

The **TEN** COMMANDMENTS

Exodus 20:1-17

God's Moral Compass in a Messed-Up World

Commandment #1 - "No other gods." Week 1 Theme - "Always Put God First"

Introduction: Without a moral compass to guide us, humanity would be like the nation of Israel when they were not obeying God's law. The Book of Judges tells us, "Everyone did what was right in their own eyes." (Judges 17:6)

Why the Ten Commandments still matter today

Reason #1 - The Ten Commandments came from God to us and that has not changed.

Who is to say what is right and what is wrong

Answer #1 - Our human feelings can decide what is right and what is wrong.

→ **The Problem** - The Bible says in places such as Jeremiah 17:9 that "The heart is deceitful above all things ..." Our emotions can fail us because they are always changing and therefore can't be dependable. A person could break all Ten Commandments and justify it by saying, "It can't be wrong when it feels so right."

Answer #2 - What society says can decide what is right and what is wrong.

→ **The Problem** - Society is always shifting its position about what is right or wrong. What was once considered "right" by society may now be

considered "wrong" and what was once considered "wrong" by society may now be considered "right."

Answer #3 - What God says in the Ten Commandments is a reliable moral standard for right and wrong because they are timeless truths given to us by our Creator, God.

Reason #2 - In obeying the Ten Commandments, holiness will lead to happiness.

→ **Note this:** We sometimes wrongly think that you can be holy or you can be happy - but you can't be both. Being holy - that is being right with God and right with others - is what leads to real happiness in life.

The positive side of the Ten Commandments

1. Happy are those who put God first.
2. Happy are those who need no substitutes for life with God.
3. Happy are those who honor God's name.
4. Happy are those who honor God's day.
5. Happy are those who honor their parents.
6. Happy are those who value all life from beginning to end.
7. Happy are those who keep their marriage vows.
8. Happy are those who respect the property of others.
9. Happy are those who love the truth.
10. Happy are those who find contentment with what God has given them.

Reason #3 - Jesus, my model for living life the right way, practiced keeping the Ten Commandments.

The First Commandment - Put God First and God Alone

* **Exodus 20:3:** "You shall have no other gods before Me."

→ **Note this:** A "god" can be anything or anyone that dominates our life. Whatever has first place in our life is a "god." God says He is to have first place in our life. The foundation of the Ten Commandments and the foundation for doing things right in life is to put God first.

Five ways to put God F-I-R-S-T. F- My Focus. I - My Interests. R - My Relationships. S - My Schedule. T - My Trust.

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Commandment #2 - "Make nothing more important than God."
Week 2 Theme - "No God-Substitutes"

WEEK ONE REVIEW

Why the Ten Commandments still matter today

Reason #1 - The Ten Commandments came from God for us and that has not changed.

Reason #2 - When we obey the Ten Commandments holiness will lead to happiness.

Reason #3 - Jesus, my model for living life the right way, practiced keeping the Ten Commandments.

The Second Commandment - "You shall make no idols." (Exodus 20:4-6)

→ **Note this:** The Second Commandment is why we don't bow down to religious statues or religious symbols - such acts of reverence are reserved for God alone.

→ **Note this:** We are a product of our past. But in Jesus, even though we are a PRODUCT of our past we don't have to be a PRISONER of our past. 2 Corinthians 5:17, "Anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"

* **Definition** - An idol is anything that takes our love and loyalty from God

and puts that love and loyalty on something else. When anything in our life is placed ahead of God, even if it's something good, it is an idol in our life.

What happens when we give our love and devotion to something other than God

Result #1 - The thing we love more than God will begin to control us. (1 Corinthians 12:2a)

Result #2 - Whatever we love more than God will lead us in wrong ways. (1 Corinthians 12:2b)

Result #3 - Idols will distort how we see life. (Psalm 115:8)

Why people want to make their own "god"

Reason #1 - Some people want to make their own image of "god" in an attempt to **LIMIT GOD'S CAPABILITIES.**

Reason #2 - Some people want to make their own image of "god" in an attempt to **LIMIT GOD'S CHARACTER.**

Reason #3 - Some people want to make their own image of "god" in an attempt to **LIMIT GOD'S CONTROL.**

Takeaway Truths from the Second Commandment

Truth #1 - Anything good can become an idol if we love it too much.

