



## Living in Faith

Discipleship Series

Understanding  
right and  
wrong



# The Law of God



# **The Law of God**

*Understanding Right and Wrong*

## THE LAW OF GOD

### *Living in Faith* Discipleship Series

*Adapted from LAW OF GOD* (The Bible Teaching Series)

Original text produced by the Commission on Special Ministries  
of the Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod

Copyright © 2001

**LIVING IN FAITH** Discipleship Series 2018

Text adapted by Multi-Language Publications of the Wisconsin Evangelical  
Lutheran Synod

All cover and black and white illustrations are the work of Allie Lyo.

Rights to Allie Lyo illustrations reserved by  
Multi-Language Publications and Allie Lyo.

Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION®, NIV®  
Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984, 2011 by Biblica, Inc.® Used by permission. All  
rights reserved worldwide.

NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION® and NIV® are registered trademarks of  
Biblica, Inc. Use of either trademark for the offering of goods or services  
requires the prior written consent of Biblica US, Inc.

Multi-Language Publications – ASIA  
Suite B, 11/F, Chun Hoi Commercial Building  
688 Shanghai Street, Mongkok  
Kowloon, Hong Kong  
[AsiaMLP@yahoo.com](mailto:AsiaMLP@yahoo.com) • (852) 2190 6211

# Table of Contents

Getting Started .....	2
Chapter 1: Is There a Right Way to Live? .....	3
Chapter 2: The First Table of the Law ..... 1-3 Commandments	14
Chapter 3: The Second Table of the Law ..... – Part One: 4-6 Commandments	28
Chapter 4: The First Second Table of the Law ..... – Part Two: 7-10 Commandments	41
Chapter 5: The Ten Commandments in Your Life.....	54
Appendix: Martin Luther’s Explanations to the Ten Commandments .....	65

# Getting Started

In this book you will learn about what God reveals as right and wrong in his law. It will help you understand where you stand with God.

## READ THE TEXT

We are going to look at how God gives us an understanding of his law and how that will look in our lives. We will do this by studying the 10 Commandments that God gave to Israel through Moses. They embody what God teaches throughout Scripture about our relationship to him and to the people in our world.

## GRAPPLE WITH THE QUESTIONS

In this book there are also questions to start, review and end the lesson. If you are studying this on your own, think through the questions for yourself. If you are studying in a group, use the questions for deeper discussion. Allow each individual a level of comfort to ask questions and freedom to discover and grow.

## NOTICE OPPORTUNITIES FOR FURTHER STUDY

Each page also includes additional references on the sidebar for those who want to dig deeper (You will need a Bible or a Bible app to read those sections).



= Location of Bible Story



= Search options – related passages



= Luther's Catechism reference



## MAP OUT YOUR NEXT STEPS

After connecting the timeless truths to your life, map out your Next Steps before ending the lesson.



# Chapter One

## IS THERE A RIGHT WAY TO LIVE?



In the past people treated divorce as a bad and shameful thing. But now many treat it as a common thing. Some things have changed, but others haven't. People of both time periods knew that killing people is a sin. Then how can people really judge what is right and what is wrong in a society?

Every society has its set of rules to protect its cultural values. Some moral standards are somewhat common to all countries. Other laws and taboos are unique to a particular group of people or country. What happens when they contradict someone else's standards. Is there a divine law that comes above them all?

1. Describe what your world would be like without laws. Why?

In this chapter, we are going to talk about how people come to know about God's law. We will discuss how and why God gave us his law in the first place. At the end of this chapter you will be able to:

- \* tell what the two places are where God has written his law;
- \* tell why he had to write them twice; and
- \* tell the three purposes God has for his law.

## Natural Law - the Way It Was Meant to Be

In the beginning there was no need for written laws and rules. It was a time when the first people, Adam and Eve, just naturally did what was right. In other words, when God made people, they already knew in their hearts what thoughts and actions were right and pleasing to God. They knew them naturally. God created those first two humans to reflect and represent God's thoughts and ways. They lived with the knowledge of how God wanted them to relate to him and each other.

Jesus explained what Moses had said 1,500 years earlier. The law of God can be summarized as "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your strength,*

---

**Love is the essence of  
the law**

---

*and all your mind."* If that was first in our lives, then we would also naturally follow the second part of his

will - to "*Love your neighbor as yourself.*" Love is the essence of the law and was a natural guide for the joyful relationship with God and each other.

We call this in-born law the natural law. it is still in



**Made in God's Image**

Genesis 1:26-27



**Law Basics**

Deuteronomy 6:1-7

Luke 10:25-37



**Conscience**

Romans

2:14-15



human hearts. That is why people all over the world agree that certain things are right and certain things are wrong. Almost everyone in the world agrees that it is wrong to steal, or to kill just anyone you feel like killing. This agreement is because of the natural law.

2. Where does the natural law come from?

### Natural Instinct Gone Wrong



**Fall into Sin**  
Genesis 3:1-13

Something went wrong with the natural law though. Actually, the people in whose hearts it was written

---

**The sinful mindset  
infected all humanity**

---

went wrong. Adam and Eve, the first two humans, made a choice to distrust and rebel against God. The

sinful mindset infected all humanity, including you and me. We became sinful. Our sinfulness did something to that natural law in our hearts.

Think of it in this way. Suppose you owned a building, and on the side of that building you wrote God's commands. Now, suppose you began throwing mud at the building. The more mud you threw, the harder it would be to read the words of the commands, right?

With our sins, we were doing the same thing to the natural law in our hearts. The more we would sin against any of God's commandments, the more it is like throwing mud at them. Soon you would not be able to recognize God's will in your hearts.

Have you ever had that happen in your life? You knew something was wrong. You knew what you did wrong was against God's commandments. But you did it anyway. The first time, you felt really guilty about it. Your conscience really made you suffer over it. The second and third time you committed the same sin, you still felt sick about sinning.

But what about the fourth, fifth and sixth times? You did not feel quite so guilty any more. By the tenth time, you are beginning to wonder why anyone should think that what you did is a sin. You began to think of it as no more than a little weakness on your part. By the twentieth time you did wrong, you did not even think of it as a weakness any more. You threw enough sinful mud at the commandment so it no longer bothered you.

3. What is the most important point for you in this section?



## Addicted to Sin

Romans  
7:7-24

4. Does this also apply to Christians? How should they deal with it?

## God Wrote It Down So It Would be Clear

God did not want the whole human race to lose the meaning of his commands. Very soon wickedness would ruin the world! If mankind's sins kept on muddying up the natural law in our hearts, no one would think anything was sinful any more.

So God wrote down the Ten Commandments on two big tablets of stone to make his will clear again.

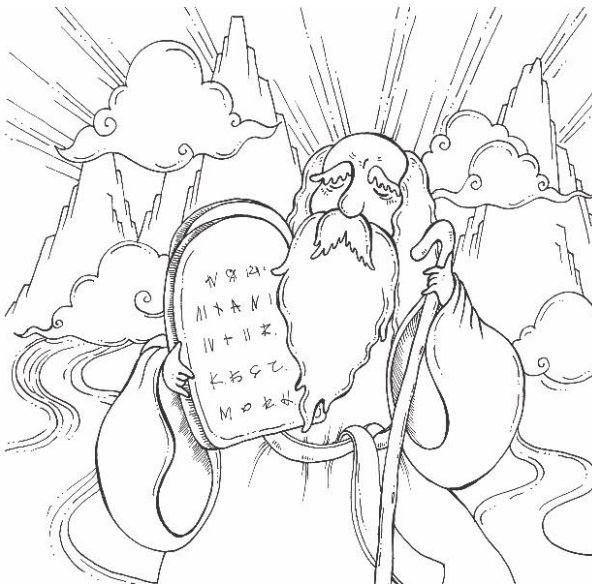


### Giving the Law

Exodus

19:1-9; 32:15-16

34:1-10; 34:27-32



We read about it in the second book of the Bible called Exodus. This book tells the story of Moses, the man who led God's people, the Israelites, out of Egypt. In Egypt, they were slaves for hundreds of

years. God saved them from slavery and had Moses lead them to a high mountain in the desert. The mountain was known by two names: Mount Horeb and Mount Sinai. It was on this mountain that God

---

**The written law now can  
help people see the  
natural law more clearly**

---

gave Moses the Ten Commandments, inscribed by God himself on two tablets of stone. Then God gave other

commandments to Israelites. Moses wrote down God's law and commandments into the books of Old Testament.

The Written law now can help people see the natural law more clearly. The natural law is muddled over by our sins. It is not a suitable guide for us now. But the written law is right there in the Bible where we can read it clearly.

Think of it like this. Suppose you have a map. It is old and it is all torn and faded and muddy and dirty. You can hardly read it any more. You have to take a trip to another city. You open your road or subway map, and you find it is too dirty and worn to help you find the way. What can you do? Well, you get a new map, one that is not all torn and worn and muddled. It will show you the way clearly. The natural law in our hearts was like that old map. The written law in the Bible is like the new one. Which one will you depend on to show you the way? The new map will clearly show you the way to live, not the old one. To clearly understand God's will you will use the written law in the Bible, not the muddled natural law in the heart.

