

The Ten Commandments

(Mark 10:17-21) *As [Jesus] was setting out on his journey, a man ran up and knelt before him and asked him, “Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” And Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘Do not murder, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother.’” And he said to him, “Teacher, all these I have kept from my youth.” And Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him, “You lack one thing: go, sell all that you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me.”*



Here are the Ten Commandments, taken from Exodus 20:1-17. I have shortened and simplified them, to get to the essence of what they say to us.

1. I am the Lord your God. You shall have no other Gods before me.
2. You shall not worship any idols.
3. You shall not misuse the name of God.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

My brothers and sisters in Christ, do we obey our Lord? Do we keep even these Ten Commandments, as simple and straightforward as they are? Let's examine ourselves.

1. God is God. Do not have, or serve, or cater to, or worship any other gods.

For every one of us, the god we are most likely to serve in place of the true God is the god of self. We are born selfish, self-serving, and prideful, and without God's help we will remain in the same condition all of our lives and die that way. Jesus tells

us how to overcome this. He says, “Deny yourself. Take up your cross [obedience] every day and follow me. Take my yoke [obedience] upon your shoulders and learn from me how to be gentle and humble (see *Matthew 16:24 and 11:29, on page 3 of this issue*).

2. Don't worship any idols.

An idol is not necessarily an image of something made of stone or metal. An idol is anything that is more important to you than God. Philippians 3:19 speaks scornfully of those whose “god is their belly” and whose “minds are set on earthly things.” If you give too much importance to a “star” of music or film or sports, or if you are simply more self-indulgent than you should be, you are into idol worship.



A note about addiction: if you're addicted to anything — tobacco, alcohol, drugs, gossip, gambling, sex, pornography, overeating, anything at all — then that thing, for you, is an idol.

3. Don't misuse the name of God.

Most people think of this in terms of swearing, and that's correct. Any word of condemnation — even “DARN!” — is misusing God's name, because only God has authority to condemn or curse anyone or anything. Also, using His name as an exclamation of surprise or disgust, as in “Oh my God!” (or “OMG” in a text message), or “Jesus Christ!,” is just as bad. God's name should always be used, with reverence, to praise Him or tell others about Him. And that's all.

But there's another way to misuse God's name. If you call yourself a Christian, and you don't try to live as followers of Jesus are supposed to live, obeying His commands (see *John 14:15*), then you are misusing the name of God (i.e. “Christ”). If you “talk the talk” without “walking the walk,” you are disobeying this commandment.

4. Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy.

Whether you observe a Sabbath day on Saturday or Sunday, there is supposed to be one day each week when you take your focus off of yourself and your own pursuits, and devote your time and your attention to the Lord. How many of us actually do that? How many of us even try? How many of us even want to?



Saturday is for doing all those things that can't be done on a weekday, for whatever reason. Sunday is for eating junk food and watching sports on television. Isn't that how we think? It's sad.

5. Honor your father and your mother.

Some of us do a pretty good job of this, up to a point. Many of us don't.

What does "honor" mean in this context? First, it isn't conditional. Don't honor them because they are honorable; treat them with honor, respect, kindness, gratitude, and love, no matter whether they seem worthy or not. Honor them, and let them see that you are doing so. You have no idea what God can do in your life and theirs, if you obey this commandment.

What if you didn't have two parents? What if your father abandoned you and your mother never had time to meet your needs, and you were raised by someone else? Then, first of all, don't bad-mouth your delinquent parent(s); and, second, give full parental honor to the one(s) who actually served you as a parent.

6. You shall not murder anyone.

7. You shall not commit adultery.

8. You shall not steal.

All three of these are about taking something from someone that is not yours to take. Murder is taking someone's life; adultery is damaging or destroying a marriage relationship (yours and your spouse's, or another's, or both); and stealing is, well, stealing. Those of us who want to feel good about ourselves can say, "Well, at least I haven't done those three things." As if that is an excuse for breaking other commandments.