Truth #2 - The ultimate tragedy of idol worship is that it takes everything we will give it and gives nothing of value in return.

Truth #3 - Because children are affected by family values, avoid allowing idol worship to enter your family's spiritual DNA. Always point them to look to, trust in, and love God the most.

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Commandment #3 - "You shall not take the name of God in vain."

Week 3 Theme - "Take God Seriously."

The Third Commandment - "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)

Why God's name is so important

Reason #1 - God's name is important because God's name represents GOD'S REPUTATION.

* **Psalm 9:10:** "Those who know Your name will trust in You, for You, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek You."

* **Psalm 109:21:** "But You, O Sovereign Lord, deal well with me, for Your name's sake; out of the goodness of Your love, deliver me."

Reason #2 - God's name is important because God's name represents GOD'S CHARACTER.

* **Psalm 31:3:** "Since You are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of Your name lead and guide me."

Reason #3 - God's name is important because God's name represents GOD'S AUTHORITY.

* **Psalm 66:4:** "All the earth bows down to You; they sing praise to You, they sing praise to Your name."

Ways God's name can be misused

Example #1 - God's name can be misused when used irreverently - as a swear word.

Example #2 - God's name can be misused when used insincerely - as a word of expression.

Example #3 - God's name can be misused when used to act impressively - as a word of spiritual jargon.

Correct ways to use God's name

1. **Reverence God's name CONTINUALLY.**

* **Psalm 29:2:** "Honor the wonderful name of the Lord, and worship the Lord most holy and glorious."

2. **Represent God's name CLEARLY.**

* **2 Timothy 2:19:** "Everyone who confesses the name of the Lord must turn away from wickedness."

3. **Rely on God's name COMPLETELY.**

Psalm 20:7: "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God."

Conclusion: There are two general ways we can violate the Third Commandment. We can speak the name of God in vain, and we can live the name of God in vain. We can keep the Third Commandment by honoring the name of God in all we speak and how we live. For the name of our Creator, Redeemer, and Sustainer, God, is a name worth honoring.

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Commandment #4 - "Remember the Sabbath day."
Week 4 Theme - "Sunday - A Day Worth Honoring."

The Fourth Commandment - Exodus 20:8-11

8 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 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.

11 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."

Question: "Which day of the seven has God appointed to be the weekly Sabbath?"

Answer: "God has particularly appointed one day in seven for a Sabbath, to be kept holy unto Him: which, from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, was the last day of the week; and, from the resurrection of Christ, was changed into the first day of the week, which in Scripture is called the Lord's Day, and is to be continued to the end of the world as the Christian Sabbath." - The Westminster Confession of Faith

The Sabbath existed for three main reasons

Reason #1 - The Sabbath was a sign. (Ezekiel 20:12)

Reason #2 - The Sabbath was a safeguard. (Exodus 20:9-10)

Reason #3 - The Sabbath was a reminder. (Exodus 20:8)

Three viewpoints about the Sabbath

Viewpoint #1 - The Sabbath day has always been on Saturday and Saturday still remains the correct day of worship.

Viewpoint #2 - Since the resurrection of Christ, Sunday has replaced Saturday as the "official" Sabbath day.

Viewpoint #3 - Sunday worship did not replace the Saturday Sabbath - Jesus fulfilled it (Matthew 12:8). Just as Saturday was a day to remember our Creator, Sunday is a day to remember our risen Savior.

Practicing the principle of the Sabbath

- (1) One day a week I am to rest my body.
- (2) One day a week I am to recharge my emotions.
- (3) One day a week I am to refocus my thoughts.
- (4) One day a week I am to renew my spirit.

