii. “The baser sort of people in Sweden do always break the Sabbath, saying that it is for gentlemen to keep that day.” (Trapp)

b. **To keep it holy:** God commanded Israel — and all humanity — to make sure that there was *sacred time* in their life, *separated* time of rest.

i. In their traditions, the Jewish people came to carefully quantify what they thought could and could not be done on the Sabbath day, in order to **keep it holy**. For example, in [Luke 6:1-2](#), in the mind of the Jewish leaders, the disciples were guilty of four violations of the Sabbath every time they took a bite of grain out in the

field, because they reaped, threshed, winnowed, and prepared food.

ii. Ancient Rabbis taught that on the Sabbath, a man could not carry something in his right hand or in his left hand, across his chest or on his shoulder. But he could carry something with the back of his hand, his foot, his elbow, or in his ear, his hair, or in the hem of his shirt, or in his shoe or sandal. Or on the Sabbath Israelites were forbidden to tie a knot — except, a woman could tie a knot in her girdle. So, if a bucket of water had to be raised from a well, an Israelite could not tie a rope to the bucket, but a woman could tie her girdle to the bucket and pull it up from the well.

iii. In observant Jewish homes today, one cannot turn on a light, a stove, or a switch on the Sabbath. It is forbidden to drive a certain distance or to make a telephone call — all carefully regulated by traditions seeking to spell out the law exactly.

c. **For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth:** God established the pattern for the Sabbath at the time of creation. When He rested from His works on the seventh day, God made the seventh day a day of rest from all our works ([Genesis 2:3](#)). It's as if God said, *having too much to do isn't an excuse from taking the rest you need — I created the universe and found time to rest from My work.*

i. When God told them to **remember the Sabbath**, He told them to *remember the rest*. “The term ‘Sabbath’ is derived from the Hebrew verb ‘to rest or cease from work.’” (Kaiser) The most important purpose of the Sabbath was to serve as a preview picture of the rest we have in Jesus.

ii. Like everything in the Bible, we understand this with the perspective of the whole Bible, not this single passage. With this understanding, we see that there is a real sense in which Jesus fulfilled the purpose and plan of the Sabbath *for* us and *in* us ([Hebrews 4:9-11](#)) — He is our rest, when we remember His finished work we **remember the Sabbath**, we *remember the rest*.

iii. Therefore, the whole of Scripture makes it clear that under the New Covenant, no one is under obligation to observe a Sabbath day ([Colossians 2:16-17](#) and [Galatians 4:9-11](#)). [Galatians 4:10](#) tells us that Christians are not bound to observe *days and months and seasons and years*. The rest we enter into as Christians is something to experience every day, not just one day a week — the rest of knowing we don't have to work to save ourselves, but our salvation is accomplished in Jesus ([Hebrews 4:9-10](#)).

iv. The Sabbath commanded here and observed by Israel was a *shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ* ([Colossians 2:16-17](#)). In the New Covenant the idea isn't that there is *no* Sabbath, but that *every day* is a day of Sabbath rest in the finished work of God. Since the shadow of the Sabbath is fulfilled in Jesus, we are free to keep any particular day — or no day — as a Sabbath after the custom of ancient Israel.

v. Yet we dare not ignore the importance of a day of rest — God has built us so that we *need* one. Like a car that needs regular maintenance, we need regular rest — or we will not wear well. Some people are like high mileage cars that haven't been maintained well, and it shows.

vi. Some Christians are also dogmatic about observing Saturday as the Sabbath as opposed to Sunday. But because we are free to regard all days as given by God, it makes no difference. But in some ways, Sunday is more appropriate; being the day Jesus rose from the dead ([Mark 16:9](#)), and first met with His disciples ([John 20:19](#)), and a day when Christians gathered for fellowship ([Acts 20:7](#) and [1 Corinthians 16:2](#)). Under Law, men worked towards God's rest; but after Jesus' finished work on the cross, the believer enters into rest and goes from that rest out to work.

vii. But we are also commanded to *work* six days. “He who idles his time away in the *six* days is equally culpable in the sight of God as he who works on the *seventh*.” (Clarke) Many Christians should give more “leisure time” to the work of the LORD. Every Christian should have a *deliberate* way to serve God and advance the Kingdom of Jesus Christ.