5. How did God give us his written law?



## **The 10 Commandments**

Exodus  
20:1-17

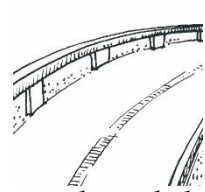
Deuteronomy  
5:1-22

## 6. Why is the written law important?

### Three Purposes of God's Law for Your Life

Now we know how God gave us the law, and why he had to give it to us twice. Now let us see why God gave us the Ten Commandments.

### The Law as a Curb to Keep Evil in Check



God actually has three purposes behind his Law – three ways in which it affects us. One of them we all know very well. It is there to keep people from being lawless. It is to make us behave ourselves. We might call it the “curb” to keep us on track, just like the highway guardrail.

Used as a curb, the law is to keep the human race out of trouble. The law keeps society from going over the edge and carries with it the threat of punishment for

---

**The law keeps society  
from going over the edge**

---

those who disobey.

Think what the world would be like, for example, if God had no laws about

stealing. Nothing you owned would be safe. Anyone who wanted something you had would take it from you - if they could. You would be getting into fights over your possessions all the time. But there is a law that says, "*Do not steal!*" (Exodus 20:15). And there are punishments for those who do steal. Someone



**Law as Curb**

| Timothy 1:8-11

you know might be in prison right now for breaking that law by stealing. The law is there to keep us from stealing - to keep us where we should be, like a curb.

## The Law as a Mirror Shows What We Are Inside



There is a second purpose behind God's law. God wants us to use it like a mirror. In the morning, before going out to face the world, many people like to stop and look in a mirror first. That way, they can see how they look and fix any problems. If a girl looks into the mirror and sees her hair is all out of place she will grab a comb or brush and fix the problem.

Our pride makes us think God will accept us on our own goodness. We see ourselves as better than criminals or the wicked people around us. For that reason the Ten Commandments are like a mirror for our souls. When we look at ourselves in that mirror,

---

**The law shows us how  
sinful we are**

---

God wants us to see there are many things wrong with us. We ought to see how sinful we are and

repent of it. We ought to see how often we have broken God's commandments and beg God for mercy.

Just like the girl with the mirror, when we see how sinful we are, we should find out what we can do about it. The Bible tells us we can never clean our



**Law as Mirror**

Romans 3:19-20

Matthew 7:1-5

sins off from ourselves. Only Jesus could do that by dying for them on the cross. So the law, as a mirror, shows us how sinful we are and how much we need a Savior.

## The Law as a Guide for God-pleasing Living



The first two purposes of the law convict us of wrongdoing. They show we are sinners who deserve God's punishments for violating his laws. The law shows us our sin, but the good news, the gospel,

shows us the Savior. God sent his son Jesus to earth to keep the law perfectly in our place. And as Jesus died on the cross, he took on to himself the

punishment of our sins so we could stand before God without shame and guilt.

---

**The gospel shows us  
the Savior**

---

Once a person has come to believe in Jesus and become a Christian, the law has one more use. It can serve as a guide to tell a person how to live a Christian life of thanks to God.

Think of it like this. Suppose you move to a different country - Germany, Japan or Ethiopia. When you get there, you do not know the language. You do not know the way they count money. You do not know the way people behave in your new country. What you need is something like a guidebook to teach you all these things. With such a guidebook, you can learn how to act in an appropriate way among all the other people around you. You can learn to act like a citizen of your new country.



**Law as Guide**

Ephesians  
4:17-32

In a way, Christians are citizens of a new country. The Bible says we are citizens of God's kingdom of heaven. But, since we have been sinners for so long, we may not know just how a citizen of heaven should live and act. What does God expect of our relationship with him and with the people around us? What should we do, as citizens of heaven, about such things as disrespect, sexual activities, gossip, or hundreds of other things? That is where the Ten Commandments come in. They are our guide, to teach us the way a Christian should live his life in this world.

7. Explain the three purposes of the law.
8. What is different in the functions of the Law when viewed by believers compared to non-believers?



## **CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE**

1. Some people say that because they feel something is wrong, then it is wrong in God's eyes. How will you respond to that?
2. If Jesus already kept the law perfectly in our place, why do Christians need the first and second purpose of the Law?



3. Some people use God's Law only as a tool to show other people their faults. How would you respond to this? How should you apply God's Law in your daily Christian life?
4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



## YOUR NEXT STEPS

### **Memorize it!**

Memorize the three purposes of the law.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this into your life this week.

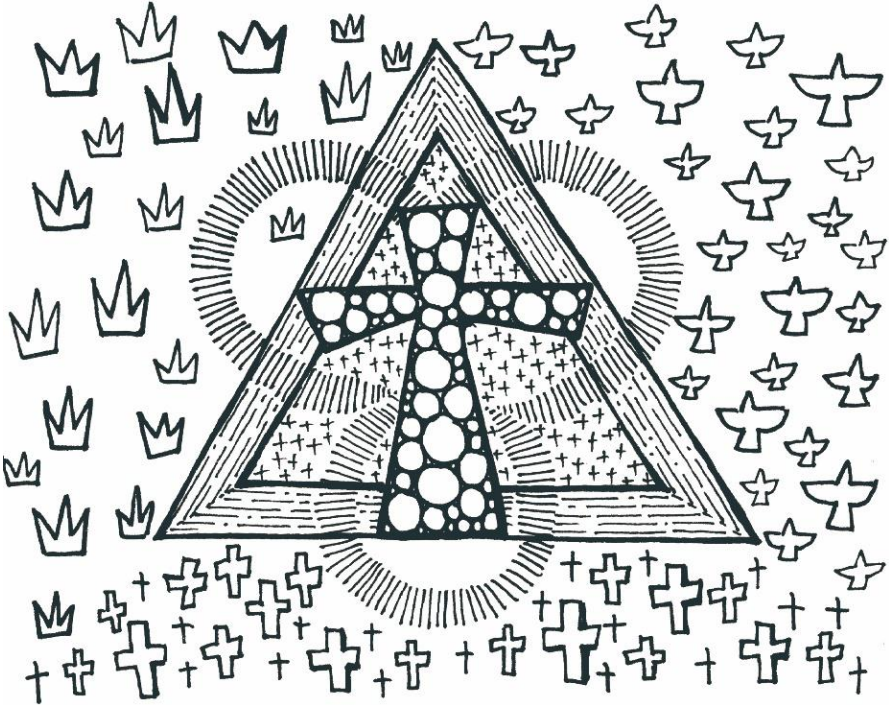
### **Share it!**

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

*Go on to Lesson Two to learn why the first part of God's law sets the foundation for the rest of God's commandments.*

## Chapter Two

# THE FIRST TABLE OF THE LAW



Do you know what makes up a joyful home? It is built on relationships of love and respect. Because of their love, the parents set boundaries for behavior to shape healthy character in their children. In response, the children show love and respect to the parents by obeying their commands. We wish that came naturally, but because of our rebellious natures, it often needs to be enforced with clear rules to protect and preserve that relationship. Without that love and respect, family starts to unravel.

How much more true that is for our relationship to our Father in heaven who has made us his children. He is the powerful Creator and

Ruler of the Universe who demonstrated his love for us in many ways. Our natural response should be to hold him in highest esteem. Yet our sinful, selfish natures make us hostile to God constantly resisting his will. Without a high respect for God, the moral health of society begins to unravel.

But how does God want us to show respect for him? How are we to act in his presence? How does he want us to live in his world?

1. Discuss how the many people around the world try to figure out what God wants of us.

## **The First Section of God's Law – Our Attitude toward God**

God doesn't leave us in the dark about his will. We can find it in the Bible. Throughout history he spoke messages through his prophets. One of those prophets was Moses through whom he presented the 10 Commandments at Mt. Sinai. They reflect the natural law that had been originally written in hearts.

Before we proceed, it is important to remember that the original wordings of the 10 Commandments were given to the Israelites. God also gave the Israelites other commandments to tell them how to make sacrifice and how to govern their people as a government. Jesus and his apostles told us clearly in the New Testament what are the law of God which are for all people. In this book, we will use the format of the Ten Commandments to conclude and sum up the laws we keep which taught by Jesus and his apostles.

When God wrote the law on stone at Moses' time, he used two big pieces, called tables (or tablets). No one knows how much he wrote on one table or tablet or how much on the other. But we speak about the two tables of the law as a way to divide the commandments. We think of the First

---

**Love the Lord your God  
with all your heart**

---

Table of the law as containing the commandments that speak about how we act toward God. The Second Table speaks about how we are to act toward our fellow man.

When we speak of the First Table of the law, we are thinking of the first three commandments (*some people divide them into 4*). Jesus summarizes these three commands in these simple words: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30).

We will study the first three commandments in this chapter. At the end of the chapter you will be able to:

- \* tell how to avoid the sin of idolatry;
- \* tell how to keep God's name holy; and
- \* tell how we should feel about God's Word.