John Calvin: "There is no doubt that by the Lord Christ's coming the ceremonial part of this commandment was abolished ... Observing the Lord's Day was instituted as a substitute for the Sabbath and carries forward on the same principles. In particular, we still find that the Lord's Day is (1) a day to gather for worship, and (2) a day to rest from our labors. And most importantly, (3) to find our spiritual rest in Christ."

The two commandments that allow us to keep ten commandments - Matthew 22: 37-40, "Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

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Commandment #5 - "Honor Your Father and Mother."
Week 5 Theme - "Make Family a Priority."

The Fifth Commandment - Exodus 20:12: "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you."

TOPIC #1 - Why God gave the Fifth Commandment

Reason #1 - God gave the Fifth Commandment because how we relate to our parents will affect our other relationships.

Reason #2 - God gave the Fifth Commandment because respect for authority begins at home.

Reason #3 - God gave the Fifth Commandment because parents need the reminder to be honorable.

TOPIC #2 - What if our parents are not honorable

→ **Note this:** When someone is in court, they address the judge with two words of respect, "Your honor." It could be that behind the robe is someone who is not honorable. Still, they say, "Your honor" because it shows respect for the position - even if the person is not always honorable. Likewise, a parent may not always be honorable but God still wants us to show honor because of the position of parenthood.

TOPIC #3 - How we are to honor our parents

1. If I am a child, I honor my parents by **OBEYING** them. (Ephesians 6:1)
2. If I am a young person, I honor my parents by **RESPECTING** them. (Proverbs 23:22)
3. If I am an adult, I honor my parents by **CARING** for them. (1 Timothy 5:8)

TOPIC #4 - When we're still carrying unfinished business, seek reconciliation or resolution

1. **Seek reconciliation. If possible, talk to the parent who hurt you or you hurt.**

* **Matthew 18:15:** "If someone sins against you, go and point out what was wrong. But do it in private, just between the two of you. If that person listens, you have won that person back."

2. **Seek resolution. Talk to God about it and let Him help you.** (Psalm 27:10; Isaiah 26:3)

* **Psalm 27:10,** "Even if my father and mother should desert me, You will take care of me."

* **Isaiah 26:3,** "You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in You, all whose thoughts are fixed on You."

→ **Note this:** When we fix our thoughts on God, God will fix our thoughts.

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Commandment #6 - "You shall not murder." Week 6 Theme - "Respect life."

The Sixth Commandment - Exodus 20:13: "*You shall not murder.*"

Since the first killing of Abel by Cain we still kill
(Genesis 4:3-8)

Note this: In spite of all our sophisticated advances over the last six thousand years, as with the first murder in the fields of the Garden of Eden, we still kill today. We still have not mastered the Sixth Commandment which is why we still need the Sixth Commandment.

What the Sixth Commandment doesn't prohibit

1. **The Sixth Commandment doesn't prohibit capital punishment.**
(Leviticus 24:17; Genesis 9:6; Romans 13:4)
2. **The Sixth Commandment doesn't prohibit fighting just wars.**
(Ecclesiastes 3:8; Romans 12:18; Deuteronomy 20)

When is it right for a nation to fight a war

- (1) It's right to fight in order to preserve freedom.
- (2) It's right to fight in order to defend innocent people.
- (3) It's right to fight in order to stop the spread of evil.

3. **The Sixth Commandment doesn't prohibit self-defense.** (Exodus 22:2)
4. **The Sixth Commandment doesn't prohibit killing animals for right reasons.** (Genesis 9:3)

What the Sixth Commandment does prohibit

1. **The Sixth Commandment prohibits the taking of innocent human life.**
(Genesis 1:26-27, 9:6; Deuteronomy 32:39).
2. **The Sixth Commandment prohibits "mercy killing."** (Job 12:10)
3. **The Sixth Commandment prohibits the ending of the life of an unborn child.** (Psalm 139:13-16)
4. **The Sixth Commandment prohibits anyone from taking their own life.**
(Job 14:5; Romans 14:7)

Question: Can a person who commits suicide go to Heaven?

