

JUST 10



The Ten Commandments form the framework of God's covenant with Israel. They have undergirded the moral fabric of the west for many centuries, but now challenged by a plural society in which the concept of moral absolutes and divine judgement are unfashionable. Yet the Ten Commandments remain remarkably relevant as a yard stick for moral decision making for those who take God seriously and want to live for God with integrity in a society which largely ignores him. For generations these commandments have been attacked as oppressive rules that limit freedom rather than offering guidelines for our liberty in living life God's way.

Here are some notes on the Ten Commandments listed in reverse order:

10. FIND CONTENTMENT

'Thou shalt not covet' Exodus 20:17.

Prov. 15 v. 16 - 17 - Better to be poor and reverence the Lord than to be rich and in trouble.
Monkey Trap - you can't be free unless you let go what is in your hand.
1 kings 21 - Naboth's vineyard - Ahab's sin - greed. (Acts 5 - Ananias and Sapphira)
Psalms 37 v. 1 - 7 - Use of material possessions
James 4 v. 1 - 10 - Evil desires make us enemies of God.
The Bible is not against material things, money or ambition - but these must be surrendered to God. Col. 3 v. 5 - put to death sinful passions and live for God.
Treasures in heaven - Mat. 6 v. 19 - 21, Luke 12 v. 32 - 34 & 18 v. 18 - 30.
Rich young ruler - went away sad
Augustine - 'You have made us for yourself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in thee.'
Phil. 4 v. 11 - 'I have learned the secret...' (of contentment).
Ivy chokes a tree - attractive but deadly. Danger - Snip the creeper now!

9. HOLD TO THE TRUTH

'Do not testify falsely against your neighbour' Exodus 20 v16.

Exasperation: confused messages
Toothpaste - you can't get it back into the tube!
Lies multiply. Being economical with the truth becomes a habit.
Gen. 2 v. 15 - 16 & 3 v. 1 - 24 - disobedience/rebellion.
John 8 v. 31 - 59 - Illegitimate children of Abraham
James 3 v. 7 - 12 - You can't get fresh water from a salty pool.
Eph 4 v. 29 - 31 - Get rid of the rubbish...let God change you.
Col. 3 v. 8 - 9 - Speak with truth, avoid lies and gossip.

Jesus is the truth - not 'I know the truth' or 'I will teach you the truth' - but 'I am the truth.'

8. PROSPER WITH A CLEAR CONSCIENCE

'Thou shalt not steal' Exodus 20 v. 15.

Lev. 19 v. 13, 35 - 36 - Honest scales - Deut. 19 v. 14 Strong moral code (weights and measures)
Amos - against unfairness and deceit - 5 v. 11 - 15, 8 v. 4 - 6.
Malachi - 3 v. 8 - 9 'This is what the Lord requires...'
Zacchaeus - Luke 19 - repays over and above what he needs to - transformed life.
Theft - an offence against God and man - Mat. 25 v. 14 - 30 - Use your gifts.
Wise managers of earth's resources.
Generous giving indicates a positive and thankful outlook on God's world.

7. AFFAIR PROOF YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

'Do not commit adultery' Exodus 20 v. 14.

We have seen the divorce statistics and we know the reasons for them. No one is exempt from temptation. May we never deceive ourselves.

Gen. 2 v. 8 - 25 - God sets the rules - people disobey.
2 Sam. 11 - David - Uriah - Bathsheba - though David repents of his adultery (and murder) in Psalm 51 everything falls apart in years to come.
Hosea 1 - 3 - Israel's unfaithfulness mirrored in Hosea's marriage.
Mat. 5 v. 27 - 30 - Jesus radicalises the Jewish law. Actions and thoughts are known to God.
Eph. 5 v. 21 - 23 - Love each other and know God loves you more. Repent/confess be forgiven. Do what you know is right. Ask WWJD - 'What Would Jesus Do?'

'Leaving' - 'cleaving' - 'one flesh' ('a three fold chord not quickly broken'). Mark 10 v. 6 - 9.

6. MANAGE YOUR ANGER

'Do not murder' Exodus 20 v. 13.

Violent crime increases - The value of human life seems to diminish - God's view on the value of human life - Gen. 1 v. 26 - 27, 9 v. 1 - 6, Ps. 8.

Gen. 4 - Cain and Abel - jealous rivalry boils over.