## First Commandment – Put God First

***"You shall have no other gods"***  
(Exodus 20:3).

With these words, God forbids a sin called idolatry. An idol is a statue that someone worships as a god. To worship a false god, whether you have the statue or not, is the sin of idolatry. There are two kinds of idolatry: open idolatry and secret idolatry. Open idolatry happens when someone worships some other type of god rather than the God of the Bible who reveals himself as the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

---

### FIRST COMMANDMENT

**You shall have no other gods.**

*"What does this mean?"*



**Luther explains:**

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

---

## Open Idolatry



### True God or Idols?

Isaiah 44:6-22

45:15-25

46:1-11

Open idolatry was widespread in ancient times. Some nations, like the Greeks and the Egyptians, had dozens, even hundreds of gods. They would make idol-statues of those gods in the forms of men and women or animals or birds. They would worship these statues and bring them offerings and pray to them.

In the book of the prophet Isaiah, God himself speaks as if even he is unable to understand the mind of an idol worshipper. Here is what he says in Isaiah 44:14-19: "He (the idol worshipper) cuts down a cedar tree. Or perhaps he takes a cypress or an oak tree. It might be a tree that grew in the forest. Or it might be a pine tree he planted. And the rain made it grow. Man gets wood from trees for fuel. He uses some of it to warm himself. He starts a fire and bakes bread. But he also uses some if it [the wood] to make a god and worship it. He makes a statue of a God and bows down to it. He burns half of the wood in the fire. He prepares a



### Consulting spirits instead of God

Deuteronomy

18:9-12

meal over it. He eats until he is full. He also warms himself. He says, "Good! I'm getting warm. The fire is nice and hot." From the rest of the wood he makes a statue. It becomes his god. He bows down and worships it. He prays to it. He says, "Save me. You are my god." People like that don't even know what they are doing. Their eyes are shut so that they can't see the truth. Their minds are closed so that they can't understand it [the truth]. No one even stops to think about what he's doing. He doesn't have sense or understanding. If he did, he would say, "I used half of the wood for fuel. I even baked bread over the fire. I cooked meat. Then I ate it. Should I now make a statue of a god out of the wood that's left over? Should I bow down to a block of wood? "

Sad to say, many people in the world still worship such false gods. There are many such religions that have many such idols for people to worship.

There are other religions that frown on making wooden statues, but still worship false gods. These

---

**Those who do not honor  
the Son do not honor  
the Father who sent him**

---

religions are doubly sad, because they get many of their ideas from the Bible, but they do not worship

the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit - the God the Bible describes as the only God. They do not worship Jesus as the Son of God.

Some people might think that not worshipping the true God is all right. After all, at least they are using the Bible. But the Bible tells us, "*Those who do not honor the Son do not honor the Father, who sent him*" (John 5:23). If you do not worship Jesus as the Son of God, you are guilty of open idolatry.

## Secret Idolatry



There is another kind of idolatry, though. It is called secret idolatry. Even Christians can fall into the sin of secret idolatry. We fall into this sin when we give God's place in our hearts to anyone or anything but God. One of Jesus' followers, John, warned us in a letter, "*Do not love the world or anything in it. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them*" (1 John 1:15). But how easy it is to love the things found in the world! How easy it is to love money, drugs, or sex more than we love God! Then those things become our god. Even good things like family and work can become more important to us than God. And when we love or trust someone or something else more than God, it becomes our god.

As a matter of fact, you might say that any sin we commit is a sin of idolatry. After all, if we let God have first place in our hearts all the time, there is no way we would ever sin against him. But when we decide to sin, we are pushing God out of his place



**You Can't Serve  
Two Different  
Masters**

Matthew 6:19-24  
1 John 2:15-17



and taking that place for ourselves. We are making ourselves into our own god.

---

**When we decide to sin,  
we are pushing God out  
of his place and taking  
that place for ourselves**

---

Even though the Ten Commandments usually tell us what we should not do, there is always another side to them.

The other part tells us what we should do instead of sinning. Martin Luther, a great teacher of the Christian religion from many years ago, wrote some simple explanations for the Ten Commandments. His explanation for the First Commandment is this: "We should fear (that is, respect), love and trust in God above all things."

First of all, we should respect him. We should think of him as the greatest of all, the wisest of all, and the best of all. We should show our respect in the way we talk about him and in the way we obey him.

Secondly, we should love him more than anything or anyone else - even more than ourselves! After all, he is our Maker. He not only gave us life but also a beautiful world in which to live. Think of how good it is to be out in the world, breathing the air and being able to go wherever you want. Everything in nature is a gift of God. No wonder we should love him and show that love by doing what he wants us to do.

Finally, we should trust in him more than in anything or anyone else. We show that trust by obeying him. Think of it in this way. Suppose you are exercising. Along comes someone who has always been friendly to you, and who knows how to



**Three Men and the  
Fiery Furnace**

*Ready to die rather than  
deny the true God*

**Daniel 3**



exercise. He tells you that you are doing your exercises wrong and shows you how to do them right. What will you do? Well, since you know you can trust him, you will do what he tells you. That shows how much you trust him.

So when God gives us his commandments, we know we can trust him. Whatever he says to do must be the right thing, the thing that will do us the most good.

2. Identify the two different kinds of open idolatry.
3. List three ways we can be guilty of secret idolatry.
4. Talk about how you can obey this commandment today.

## The Second Commandment – Respect God

***"You shall not misuse  
the name of the LORD your God"***  
(Exodus 20:7).

God has a very good reason for giving us this commandment. He wants his name to mean something to us, and careless use of his name will not get that meaning across. There are some people whose names say everything about them to us. The name Hitler is an example. Hitler was the German leader who incited the Second World War and tried to kill all

---

### SECOND COMMANDMENT

**You shall not misuse the name of  
the LORD your God.**



*"What does this mean?"*

**Luther explains:**

We should fear and love God that we do not use his name to curse, swear, lie, or deceive, or use witchcraft, but call upon God's name in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

---

the Jews. His reputation is tied together with his name. But a person's name can also bring to mind positive images. The name of Gandhi from India is often tied together with his reputation for peace and harmony.

God wants his reputation to be tied together with his name, too. When someone says, "God," or "The Lord," God wants everyone's mind to leap right to thinking about who God is and what he is like.

In the Bible, sometimes God is addressed with different names, like Yahweh or El Shaddai (God Almighty). When Moses asked God, "When people ask me 'What is your Name?' What shall I tell them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM. Tell them 'I Am' sent you. He is the one who always existed and never changes. He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

God has done us a favor. In the book of Exodus, he told us what he wants his name to mean: "I am the LORD, the LORD. I am a God who is tender and kind. I am gracious. I am slow to get angry. I am faithful and full of love. I continue to show my love to thousands of people. I forgive those who do evil. I forgive those who refuse to obey. And I forgive those who sin. But I do not let guilty people go without punishing them. I punish the children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren for the sin of their parents" (Exodus 34:6-7). These words tell us what his name means. He is a kind God who forgives sin and an angry God who punishes sin. It is that simple. Every sinner will be forgiven. Every sinner will be condemned.



**God's answer  
when Moses  
asked God's name**

Exodus 3:1-5, 13-15



**David & Goliath**  
*Victory in God's Name*

1 Samuel 17

You might have noticed that this sounds impossible. How can he forgive and punish at the same time? If you are angry with someone, you can either forgive him, or you can punish him. You cannot do both at the same time. But God could and did. All his punishing anger was suffered by Jesus when he died

---

**Whoever calls on the  
name of the Lord will be  
saved**

---

on the cross for our sins. The punishment we deserved fell on Jesus instead of us. Therefore, God has forgiven our sins. To

put this simply, then, God wants his name to mean, "The Father of Jesus Christ, our Savior." God powerfully stands behind the proper use of his name, especially because "whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."

People misuse the name of God by misrepresenting who he is. They misuse his name by claiming they have special messages from God when it is only their own words or thoughts. They misuse his name when they swear by it to cover their lies. They misuse his name when they deny he even exists and criticize those who trust the name of the Lord.

But there are many ways of using God's name in a right way and getting his true reputation understood. We can tell other people about him and the Bible. We can pray to him at all times. We can praise him when things go well. When something good happens to you, especially on a day you are specially blessed, a good, loud "Thank God!" is surely in order! "Thank the Father of our Savior Jesus Christ! Look what he has done for me!"

5. Why is a name more than just a title?



## **The only Name that Saves**

Matthew

28:18-20

Acts 4:12

6. How can we obey this commandment today?

## The Third Commandment – Worship God

***"Remember the Sabbath day  
by keeping it holy"***  
(Exodus 20:8).

For the people in Moses' day their day of worship was Saturday. God called it the Sabbath, which in Hebrew means "rest." They were to do no work at all on that day. They were to do no cooking, no building, no gardening, nothing! They were to rest.

There were two reasons they were to rest on that day. First, it was to remember how God had rested on the seventh day when he created the world. The Bible explains, "By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing. So on the seventh day he rested from all his work. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy. He rested on it. After he had created everything, he rested from all the work he had done" (Genesis 2:1 and 2).