Answer #1 - A Christian who commits suicide can go to Heaven.
(Romans 8:38-39; John 10:28)

Answer #2 - A Christian who commits suicide can go to Heaven but they go with "no-do-over" regrets because there are no second chances in life after this life. (Hebrews 9:27)

Comments of Jesus on the Sixth Commandment
(Matthew 5:21-22)

Note this: Murder is an act but it begins with an attitude. If murder is the fruit, then anger is the root.

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Commandment #7 - "You shall not commit adultery."
Week 7 Theme - "Value Marriage Faithfulness."

The Seventh Commandment - Exodus 20:14, "You shall not commit adultery."

Definition: Adultery is a sexual relationship that a married person has with someone they are not married to.

→ **Note this:** God is not ambiguous about adultery. God clearly states adultery is wrong - always - no exceptions. The Bible says adultery is a sin that always comes with consequences (Proverbs 6:32-33).

What God says about marriage

- 1. Marriage is a good thing.**
(Genesis 2:18)
- 2. Marriage is to last a lifetime.**
(Matthew 19:6)
- 3. Faithfulness in marriage is a good thing.**
(Hebrews 13:4a)
- 4. Unfaithfulness in marriage is a bad thing.**
(Hebrews 13:4b)

- 5. Divorce from marriage is a very bad thing.**
(Malachi 2:16)

How to protect a marriage

- 1. Make a commitment to God's standards.**
(Psalm 119:9)
- 2. Magnify the consequences of marital unfaithfulness.**
(Proverbs 6:32)
- 3. Maintain your marriage relationship.**
(Proverbs 5:18)
- 4. Manage your mind.**
(James 1:14-15a)

Beware of crossing lines we shouldn't cross

- **Step 1** - We allow a sinful thought.
 - **Step 2** - We allow an emotional connection.
 - **Step 3** - We allow a physical connection.
 - **Step 4** - We allow ourselves to rationalize our sin.
- 5. Maintain proper boundaries.** (Ephesians 5:3)
 - 6. Minimize the opportunity for a moral failure.**
(1 Corinthians 10:12; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Malachi 2:15)

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Commandment #8 - "You shall not steal."

Week 8 Theme - "Practice Integrity"

The Eighth Commandment - Exodus 20:15, "You shall not steal."

Topic #1 - Three reasons God gave the Eighth Commandment

1. To provide stability in society.
2. To practice respect for private property.
3. To promote honesty and hard work.

Topic #2 - Why do people steal?

1. People steal because they are greedy.
(1 Timothy 6:10)
2. People steal because they are lazy.
(Proverbs 6:9-11; 2 Thessalonians 3:10)
3. People steal because they want more money which they think will bring more happiness.
(Ecclesiastes 5:10)

Topic #3 - How do people steal?

1. Some people steal by taking the money or property of others.
(Joshua 7:20-21)
2. Some people steal by being dishonest. (Amos 8:5)
3. Some people steal by keeping money that belongs to God.
(Malachi 3:8)

Topic #4 - The big deal for why we shouldn't steal?

1. I am always being watched. (Proverbs 15:3)
2. I will reap what I sow. (Galatians 6:7)
3. Dishonesty damages my character and my testimony for Jesus.
(Proverbs 19:1)
4. God will reward my honesty. (Proverbs 28:20)

Topic #5 - Ways to Obey the Eighth Commandment

1. I practice integrity when I make a living honestly.
(Ephesians 4:28)
2. I practice integrity when I make restitution when necessary and if possible. (Luke 19:8)
3. I practice integrity when I give God what belongs to Him.
(Malachi 3:10)

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Commandment #9 - "Do not bear false testimony."
Week 9 Theme - "Tell the truth."