B. Six commandments regarding our conduct before God and man.

1. ([Exodus 20:12](#)) The fifth commandment: Honor your father and your mother.

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

a. **Honor your father and your mother:** This command is *wise* and *good*, because honor for parents is an essential building block for the stability and health of all society. If the younger generations are constantly at war with older generations, the foundations of society will be destroyed.

i. To **honor** one's parents includes to *prize* them, to *care* for them, and to *show respect* or *reverence* to them. The command is given to children, but not for only while they are children. “This is not a popular doctrine in our modern world, where youth is worshipped, and old age dreaded or despised. The result is the folly by which men or women strive to remain eternally youthful, only to find it an impossible task.” (Cole)

ii. Jesus used the way the Pharisees interpreted this commandment as an example of how one might keep the law with a limited interpretation yet violate the spirit of the commandment ([Matthew 15:3-6](#)).

b. **That your days may be long:** In [Ephesians 6:2](#) Paul repeated this command, emphasizing the *promise* stated here, **that your days may be long upon the land**. Rebellion is costly, and many have paid a high price personally for their rebellion against their parents.

i. “A good child lengtheneth his father's days; therefore God promiseth to lengthen his.” (Trapp)

2. ([Exodus 20:13](#)) The sixth commandment: **You shall not murder.**

“You shall not murder.”

a. **You shall not murder:** In Hebrew as well as in English there is a distinction between *to kill* and *to murder*. As opposed to killing, **murder** is the taking of life without legal justification (execution after due process) or moral justification (killing in defense).

i. “Only two words are used in Hebrew, as blunt as the order ‘no killing’ would be in English.” (Cole)

ii. Kaiser on *rasah*: “Hebrew possesses seven words for killing... If any one of the seven words could signify ‘murder,’ where factors of premeditation and intentionality are present, this is the verb.” (Kaiser)

iii. This important distinction explains how someone can quite consistently argue for the principle of capital punishment *and* the prohibition of murder. When carried out properly, capital punishment is killing with legal justification.

b. **You shall not murder:** Jesus carefully explained the heart of this commandment. He showed that it also prohibits us from *hating* someone else ([Matthew 5:21-26](#)), because we can wish someone dead in our hearts, yet never have the nerve to commit the deed. Someone may not kill from a lack of courage or initiative, yet his or her heart is filled with hatred.

3. ([Exodus 20:14](#)) The seventh commandment: **You shall not commit adultery.**

“You shall not commit adultery.”

a. **You shall not commit adultery:** Clearly, the *act itself* is condemned. God allows no justification for the ways that many often seek to justify extra-marital sex. It is not to be done, and when it is done it is sin and it damages.

i. “For a man to have intercourse with another man's wife was considered as heinous sin against God as well as man, long before the law, in patriarchal times ([Genesis 39:9](#)).” (Cole)

ii. Because there are different punishments for adultery ([Deuteronomy 22:22](#)) and the seduction of a virgin woman ([Exodus 22:16-17](#), [Deuteronomy 22:23-29](#)), adultery is distinguished from pre-marital sex in the Old Testament. Each is wrong, but wrong in sometimes-different ways.

iii. Some years ago there was a Christian music industry singer named Michael English. He lost his recording contract and marriage over adultery with another Christian singer. Afterward he said of his adultery and its

aftermath: "Maybe God allowed this to happen to make me see I needed some freedom." No!

b. **You shall not commit adultery:** The New Testament clearly condemns adultery: *Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication uncleanness, licentiousness* ([Galatians 5:19](#)). The act is condemned, but not *only* the act itself.

i. More than the act itself, Jesus carefully explained the *heart* of this commandment. It prohibits us from looking *at a woman to lust for her*, where we commit adultery in our heart or mind, yet may not have the courage or opportunity to do the act ([Matthew 5:27-30](#)). We aren't innocent just because we didn't have the opportunity to sin the way we really want to.

ii. "As to the word adultery, *adulterium*, it has probably been derived from the words *ad alterius torum*, to another's bed; for it is *going to the bed of another man* that constitutes the *act* and the *crime*." (Clarke)

4. ([Exodus 20:15](#)) The eighth commandment: **You shall not steal.**

"You shall not steal."