But there was something more to learn about the day of rest. It not only looked back in time, but it also looked forward. It looked forward to a different kind of rest. Jesus Christ was to bring rest for our souls. If Jesus had not come to save us, we would never have any rest. We would have to try to earn our way into heaven. We would have to struggle and worry always trying to obey the Ten Commandments

---

### THIRD COMMANDMENT

**Remember the Sabbath day by  
keeping it holy**



*"What does this mean?"*

**Luther explains:**

We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and his Word, but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it.

---



**God "Rests"**  
*After creating the  
world*  
Genesis 2:1-3

perfectly. And we would always be fearful that we were not doing it well enough.

Jesus came to die for all our sins. We will get into heaven, not because of our efforts, but because of Jesus' work. Our hearts can be at rest, because he did all the work and promised that we now have eternal rest with him in heaven. For nearly 1,500 years before he came to earth, people looked forward to this rest

---

**Our souls are at rest  
because of what Jesus  
did for us**

---

by not working on Saturday, their day of worship.

Most people do not observe Saturday as

the main day of worship any more. It was only a short time after Jesus' lived that Christians started worshipping on Sunday. Christians felt Sunday was a good day to worship, because it was the day Jesus rose from the dead. But we should remember that the Third Commandment means more than taking a day off from our work. It has to do with the rest Jesus won for us and everything included in the rest Jesus gives us.

The day of worship, after all, is the day we hear the Bible read and preached. But whether it is Sunday, Saturday, or any day of the week, the Bible ought to be part of each day. When the Bible tells us what Jesus did to save us, then our souls are at rest. That is what the Third Commandment is all about. Our souls are at rest because of what Jesus did for us. We love and respect the Bible, because it is God's book that tells us all about this rest. It is a book we will gladly read, hear, and learn.



## **Jesus Gives us Rest**

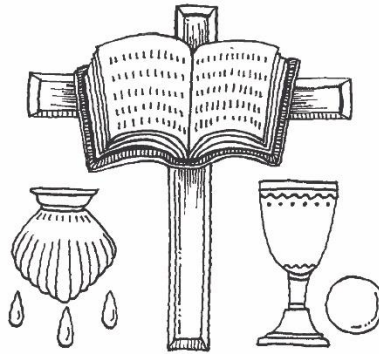
Hebrews 4:1-11



## **Daniel and the Lions**

*Worship despite  
opposition*

Daniel 6



## Your Worship Life

Hebrews

10:22-25

Acts 2:42-47

Romans 12:1-2

7. What kind of Sabbath rest is this commandment talking about for us today?
8. How can we obey this commandment today?



## CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE

1. Martin Luther commented, “A god is that from which you expect to receive all good and to which you turn in times of trouble...whatever you set your heart on and rely on is really your god.” How does this definition help you understand what God is asking in the First Commandment?
2. Some people say there are so many names for God in the Bible that they don’t know which one to use. What did you learn from the Second Commandment that helps you answer this?

3. Someone might tell you that you have to worship God on the Sabbath day (Saturday) as the Israelites did years ago. How would you respond to this?
4. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



## **YOUR NEXT STEPS**

### **Memorize it!**

Memorize the first three commandments.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this into your life this week.

### **Share it!**

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can take this book along to help you).

*Go on to Lesson Three to learn of the Second section of God's law.*

# Chapter Three

## THE SECOND TABLE OF THE LAW

### PART ONE



You don't have to look far to see how the peace and love that God intended in the world is shattered by broken relationships. You see it in children disobeying parents, disregard for the life of others, unfaithfulness to a marriage partner, and unrest in countries. This isn't the way God intended it to be in the beginning. In his commandments, God will show people how should they act toward each other.

1. Where do you see the brokenness in the world?



## The Second Section of Law – Relationships with People

The Second Table of the law teaches us about the way God wants us to act toward our fellowman. God did not put us on this earth to be all alone. There are all kinds of people around us. We must live and work with them every day. God's commands protect and guide those relationships.

We might divide up the Second Table of the law like this: some of the commandments speak of other people, and the rest with the things those people own. In this chapter, we will speak of the Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Commandments that tell us how to act around other people.

At the end of the chapter, you will be able to:

- \* tell who is in authority over us and how we are to act toward them;
- \* tell what the Bible means by the word murder;
- \* tell what we are to do about the life and health of other people;
- \* tell the right and wrong uses of our sexuality.

## The Fourth Commandment – Respect Authority

***"Honor your father and mother  
that it may go well with you and  
that you may enjoy long life on the  
earth"***

(Exodus 20:12).

For people today, this commandment deals not only with your parents, but also with anyone whom God has put in authority over you. We are to obey

---

### The Fourth Commandment

**Honor your father and mother that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth**



*"What does this mean?"*

**Luther explains:**

**We should fear and love God that we do not dishonor or anger our parents and others in authority, but honor, serve, and obey them, and give them love and respect.**

---

them and show them honor and respect as they represent God who appoints them to take care of his world.

There are three areas of life where God puts people in authority over you. The first area is your home, when you are a child. The second is out in the world, where you have the government over you. The third is in your church, where pastors and teachers represent the authority of God's Word and his shepherding care over you.

In a way you might say God shares his authority with these people. He, of course, is the one who makes the rules and commandments. But he is also the one who put these people in authority over you. Consider the work of teachers. Parents tell their children, "Now, do what your teacher says." Just as parents entrust part of their authority and respect to teachers, God entrusts part of his authority and respect to those he has put over you. When you obey these people, you are obeying God.

## IN THE HOME

The family was the basic unit of society that God created and is the foundation of life and society. The duty to honor and respect parents is the primary step for developing respect for others. When either the responsibilities of parents or respect by children are neglected, the arrangement God created to show



**God Entrusts Part of  
His Authority in the  
World - to People**

Genesis 1:27-31



**Respect for Parents**

Ephesians 6:1-3

his care for the world starts to crumble. It is a sad fact that many people come from families where a father or mother is not at home. It makes it especially



difficult for the child to develop those healthy values, because it is in the home where we are to learn to honor those over us. On the other hand,

when children rebel against that love and disobey their authority, that also frustrates the responsibility of parents who are to train them up in the way they should live before God and the people around them.

Of course, parents are not only there to make rules. God wants them to care for us while we are children.



Small children cannot care for themselves very well. Father and mother are to feed and clothe their children. They are to give them a home, and

teach them to be good people. The homes are also to be training grounds to give love and respect for the older generation and cherish the memory of previous generations of people who laid a foundation for their way of life.

## IN THE GOVERNMENT

The government is also there to protect us and help



**Respect for Elderly**

1 Timothy 5:1-8

us. It makes and enforces the laws that make life safe. Think, for example, of how unsafe the roads and streets would be if the government did not have speed limit laws for cars and trucks. Fast drivers would be hurting or even killing many people. But there are speed limits and traffic police to enforce them, so that you can be safe walking alongside the road or street. To carry out its responsibility, governments have God's authority to bring the criminal to justice.

## IN THE CHURCH

In the church pastors and teachers also have authority over us. Theirs is a different kind of authority. It is not their responsibility to tell us what to eat or wear, like our parents in the home. It is not their responsibility to tell us how fast to drive, like the government can. But they tell us what the Bible says we are to do. They are not to add in their own ideas, but lead us to trust and obey God's Word. They do this out of love for us, since we all agree that we should know what God wants us to do.

It is sinful and harmful to disobey these authorities. God, after all, put them over us. To disobey them is like saying, "God, you made a mistake. I know better than you." But God, in his wisdom, gave us the authorities he gave us. In fact, we should obey them all the time – with only one exception. If they misuse their authority and tell us to do something that is against God's law, then we are to put God's will first and honor the First Commandment. Or if they forbid us to do something that God commands, then we have follow God's will above all. He is the ultimate authority. That holds true with all authorities. The religious authorities once told Jesus' followers that



### Respect for Government

Romans 13:1-7

Matthew 22:15-22



### David respects Saul's position as king

1 Samuel 26:1-21



### Respect for Church Leaders

Hebrews 13:7,17

they had to stop preaching and teaching about Jesus. The disciples replied, "*Which is right from God's point of view? Should we obey you? Or God?*" (Acts 4:19).

We are to obey those whom God has placed over us, as we would obey God himself, even though they are not perfect like God is. It is important to realize they are sinners just like us. Still, we are to give them respect and honor just as we see Jesus doing in his life. Even if we do not like them very much personally. Even if we think they could be doing better than they are doing, we are still to remember that God put them over us. We should respect the position they hold and respect them for being the people God thought should be in authority at this point in time.

2. What are the three areas in which God has set authorities over us?
3. Why is it difficult for us to honor and respect authority in the different stages of our lives?

## The Fifth Commandment – Protect Life

### ***"You shall not murder"***

(Exodus 20:13).