The Ninth Commandment - Exodus 20:16, *"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."*

What God says about lying

1. God says we are to tell the truth completely. (Psalm 120:2)
2. God says we are to tell the truth consistently. (Proverbs 12:22)
3. God says we are to tell the truth caringly. (Ephesians 4:15)

Questions about the Ninth Commandment

Question #1 - What is a lie? A lie is something a person tells someone that they know to be untruthful.

Question #2 - Why do we lie?

Reason #1 - We lie so we can get our way.

Reason #2 - We lie because we are afraid of the outcome if we don't lie.

Reason #3 - We lie to make ourselves look good.

Reason #4 - We lie because we want to avoid an uncomfortable situation.

Reason #5 - We lie because we want to hurt someone.

Question #3 - Why is it wrong to "stretch" the truth?

1. It is wrong for us to lie because God hates lying. (Proverbs 6:16)
2. It is wrong for us to lie because God doesn't lie and He wants us to be like Him. (Titus 1:2)
3. It is wrong for us to lie because the Bible clearly tells us again and again that we are not to lie. (Proverbs 4:24)

Question #4 - Why is lying such a big deal?

1. Lying affects our relationship with God. (Genesis 3:8-10)
2. Lying affects our relationship with others. (Ephesians 4:25)
3. Lying affects how we live with ourselves. (Proverbs 11:3)

Question #5 - How can we consistently keep the Ninth Commandment?

1. We need to monitor our heart. (Matthew 15:18)
2. We need to consider the source of what we say. (Colossians 3:9-10; John 8:44)
3. We need to practice wholesome conversations. (Philippians 2:14)

→ **Note this:** The Ninth Commandment adds a phrase we can tend to overlook: "... against your neighbor." The New Testament puts it this way in Colossians 3:9, "Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds." Lying belongs to the old self, and is not to be a part of the new life we have in Jesus.

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Commandment #10 - "*Do not covet.*"

Week 10 Theme - "Be content with what you have."

The Tenth Commandment - Exodus 20:17: "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

→ **Note this:** The application of the Tenth Commandment is clear: We must not set our sights on property, people, and possessions that belong to others. This commandment teaches us: Be content with what you have.

A definition: Coveting is the desire to acquire something that belongs to someone else.

What coveting can cause in our life

1. **Coveting can cause fatigue.** (Proverbs 23:4)
2. **Coveting can cause debt.** (Proverbs 22:7)
3. **Coveting can cause worry.** (Matthew 6:25)
4. **Coveting can cause conflict.** (James 4:1)
5. **Coveting can cause dissatisfaction.** (Ecclesiastes 5:10)

How we can conquer coveting

Philippians 4:11: "*I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances.*"

Note this: The way to conquer the sin of coveting is by being content. Contentment is being satisfied with what God has given us. Contentment is the positive side of the Tenth Commandment. We can't be content and covet at the same time. We can't covet and be content at the same time. We can be content ... or we can covet ... but we can't do both.

Learning how to live a content life

1. **To live a content life, we need to resist comparing ourselves with others.** (2 Corinthians 10:12)
2. **To live a content life, we need to rejoice with what we do have.** (Hebrews 13:5a)
3. **To live a content life, we need to refocus on what matters most.** (Luke 12:15)

→ **Note this:** Maybe we have discovered today that we need a Contentment Course Correction. The way we can do that is by asking God to help us guard our hearts. Proverbs 4:23: "Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it." For some of us what we may need is to have our desires reduced, not our possessions increased. "Dear Lord, You have given so much to me. Give one thing more, a grateful heart. Amen."

What the Ten Commandments can and can't do

Keeping the Ten Commandments CAN provide us with a trustworthy God-given moral guide for our lives. Keeping the Ten Commandments CANNOT save us. Only Jesus can save us (Galatians 2:16; Luke 18:18-23).