a. **Not steal:** This command is another important foundation for human society, establishing the right to personal property. God has clearly entrusted certain possessions to certain individuals, and other people or states are not permitted to take that property without due process of law.

b. **Not steal:** We can also steal from God. Of course, this demands we honor God with our financial resources, so we are not guilty of robbing Him ([Malachi 3:8-10](#)). But we can also rob God by refusing to give Him ourselves for obedience and His service, because He bought us and owns us: *knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold... but with the precious blood of Christ* ([1 Peter 1:18-19](#))

i. [1 Corinthians 6:20](#) gives the same idea: *For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.*

c. **Not steal:** [Ephesians 4:28](#) gives the solution to stealing. *Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.*

5. ([Exodus 20:16](#)) The ninth commandment: **You shall not bear false witness.**

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

a. **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor:** The primary sense of this command has to do with the legal process. Yet it is common to speak in an *informal* court, where what we say is taken seriously and truth or error matters for us and for others.

i. In an extended sense, we can break the ninth commandment through slander, tale bearing, creating false impressions, by silence, by questioning the motives behind someone's actions, or even by flattery.

ii. "Slander... is a lie invented and spread with intent to do harm. That is the worst form of injury a person can do to another. Compared to one who does this, a gangster is a gentleman, and a murderer is kind, because he ends life in a moment with a stroke and with little pain. But the man guilty of slander ruins a reputation which may never be regained, and causes lifelong suffering." (Redpath)

iii. "Talebearing... is repeating a report about a person without careful investigation. Many, many times I have known what it is to suffer with that. To repeat a story which brings discredit and dishonor to another person without making sure of the facts, is breaking this commandment... How many people, especially Christian people, revel in this, and delight in working havoc by telling tales about others. To excuse the action by saying they believed the report to be true, or that there was no intention to malign, is no justification." (Redpath)

iv. Inappropriate *silence* may also break this command. "When someone utters a falsity about another and a third person is present who knows that statement to be untrue but, for reasons of fear or being disliked, remains quiet, that third person is as guilty of breaking this law as if he had told a lie." (Redpath)

v. "Neither bear it, nor hear it; raise, nor receive wrong reports of another; [do not] make a lie, nor love it

when it is made.” (Trapp)

b. **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor:** The New Testament puts it simply. *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds* ([Colossians 3:9](#)). Lying and false representations belong to the old man, not to the new life we have in Jesus.

i. “How very strange that we have ever come to think that Christian maturity is shown by the ability to speak our minds, whereas it is really expressed in controlling our tongues.” (Redpath)

ii. “What a startling revelation it would be if a tape recording could be played of all that every church member has said about his fellow members in one week!” (Redpath)

iii. Satan is always there to encourage a lie ([John 8:44](#); [Acts 5:3](#)); and Jesus Himself was the victim of *false witness* ([Mark 14:57](#)); in some ways, we might say this was the sin that sent Jesus to the cross.

6. ([Exodus 20:17](#)) **The tenth commandment: You shall not covet.**

“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”

a. **You shall not covet:** All the first nine commands focus more on things we do; the tenth deals straight with the heart and its desires.

i. Literally, the word for **covet** here means, *to pant after*. “Hebrew *hamad*, ‘desire’, is in itself a neutral word. It is only when misdirected to that which belongs to another that such ‘desire’ becomes wrong.” (Cole)

ii. Covetousness works like this: the eyes look upon an object, the mind admires it, the will goes over to it, and the body moves in to possess it. Just because you have not taken the final step does not mean you are not in the process of coveting right now.

b. **Your neighbor’s house... wife... ox... donkey:** Covetousness can be expressed towards all sorts of things; it is the itch to have and to possess what someone else has. It speaks of a dissatisfaction with what we have, and a jealousy towards those who have something better.

i. [Hebrews 13:5](#) puts it well: *Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”*

ii. This last commandment is closely connected with the first commandment against idolatry: *For this you know, that no... covetous man, who is an idolater, has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and God* ([Ephesians 5:5](#)).

iii. Jesus gave a special warning about covetousness, which explained the core philosophy of the covetous heart: *And He said to them, “Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.”* ([Luke 12:15](#))