But even if you actually have done one or more of those three things, the commandments are still in effect. Don't do those things again.

One more thing: watch what you say. Jesus says that calling someone a fool is as wrong as murder (see *Matthew 5:21-22*). Don't put people down.

9. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

With the parable we call "The Good Samaritan," Jesus declared that everyone is your neighbor. Some say this is an injunction against all lying, and that well may be so. Luther's take on it was as follows: "We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way." My own version is that when we speak, we should always "speak the truth, in love" (see *Ephesians 4:15*).

10. You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.

Desiring something (or someone) that belongs to someone else is like wanting to steal, without actually doing it. It's an offense against your neighbor, who would be deprived of it if you had your way; and it's also an offense against the Lord, who provided it for your neighbor, and who does not want you to desire things for your own gratification or pleasure, but wants you to desire a closer relationship with Himself.

Now, having looked at the Ten Commandments, probably for the first time in a long while, what have we learned?

First, if obeying the commandments is required for salvation, we're lost. I'm a sinner, and so are you. All praise and thanks to our God, that our Savior has paid the awful penalty for our sins!



The second thing we can learn is that, even if we fail to obey every one of these commandments perfectly, we should still try hard to obey them. They are not out-of-date; they are still good commands. And they are not given for God's benefit; they are for the benefit of His people — us. When we obey God, we not only please Him; we actually change ourselves a little bit. We become more like Jesus; more in tune with truth and goodness and heavenly joy.

Fortunately, we have good help — three helps, in fact: the Word of God (the Bible), prayer, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. If we will dedicate ourselves to obeying God, and make use of these three helps that He has provided, we will please Him and grow in Christ -- and call ourselves "Christian" with peace and joy!

Blessings in Christ!

Brother Roland

Bible verses referenced on pages 1 and 2:

(Matthew 16:24) Then Jesus told his disciples, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.

(Matthew 11:29) Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ""

(John 14:15) "If you love me, you will keep my commandments."

(Matthew 5:21-22) "You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire."

(Ephesians 4:15) Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,

Becoming A Happy Person

by Merlin Carothers

We must practice on a piano if we want to learn how to play it well. No matter how much we wish we could play a musical instrument or paint a beautiful picture, we must do whatever is necessary to reach our goal.

To become a happy person we must practice being a happy person.

Learning to play the piano is easier for some people than others. Having good hands, and the ability to memorize are very helpful, but people with determination can conquer many obstacles.

Learning to be a happy person is difficult for some people. Some of us face greater hardships than others, but God's desire is for every believer to have His happiness; Jesus came to make it possible for everyone.

If we have serious problems it is easy for us to decide, "I can't do it." Or, "I don't know how to do it." We then end up being unhappy and we often cause others to be the same.

We can decide, "I can't be happy on my own, but because of Jesus I can learn how." Because of Him we can do the "all things" in Philippians 4:13. For example, we can believe we have eternal life. Because of Him we can also do the seemingly impossible by being happy in very difficult circumstances.

Sickness, poverty, and loneliness are a few of the many obstacles we may face. But Jesus offered us the gift of receiving whatever we believe He will give us. True, we have to learn how to believe, and that isn't always easy, but we can learn if we determine to practice what Jesus taught us. His disciples had difficulty learning, but they did learn. They caused their hardships to work for them. Some of them recorded what they learned, in the Bible, and we are free to learn from them.

We can learn, and then practice the joy that Jesus came to give us. Some of us have to work harder but we can end up with greater joy than those who have not been "blessed" with difficulties! Jesus said, Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest (Matt. 11:28 NIV).

Such a promise may seem impossible to receive if you are weary or burdened, but God makes the impossible possible! Multitudes of people have learned that God wants to give rest to all who are weary and burdened. As you learn, you can have the even greater joy of helping others who carry heavy burdens.