God alone is allowed to decide when peoples' lives end. He gives us life as a gift and wants us to spend our time on earth learning about our Savior, Jesus Christ so we can be reunited with him eternally. He also has designed special roles for us to carry out while we are in

---

### **The Fifth Commandment**

#### **You shall not murder**



*"What does this mean?"*

#### **Luther explains:**

We should fear and love God that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need.

---

his world. We do not have any right to shorten that period of time for someone else or ourselves.

Murder is a serious crime in any society. There is more to the Fifth Commandment, though, than just making sure we do not murder anyone. We are not to hurt or harm them, either. Beating someone up, or doing any physical harm to him or her, goes against this commandment.



### Cain kills Abel

Genesis 4:1-16

We shouldn't forget that God gives authority to governments to protect and keep their countries safe. In a world of aggression, envy, hatred, and crime, there are times the military, policemen, and courts are faced with putting to death enemies and dangerous criminals to protect other lives. In the proper setting, this isn't the murder that the commandment talks about.

But we disobey this commandment without even touching the other person. It happens already in our



### Hatred as Murder

Matthew 5:21-24

1 John 3:11-16

1 John 4:15-21

hearts. Apostle John said, “whoever hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him” (1 John 3:15). We break this commandment with cruel and selfishly angry words. Jesus said that if you are angry with someone without a good cause, or you say insulting things to him, that is also a sin against the Fifth Commandment.

What should we do instead? We should do all we can to make other people's lives good for them. We should praise them, not insult them. We should care about them, not hate them (not even our enemies!). We should do all we can to help them with whatever bodily needs they have. In this way we demonstrate God’s love and care. We show his compassion by reaching out especially to help the less fortunate, protecting the rights of the more vulnerable people in society, and not neglecting the widows and fatherless.

Going out of your way to be a friend and helpful to all, showing love even to those who oppose or irritate us, is what Jesus did when he gave up his life on the cross. He did it to save even those who cursed him. His action brought forgiveness for the many ways we have broken this command of God.

4. Talk about some ways we might become guilty of sinning against this commandment.
5. In society people are punished only based on their actions. Why would Jesus put hatred be in the same category as murder?



### **Fulfilling the Law of Love**

Matthew 5:43-48

Colossians 3:12-15



### **The Good Samaritan**

Luke 10:25-37

## The Sixth Commandment – Honor Marriage

**" You should not commit adultery "**

(Exodus 20:14)

God designed the bond of marriage to be a lifelong commitment of a man and woman to live together in love and mutual companionship. Respect for marriage is foundational to healthy families and a healthy society.

Adultery is the sin of having sex outside of marriage. Inappropriate sexual activity undermines marriage.

Adultery is a sin against all kinds of people. First of all, it is a sin against the person with whom you are committing adultery. Secondly, it is a sin against the person you are married to or are going to marry one day. Thirdly, it is a sin against the person that your partner in adultery is married to or going to marry one day. Seeking those intimate pleasures of marriage without the commitment creates broken lives and damaged emotions. Above all, it is a sin against God who wants us to honor him with our bodies. He wants the actions of a loving husband and wife to picture for us his relationship with us as his Church.

---

### The Sixth Commandment

**You shall not commit adultery**



*"What does this mean?"*

**Luther explains:**

We should fear and love God that we lead a pure and decent life in words and actions, and that husband and wife love and honor each other.

---



### **Honoring Marriage**

Ephesians 5:21-33

1 Corinthians 7:2-17





## Sexual Boundaries

Matthew 5:27-32

1 Corinthians 7:2-6

1 Thessalonians 4:1-8

Some people think sex itself is a sin, but within marriage it is part of a loving bond between husband and wife. And when God created the human race, he gave Eve to Adam and said, "*Have children and increase your numbers*" (Genesis 1:28). It was his design to create a growing family out of the sexual intimacy of a husband and wife.

The sin is in having sex with the wrong person. God means for it to be only between husband and wife. Too many people in the world around us do not think that way anymore. They think you should be allowed to have sex with anyone you want, even if they are the same sex as you are! But God's Word forbids it. And it goes without saying that sexually abusing innocent children or violating women is also repulsive in God's sight.

It is not only sexual activity, of course, that the Sixth Commandment speaks about. It is our whole way of thinking about the opposite sex. Even just having thoughts about having sex with someone else is



## Joseph & Potiphar's wife

Genesis 39: 1-12



## David and Bathsheba

2 Samuel 11:1 – 12:14

violating God's will (unless, of course, you are married to that someone else!). Jesus said, *"Do not even look at a woman in a lustful way. Anyone who does has already committed adultery with her in his heart"* (Matthew 5:28). Well, that is exactly what dirty magazines or internet pornography are all about! It goes contrary to this commandment to have those magazines around or watch the movies and television shows that arouse sinful sexual desires. The same goes for those jokes that make fun of sex or any talk that does not treat sex with anything but respect.

Here is what God wants. He wants everyone to respect marriage and to remain true and faithful to their spouses as long as they are both alive. He wants us to work hard to build the trust and unity that make the marriage relationship stronger. He wants us to love each other and be helpful to each other. He wants us to raise the children he gives us. And he has given sex as a gift to such people in such a marriage.

All of these commandments become both a curb and a mirror for us. They not only restrain wickedness but reveal how imperfect we are. They call us to repentance seeking forgiveness. Our failures to keep these commands would surely bring the punishment of God upon us. For that reason they also help us understand the need for a Savior which God provided for us in Jesus. He perfectly kept God's will in our place. His sacrifice and love lead us to use these commandments as a guide to live in love and thanks to him.

6. Talk about some ways we might become guilty of sinning against this commandment.



### **Sinful Nature vs. Fruits of the Spirit**

Galatians 5:19-26

Ephesians 4:17-32

Colossians 3:1-21

7. Where is the greatest temptation in our society to break this command of God?



## CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE

1. If your parents tell you something you don't like, how do you still show respect for them?
2. The Fifth commandment forbids murder and hatred. Give positive actions we can do to keep this commandment.
3. Couples like to live together outside of marriage. How do you think the sixth commandment addresses that?
4. What actions could you take to improve your relationship with your spouse if you are married?
5. Pick out the one point that was most meaningful for you in this lesson.
6. Please pray to God based on this.



## **YOUR NEXT STEPS**

### **Memorize it!**

Memorize commandments 4-6.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this into your life this week.

### **Share it!**

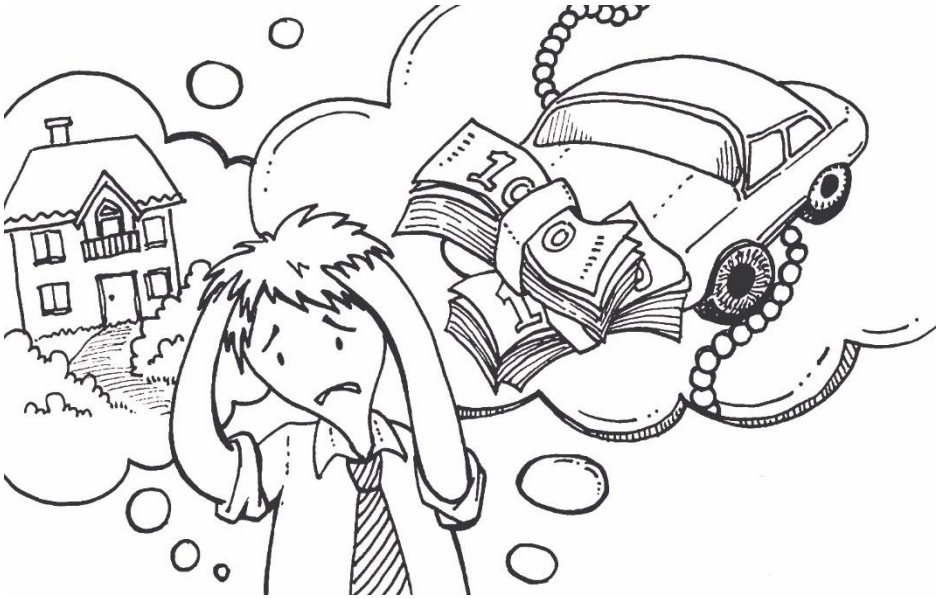
Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can take this book along to help you).

*Go on to Lesson 4 to learn of the last section of God's law.*

## Chapter Four

# THE SECOND TABLE OF THE LAW

### PART TWO



What do you consider valuable? We work hard for what we have and value a favorable reputation. But sometimes it doesn't take much for possessions or reputation to be taken away by someone else's words or actions. Jealousy and envy for what others have can lead to stealing or slander. Covetousness, criticism, and bitterness towards others often ruins relationships and lives. It has been the cause of crimes and wars.

1. Discuss some specific examples of damage caused in the world by jealousy, envy, or bitterness.

We might be quick to see these attitudes and actions in others, but often

fail to see it in ourselves. They not only decrease our appreciation of what we do have but also our efforts to protect what others have. In the last chapter we learned how God wants us to act toward our fellow man. We learn more about that in this chapter, with a little difference. The last four commandments tell us how we are to behave toward those things God has given to our fellow man.