Mat. 5 v. 21 - 6, 38 - 42 - don't get angry, love enemies, get right, take the initiative.

Eph. 4 v. 25 - 27 - Keep control, produce fruit of the Spirit (not flesh) - Gal. 5 v. 22 - 23.

James 1 v. 19 - 20 - be slow to get angry, be careful of deadly emotions and provide no foothold for the devil.

Anger may represent the presence of an evil spirit which must be cast out. Some anger is right - a passion for justice - Jesus in the temple - Mat. 21 v. 12 - 13.

Be in favour of life, love, forgiveness and peace.

5. KEEP THE PEACE WITH YOUR PARENTS

'Honour your father and mother' Exodus 20 v. 12.

Prov. 1 v.8 - take heed of your parents teaching. 23 v.15 - 25, 19 v. 26 - 21, 30 v. 11 - 13, 13 v. 24, 22 v. 6.

Mat. 15 v. 1 - 9 - The religionists replaced God's commands with human teaching.

Eph. 6 v. 1 - 3 - Obey parents, mutual respect.

Mark 3 v. 20 - 21, 31 - 5 - Kingdom priorities.

1 Tim. 5 v. 1 - 8 - Looking after your family/the church.

How can I honour my parents?

- obedience in early years.
- interaction in adulthood.
- care in later years.

4. CATCH YOUR BREATH

'Keep the Sabbath' Exodus 20 v. 8 - 11.

A seven day week society is unsustainable. Look at the evidence to take God's advice -

Gen. 2 v. 1 - 3 - A day of rest - even in the wilderness: Ex. 16 v. 13 - 30

Luke 4 v. 14 - 16 - Jesus practice of going to the synagogue on the Sabbath for worship.

Mark 2 v. 23 - 3 v. 6 - Jesus, Lord of the Sabbath - against legalists. Pragmatic holiness.

Col. 2 v. 16 - 17, Gal 4 v. 3 - 12 - Don't be distracted by minor rules - live by faith under God's grace.

On Sunday - remember the resurrection.

rest from labour.

consecrate yourself to the Lord.

3. TAKE GOD SERIOUSLY

'Don't misuse God's name' Exodus 20 v. 7.

God's name is holy and to be honoured. Today it is commonly used as an expletive empty of any true meaning. On other occasions those who reject personal faith in Christ are unwilling to speak his name.

Ex. 3 v. 1 - 5, 34 v. 5 - 7 - Be in awe. Psalms 99 v. 1 - 3

Mat. 6 v. 7 - 9 - Don't babble - in prayer or at any time!

Mat. 7 v. 21 - 23 - Don't use God's name lightly or without content.

Acts 3 v. 1 - 16 - 'The name', there is power in the name of Jesus - Phil. 2 v. 9 - 11.

Distortions of God's truth are also abuses of his holy name. Lord lead us into your truth.

2. KNOW GOD

'Make no idols' Exodus 20 v. 4 - 6.

There are both obvious and subtle abuses - things which take the place of God in our lives.

Ex. 32 v. 4 - 14 - Golden calf - even after theophany there is propensity to deviate from serving God alone.

Isaiah 44 v. 6 - 20 - Against idolatry - Psalm 115 v. 1 - 8.

Acts 17 v. 16 - 34 - Paul in Athens confronts the philosophers and their worship of 'an unknown God'.

Rom. 1 v. 18 - 22 - 'serving the creature not the creator' results in many abuses and depravities:

Mat. 6 v. 24, Col. 3 v. 5, 1 John 5 v. 21.

Where are my idols?

What will I do about them?

1. LIVE BY PRIORITIES

'Have no God's but God' Exodus 20 v. 1 - 3.

Exclusive claims by God and about God are unavoidable in the Bible.

Ex. 24 v. 1 - 11 - Worship God alone.

Jer. 31 v. 31 - 4 - A new covenant relationship.

Mark 12 v. 28 - 34 - Love the Lord with all you've got.

Mat. 4 v. 8 - 10 - Jesus' temptation was to put his plans ahead of his Father's.

Love God with your whole being and all the other commandments follow from that:

Coming to Christ is the doorway into this new covenant.

Prov. 3 v. 5 - 7 - How do I find God's will for my life? -

1. Trust in the Lord with all your heart.
2. Don't rely on your own understanding.
3. In all your ways acknowledge him (and the consequence of this is...)
4. He will direct your paths.