Moving? If your address is changing, please send me your new address. Maryland inmates, don't forget to include your SID number. I would like to keep sending you the "Good News Guide" for as long as you'd like to receive it. As always, if you want to send me a question or a comment, send them to me at this address:

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The Ten Commandments

Here are some of the words and phrases God spoke to the people of Israel when He gave them the Ten Commandments. Enjoy!

Puzzle:

X L X Y O U R N E I G H B O R S H O U S E J T J M I S F X B
T T C P B D F D Z Y S I A S I E T G L E L Y I H A N X Y C G
Q H A N D Y O U R M O T H E R G A A Y D Y X E I P S P S S A
L A E P G X S N M Q V C A H X O B G D N R L V K Y I B D I I
G T I S S R T I O T N W O D W O B D N A E O R D P X U R F W
G Y V I A I T F R T I E L B O L A E M U T K E R Z D R O H J
B O M C S B A O B I B A M L H P S F D R L E S O R A U W R J
K U R B H D B Q K Q W E Q D V B E S O J U R D L W Y H E L Y
J R Z A N I M A G E O F A N Y T H I N G D E N E W S R S A R
L D S U B Q M P T L E M D R E U T L O S A D A H Q T N E N H
Q A I Q C H Q O I H I P A L Z O D O T D T R E T Q H L H D S
B Y V X I G V R S I D G I D C M E V T X I U F F C E R T M N
C S S E N T I W E S L A F T E Y S B A Z M M R O O L B E A W
D G S B I P X I P R K X Y D H H S Q K L M T S E Y O B K D C
E I X P A H D F N L Z K R B D O E D E P O O C M T R P O E R
V L O F M S T E V O C T O N O D L A O V C N I A C D X P I U
A T M G T A G O I Y P V Q H B Z B Y V N T O K N P N W S T F
H G L M H X O R A N Y T H I N G E L S E O D O E V N T D H D
L T I E E O D M C Z O D H E P V H Q J D N T Y H R A T O O L
L B N D L E K A M T O N L L A H S U O Y O A S T N G I G L R
A W T F O H H L K H J O D G W B D T O T D G N T J W R N Y B
H S H G R I J E H O N O R Y O U R F A T H E R D E Z N K N E
S Z E I D L F S M A Y B E L O N G Q X K K R A E E A X A M B
U A L B Y S Y E K N O D R O X O S I H R O S E V H A L E M D
O W A N O G K R U R G B M T O I N T H B S E Z B Z T R B X S
Y V N F U X C V M S O S R J A B B X U T V T E H M O O T Q E
H Z D I R A G A I N S T Y O U R N E I G H B O R F E U O H E
N Q U B G R D N G J E W O Q J J T W J B I B G E C F M Q N S
B T Z X O C F T V D K E B K L J M C U C I K B E Q I V E G V
L M G Z D T N A V R E S E L A M E F R O Y V S L T N Q N R O

Words:

GOD SPOKE THESE WORDS
I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD
YOU SHALL HAVE
NO OTHER GODS
BEFORE ME
YOU SHALL NOT MAKE
AN IMAGE OF ANYTHING
AND BOW DOWN TO IT
AND SERVE IT
DO NOT TAKE
THE NAME OF THE LORD
IN VAIN

REMEMBER
THE SABBATH DAY
TO KEEP IT HOLY
IN SIX DAYS THE LORD
MADE HEAVEN AND EARTH
HE BLESSED THE SABBATH
AND MADE IT HOLY
HONOR YOUR FATHER
AND YOUR MOTHER
THAT YOUR DAYS
MAY BE LONG
IN THE LAND

DO NOT MURDER
DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY
DO NOT STEAL
DO NOT BEAR
FALSE WITNESS
AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR
DO NOT COVET
YOUR NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE
OR WIFE OR MALE SERVANT
OR FEMALE SERVANT
OR HIS OX OR DONKEY
OR ANYTHING ELSE