The Seventh through the Tenth Commandments talk about the things that belong to our neighbor. These things include his property, his good name, and the like. In this chapter you will learn about helping others keep what God has given them. By the end of the chapter you will be able to:

- \* tell why we must not steal the possessions of others;
- \* tell why we must not ruin the good name of others; and
- \* tell what it means to covet and why we should not do it.

## The Seventh Commandment – Protect Their Possessions

***"You shall not steal"***  
(Exodus 20:15)

We say stealing is the crime of taking something that belongs to someone else. Let us see what those words, "belongs to someone", means. How do things come to belong to us? Perhaps we were given them as a gift. Maybe we earned them by working for them or bought them with money we had earned. Maybe we inherited them from a loved one who died and left them to us in his or her will.

---

### The Seventh Commandment

**You shall not steal**



*"What does this mean?"*

**Luther explains:**

We should fear and love God that we do not take our neighbor's money or property, or get it by dishonest dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and means of income.

---

---

## Everything that belongs to us is a gift from God

---

But, in truth,  
everything that  
belongs to us is a gift  
from God. As the  
Bible tells us, "Every

good and perfect gift is from God. It comes down from the Father. He created the heavenly lights" (James 1:17). He gives them to us in the ways described above. He moves someone to give us a gift or remember us in their will. He gives us the ability to work and earn money to buy possessions.

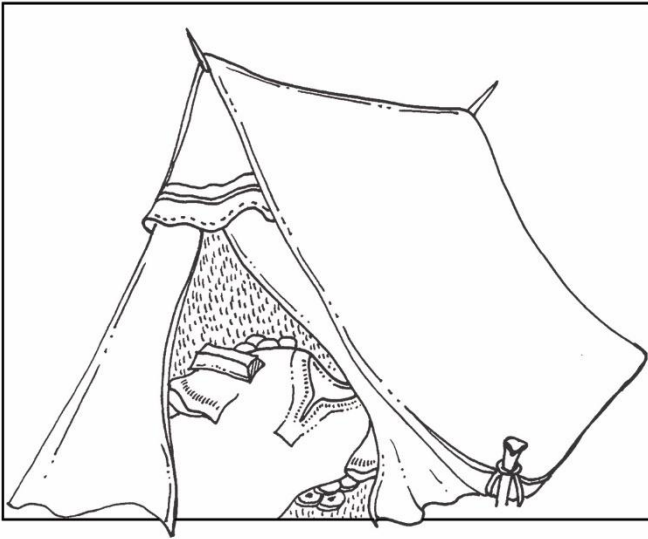
The same thing we said in the last chapter about life applies to possessions. God gave them to us; he alone may decide when they should be taken away. In fact, stealing something from someone else is not only a sin against that person. It is an insult to God.

Think of it this way. Suppose a father was dying and wrote up a legal will to distribute his estate to his family. What if one of the children came to him and said, "You are foolish. You have given more to my brother than to me. I deserve more and will find a way to get my fair share." Is that not an insult to the father? How dare he become jealous for something that never was his. The father has every right to distribute his inheritance as he will for whatever reason he has.

We do the same thing if we steal. God decided that Joe or Peter or Mary has the things they have. If you steal them, you are telling God that he was wrong in giving those people the things they have and that you deserve them more. You are going to have to fix his mistake by taking the things he gave to them and giving them to yourself, instead.



**Achan's Theft of  
Forbidden Items**  
Joshua 7:1-26



Stealing can come in many forms. It can be in the form of a worker not faithfully working for his wages. I can be a businessman cheating workers of wages or overcharging customers. Too often stealing is driven by believing that life is all about me or having more for ourselves will bring happiness and success. Other times it is driven by desperation. At the heart of it is either selfishness or a lack of trust that God will take care of us if we follow his will.

So, what should we do instead of stealing? We should help others keep what they have. If we see that someone's possessions are in danger of being stolen, we should warn him and help him protect them. If those possessions are getting ruined, we should help him fix them.

In short, we should not have an idea in our head that says, "Well, I have my things, and that is enough." It is not enough. God wants us to look out for the



### Love of Money

1 Timothy  
6:9-10, 17-19

Hebrews 13:5-6



things other people own, too. We need to remember that God gave each person the things he has. And he has given each of us the responsibility to help others protect and improve what they have.

It is easy for money and possessions to become a god that we love and trust in rather than loving and trusting our heavenly Father who provides all things for us. It is important to remember that God is the owner of all things and distributes them as he will. Our first response of thankfulness for his care and gifts is to set aside a portion of what he has given as our worship offering to him. It keeps our hearts in tune with the first commandment to have no other gods than the true God. It becomes an antidote to the infection of greed that the seventh commandment addresses. If we put him first in our possessions, he promises he will open the floodgates of his blessings in a way that will benefit our life and service to him.

---

**God wants us to be a  
generous giver like he is**

---

God also wants us to be a generous giver like he is. Sharing what we have with

those in need reflects his heart. So the cure is an attitude of generosity, an eagerness to share what you have in a way that could benefit others – especially the needy. Apostle Paul says, “He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need” (Ephesians 4:28). God is the ultimate Giver. Not only did he give us our lives and the things we have. God gave us his Son to die for us so we could inherit the treasures of heaven. Knowing that has a transforming impact on a life of generosity.



**Stealing from  
God?**

Malachi 3:6-12



**Living  
Generosity**

2 Corinthians 9:6-11

2. How is stealing more than just sinning against the people you steal from?
3. Talk about ways we can honor and obey this commandment.

## The Eighth Commandment – Protect Their Reputation

***You shall not give false testimony  
against your neighbor"***  
(Exodus 20:16).

Usually, when we hear the word, witness, we think about being in a courtroom. It is a great sin to lie about another person while under oath, because we know very well what could happen to him. He might end up in jail when he did not do anything wrong.

But there are other times we witness about our neighbor. We may be talking about someone when he is not in the room. What will we say?

We can see very easily that it would be wrong to tell lies about him to ruin his good name.

---

**Your good name is one  
of the greatest gifts God  
gives you on this earth**

---

own reputations by their bad deeds. But no one has

---

### The Eighth Commandment

**You shall not give false testimony  
against your neighbor**



*"What does this mean?"*

**Luther explains:**

We should fear and love God that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, or give him a bad name, but defend him, speak well of him, and take his words and actions in the kindest possible way.

---

the right to ruin the reputation of someone else by what they say about them.



### A good name

Proverbs 22:1

Proverbs  
16:21-25, 28

James 3:1-18

In fact, there may be times when it is a sin to tell the truth about someone. Of course, this is not true in court. In court you are swearing before God to tell the whole truth, even if it gets someone else in trouble. But suppose you knew someone who had some shameful thing in his past that he did not want anyone else to know. If they knew it, they would not respect him. It would be wrong for you to tell what that shameful secret is just so that you could ruin that person's good name.

The best thing to do when it comes to the Eighth Commandment would be this: Do not say anything, true or false, to ruin another person's good name unless you absolutely have to. If you are under oath, or if someone will be hurt if you do not say what you know about someone else, then you will have to say things that will destroy his reputation. But otherwise, you must keep silent. And, of course, you must never lie about anyone.

The Apostle Paul says it clearly, *"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen"* (Ephesians 4:29). Instead of ruining someone's good name, we should do all we can to defend it. Suppose people are gossiping about someone who is not there to defend himself. It is up to you, then, to step in and defend him. You might tell the others, "You would not want people talking about you behind your back. Give this person that same consideration!" When others are saying bad things about someone, you should say good things about him. When others are ruining his name, you do all you can to uphold it.

As Martin Luther explained, you should take his

---

**Take his words and actions in the kindest possible way**

---

words and actions in the kindest possible way. Suppose you have suspicions about your friend. Suppose you see him doing something that looks bad at first. What should you do then? You should give the person the benefit of the doubt. For example, if someone is talking with a slurred voice and is having trouble standing straight or walking, you might suspect that he is high on drugs or is drunk. But giving him the benefit of the doubt, you ought to say to yourself, "Maybe he is feeling sick today." Also you might go over to him and try to help him. That is the way God wants you to help and be a friend to him.

4. Discuss some of the ways we might become guilty of sinning against this commandment.



## Jonathan defends David's reputation

1 Samuel 19:1-7

5. List some ways you can protect another person's good name.

## The Ninth & Tenth Commandments – Protect Your Heart

The final two commandments speak about different aspects of the same sin of coveting.

The Ninth Commandment says,

***"You shall not covet your neighbor's house.***

(Exodus 20:17)

The Tenth Commandment says something similar,

***" You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, workers, animals, or anything that belongs to your neighbor"***

(Exodus 20:17)

Out of the heart comes evil thoughts that can also turn into evil actions. Coveting is a sin we commit in our minds and hearts. But it is very bad, even if we never do anything about such desires. Coveting means we really, really want something that we know we are not meant to have.

It is not a sin to desire or want what our neighbor has, if we could get it honestly and for purposes that honor God. If he has a book he might lend to us, or even sell us, there is no sin in wanting it. But when he has something we know he does not want to part

---

### The Ninth Commandment



*"What does this mean?"*

**Luther explains:**

We should fear and love God that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or obtain it by a show of right, but do all we can to help him keep it.

---

### The Tenth Commandment



*"What does this mean?"*

**Luther explains:**

We should fear and love God that we do not force or entice away our neighbor's spouse, workers, or animals, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

---

with (for example, his wife), then it is wrong to keep on desiring it.

Coveting is, first of all, a sin against God. As we said in connection with the Seventh Commandment, it is like telling God he made a mistake. "Lord, you gave that wonderful coat to the wrong person. It should have been mine! You gave that good wife or husband to the wrong person. He or she should have been mine!" Coveting is also a sin against the person whose things you covet. You are really wishing him harm when you want the things that he enjoys. Suppose he died tomorrow, and you could get what he has and what you covet. You would be sort of glad about his death. What kind of attitude is that to have against another human being?



Coveting often leads to other sins. The Bible has many examples of such sins. One story tells of a king named Ahab who wanted to buy the grapevines of a man named Naboth. But Naboth did not wish to sell his vineyard. Ahab continued to covet the vines anyway. Before it was all done the king and his wife



### **Ahab Covets Naboth's Vineyard**

1 Kings 21:1-15



### **Cleansing the heart**

Matthew 15:18-20

Colossians 3:1-10

1 John 2:15-17

Psalms 51:1-12

paid evil people to testify, or witness, against Naboth in court. They got him killed for a crime he never did, and then stole his vines for themselves.

As with all the other commandments, the mirror of the law convicts us of violating God's holy will. An honest assessment of our lives would surely lead us to confess to God how we have wronged him and bring us to repentance. The great thing about our God is that he convicted his Son Jesus of all the crimes of selfishness we committed. His death and life have caused God to look on those who have faith in him as if they had lived the perfect life Jesus lived. That brings a peace and contentment that world cannot give. *"The peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"* (Philippians 4:7).

So how does the law guide us here? King Solomon said, *"Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it"* (Proverbs 4:23). When we are happy with what we have, we are content. Who, after all, is richer: the rich man who cannot be happy unless he

---

**Do all you can to help  
them appreciate and  
keep what they have**

---

has more, more, more, or the poor man who is very happy with only a little? A Christian finds

contentment with however much God has given him. This is especially true when he remembers God gave him the greatest gift there is, a Savior named Jesus Christ.

When you have Jesus, there is no longer any reason to be unhappy just because someone else has something you wish you could have. Instead, you will be more eager to share Jesus with others than to



### **Life of Contentment**

Luke 12:13-34

1 Timothy 6:6-8

Philippians  
4:11-13, 19-20

take what Jesus decided to give them. As for their possessions as well as spouse, workers, animals, and everything else, you will want to do all you can to help them appreciate and keep what they have.

6. Talk about some of the ways we might become guilty of sinning against these last two commandments.
7. What are some things we can do to guard and guide our hearts?



## **CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE**

1. Centuries before Jesus was born, God told his people they robbed him in their tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:6-12). How should we understand that? How does that apply to our offering to church today?
2. Think of the times you may have ruined a person's good name last week. How would you improve it?
3. Some people might say coveting helps me work hard to reach the target. How would you respond to this?



4. Pick out the one point that was most important for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



## **YOUR NEXT STEPS**

### **Memorize it!**

Memorize the commandments 7-10.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this into your life this week.

### **Share it!**

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can take this book along to help you).

*Go on to Lesson 5 for concluding comments about God's law.*

## Chapter Five

# THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN YOUR LIFE



Many people want to become a better person. To do this, many will use a program, that is, a series of steps they must take to reach their goal. An alcoholic might follow a well-known Twelve Step program to stop drinking. Someone who is overweight might follow a program to lose that extra weight. There are plenty of programs like these on the internet

1. Describe times you or your friends tried a program to improve yourself. What were the results?

Some people think of the Ten Commandments as a Ten Step program to becoming a better person. It is true that if people would try to live according to the Ten Commandments, they would probably be better people.

But God did not give these commandments to us as a self-improvement program. The goal is not just to improve our lives and make us better people. The Ten Commandments provide the opportunity to take an

---

**The Ten  
Commandments provide  
the opportunity to take  
an honest look at  
ourselves**

---

honest look at ourselves and our relationship with God. His commandments bring us to repentance and lead us to depend on the forgiveness God has shown us through Christ. That is what we will talk about in this final chapter.

At the end of the chapter you will be able to:

- \* tell how well God commands us to keep the Ten Commandments;
- \* tell how Jesus used the Ten Commandments to save us from our sins; and
- \* tell how a Christian uses the Ten Commandments.

## The High Standards of God's Law

When someone gives you a list of rules, he expects you to obey them. However, some rule-givers will give you a little wiggle room. That means they realize you may not keep the rules exactly the way they would like, but they will be satisfied if you are trying or at least not creating trouble.



**Adam and Eve Fall  
to Sin**

Genesis 3:1-13

Romans 5:12-14

That is not the way it is with God. When he gives rules, he means for you to obey them perfectly. In the Bible he says, "Be holy, because I am holy" (Leviticus 11:44). Holy means perfect. That means that even one sin, even one little sin is too many for God. You are not holy any more after that. James, one of the writers of the Bible, put it this way, *"Suppose you keep the whole law but trip over just one part of it. Then you are guilty of breaking all of it. God said, 'Do not commit adultery.' He also said, 'Do not commit murder.' Suppose you don't commit adultery but do commit murder. Then you have broken the law"* (James 2:10-11).

Remember one more thing. Adam and Eve, in the Garden of Eden, disobeyed only one law, one simple command. God told them not to eat the fruit of a certain tree. They ate it anyway. That sin dishonored

---

**God is a God of justice  
and serious about sin**

---

the trusting  
relationship with God.  
For that one sin they  
were thrown out of  
Eden and condemned

to die. We not only inherited their sinful nature but also the punishments. God is a God of justice and serious about sin. Every sin we commit is an offence against the honor and respect that is due to our God who created and cares for us. Any sin separates us from the life of eternal blessings that he desired with each of us.

The law has no power to change what is wrong inside. So, people who want to use the Ten Commandments as a program to improve themselves are only fooling themselves. We end up measuring ourselves in comparison with others rather than with God's standards. In self-righteous

**To sin =**

Miss the target

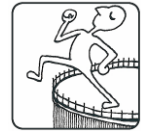
1 John 3:4



**To transgress =**

Cross the line

Isaiah 53:5



**Iniquity =**

Crooked behavior

Isaiah 53:5



pride we think we are doing pretty good, but we can never fix our sinful heart. Can we ever obey the commandments perfectly? Of course not. God does not allow any wiggle room. It shows how desperately we need a savior.

2. What is the difference between the requirements of God's law and the laws of society today?

## Jesus' Perfect Obedience to God's Law

But there was one man who did keep the law! He kept all the commandments perfectly his whole life long. That was Jesus Christ, our Savior. He never committed a single sin! He never even desired to do anything that would dishonor or not fulfill God's law.

You might say, "So what? What good does that do me?" The answer is, it does you all the good in the world. Jesus obeyed the whole law of God as your substitute. Because of that, God acted as if you had kept the law. Jesus' perfect and holy life satisfied him so much, that he counted what Jesus did as everything he ever wanted from the entire human race.

---

**Jesus obeyed the whole law as your substitute**

---

Think of it this way. Suppose you are a poor person. You cannot afford a decent set of clothes. You are invited to an important event, a big feast or banquet. The invitation says, "Formal clothes required." How



**Jesus' Love and Obedience Saves Us**

John 3:16-18

Romans  
5:6-11,15-19



**Law says:**  
*You must do this or  
be punished  
(shows our sin)*

**Gospel says:**  
*Jesus did this and  
forgives you  
(shows our Savior)*

Galatians 3:7-14

1 John 2:1-2

can you go there? You do not have any formal clothes. Then a friend says, "Here, you can wear my clothes to this banquet." Now you can go. You have the right clothes, even though they are not your own.

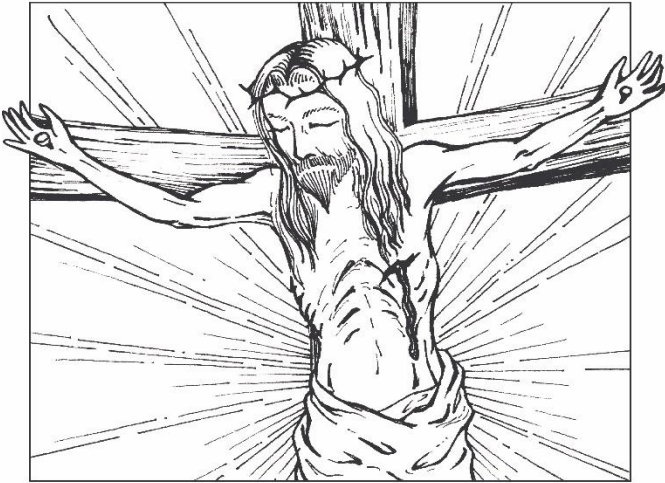
The Bible speaks in the same way about Jesus' perfect life. It says that Jesus' perfection, his righteousness, is like a beautiful set of clothes that we are invited to wear to God's great banquet or feast. "All of you" the Bible says, "who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ as if he were your clothes" (Galatians 3:27).



In fact, just as Jesus gave us his perfect life to wear before God, he took our clothes and wore them. Our clothes (lives) were filthy, covered with our sins. That doesn't mean God overlooks sin. The death of his son Jesus in our place shows how serious sin is and how big the punishment is. Jesus took on the punishment we deserved. *Jesus* covered himself with our sins when he died on the cross. God looked at him and

saw only our sins and made Jesus pay for them with his life. He experienced the separation from God (hell) that we would have to face. Now God looks at us and sees only Jesus' holy obedience to the Ten Commandments, and is pleased with us.

Apostle Paul explains this great exchange, *"God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God"* (2 Corinthians 5:21). That is what "reconciles" us with God, or in other words, brings us back to a healthy relationship with him.



This is what the Bible calls the "good news" or the gospel. The gospel, not the law, is the solution to our sin and failures.

3. Discuss our failure to keep God's law and how Jesus changes the way God looks on us.

## My Respect for God's Law

Someone might get the wrong thought or idea here, though. He or she might say, "Well, since Jesus obeyed the Ten Commandments for me, I do not have to obey them. I can sin all I want to and still be saved."

It is true that we are not saved by keeping the commandments. In fact, we are not capable of obeying like we should. Our comfort and hope come from knowing that Jesus completely obeyed God's will as our substitute so that God can look at us as if we were righteous. The Bible says so again and again. "*Christ has completed the law. So now everyone who believes can be right with God*" (Romans 10:4).

But if a person now says, "I can sin all I want," he deceives himself. The fact is believers do not want to sin at all! That does not reflect the attitude of the new life the Holy Spirit gives us through faith. That does not honor the great love the Father has lavished on us to make us his children. Jesus laid down his life to free us from sin. Why would we want to go back to what enslaved us? We are very grateful to Jesus for being our Savior. Why would we want to do things he does not like?

Think back to that illustration about wearing someone else's formal clothes to a banquet. Would you feel free, wearing those clothes, to start running and jumping around in the mud? Of course not! What kind of a way is that to thank the person who loaned them to you?



**Honoring God by  
obeying**

Deuteronomy 10:12-13

Romans 12:1-2



Jesus put his perfect clothes on us. He dressed us up in his perfect obedience and brought us to God.

---

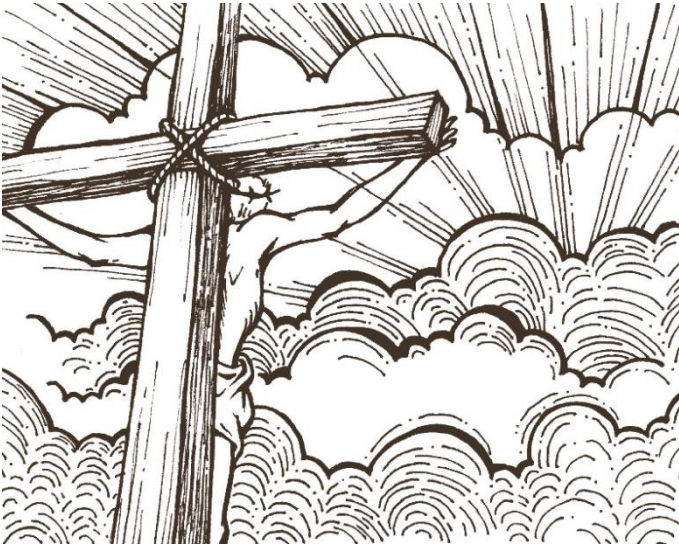
**Jesus dressed us up in his perfect obedience and brought us to God.**

---

Dressed like that, why would we want to run out and get dirty in our sins again?

The Bible puts it this way. “Let us behave

*decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. <sup>14</sup> Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh. (Romans 13:13-14).*



The problem is we continue to struggle with sin. Like failing a self-improvement program, we desire to do better, but don't follow through. The sinful nature living in us still causes us to desire or do the wrong



**Put off the Old Life  
Put on the New  
Life**

Romans 6:1-14

Ephesians 4:17-32

Colossians 3:1-17

things. Because of that, our daily life becomes a constant battle between the old nature of sin and the

---

**Our daily life becomes a constant battle between the old nature of sin and the new creation of the Holy Spirit in us.**

---

new creation of the Holy Spirit in us. It helps to understand that other Christians go through the same struggle. Sometimes the good things we

intend to do we end up not doing. Sometimes the evil things, the hateful things, the indecent things, we want to avoid, we end up falling into. So we look to the Scriptures for strength for the battle. We ask the Holy Spirit to help us in our weakness and guide us along our way. We look at what Jesus did on the cross to be reminded of his forgiveness. We look at his sacrificial love for us as our motivation to live for him. Our love for him and our obedience to his commands is the natural fruit that comes from faith.

So that is how you want to live in relationship to the Ten Commandments – with a life worthy of the one who saved you. That is where the commandments can guide you to understand what is pleasing to God. Let people learn how to honor our holy God by the way you love God and obey his will. Show them how much God loves them by the ways you love them, just as the Commandments guide us to do.

4. Why is God's law even more precious to someone who believes in Jesus?



**Struggling with Sin**

Romans 7:7-25

**Conquerors in Christ**

Romans 8:28-39

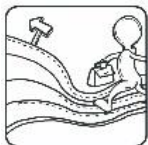


**Love for God - the heartbeat of the commandments**

Matthew 22:37-40

Romans 13:9-10

1 John 4:7-12



## CONNECTING TO YOUR DAILY LIFE

1. People might say they can be perfect someday, if they follow the right principles or practices of life. How would you respond to this comment based on the standards of how to obey God's law?
2. Some Christians might say God loved you and died for you on the cross. Now it is your turn to obey his commandments to be a true Christian. What is confusing about that perspective?
3. In our daily lives, we find we do not always like to obey God's law. Does that prove we are not Christian? How to explain that?
4. Pick out the one point that was most important for you in this lesson.
5. Please pray to God based on this.



## YOUR NEXT STEPS

### **Memorize it!**

Memorize the difference between the law and the gospel.

### **Apply it!**

Discuss how you can put this into your life this week.

### **Share it!**

Who especially needs to hear this? Determine how you will share this chapter with others. (You can use this lesson to help you).

## APPENDIX



# MARTIN LUTHER'S Explanations of the TEN COMMANDMENTS

## FIRST COMMANDMENT

**You shall have no other gods.**

*"What does this mean?"*

We should fear, love, and trust in God above all things.

## SECOND COMMANDMENT

**You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God.**

*"What does this mean?"*

We should fear and love God that we do not use his name to curse, swear, lie, or deceive, or use witchcraft, but call upon God's name in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

## THIRD COMMANDMENT

**Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy**

*"What does this mean?"*

We should fear and love God that we do not despise preaching and his Word, but regard it as holy and gladly hear and learn it.

## **FOURTH COMMANDMENT**

**Honor your father and mother that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth**

*“What does this mean?”*

We should fear and love God that we do not dishonor or anger our parents and others in authority, but honor, serve, and obey them, and

## **FIFTH COMMANDMENT**

**You shall not murder**

*“What does this mean?”*

We should fear and love God that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and befriend him in every bodily need.

## **SIXTH COMMANDMENT**

**You shall not commit adultery.**

*“What does this mean?”*

We should fear and love God that we lead a pure and decent life in words and actions, and that husband and wife love and honor each other.

## **SEVENTH COMMANDMENT**

**You shall not steal.**

*“What does this mean?”*

We should fear and love God that we do not take our neighbor's money or property, or get it by dishonest dealing, but help him to improve and protect his property and means of income.

## **EIGHTH COMMANDMENT**

**You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor**

*“What does this mean?”*

We should fear and love God that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, or give him a bad name, but defend him, speak well of him, and take his words and actions in the kindest possible way.

## **NINTH COMMANDMENT**

**You shall not covet your neighbor's house.**

*“What does this mean?”*

We should fear and love God that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or obtain it by a show of right, but do all we can to help him keep it.

## TENTH COMMANDMENT

**You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, workers, animals, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.**

*"What does this mean?"*

We should fear and love God that we do not force or entice away our neighbor's spouse, workers, or animals, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

---

### **Words of God to Moses when he gave him the 10 Commandments:**

*"This is what you are to say to ...the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' (Exodus 19:3-6)*

*"I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents 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 20:5).*

### **Moses' encouragement to the people:**

*"These are the commands, decrees and laws the LORD your God directed me to teach you to observe...so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the LORD your God as long as you live... Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deuteronomy 6:1-7).*









# The Law of God



Multi-Language Publications  
Bringing the Word to the World

Living in Faith Series - English  
The Law of God  
MLP Catalog No: 385471