

# The 10 Commandments

Why are the 10 Commandments such a big deal?

After taking a self-survey concerning compliance to the Ten Commandments, every person must admit to being a law breaker. **Simply put, it is impossible for any man or woman to attain salvation through obedience to God's law.** All people are lawbreakers and deserve eternal death in hell. Fortunately, God had a better plan and Jesus became the ultimate sacrifice, paying for our sins through his death on the cross. Jesus has opened the door to salvation by his own blood. Forgiveness of sin is available to all by grace through faith in Jesus Christ apart from works.



Do you consider yourself 'Good Person'? Test yourself against God's law, and see if you qualify for salvation based on your obedience to the Ten Commandments.

Below is a list of each Old Testament commandment, in order (green text), followed by supporting Bible verses (in red text) and notes (yellow background).



**“Thou shalt have no other gods before me.” – Exodus 20:3**

“Neither be ye idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, The people sat down to eat and drink, and rose up to play.” – 1 Corinthians 10:7

“And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence.” – Colossians 1:18

“Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.” – Colossians 3:5 ESV

“They promise them freedom, while they themselves are slaves of depravity—for a man is a slave to whatever has mastered him.” – 2 Peter 2:19 NIV

We often picture the worship of false gods in an Old Testament context of bowing down to a carved idol of wood, stone or metal. While that form of worship still takes place today around the world, the Bible declares that ungodly passions & priorities that take God's place of preeminence in our life can also be an act of idolatry.



**“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:” - Exodus 20:4**

“Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.” – Exodus 20:5-6

“Like a scarecrow in a melon patch, their idols cannot speak; they must be carried because they cannot walk. Do not fear them; they can do no harm nor can they do any good.” – Jeremiah 10:5 NIV

“They rejected his decrees and the covenant he had made with their fathers and the warnings he had given them. They followed worthless idols and themselves became worthless. They imitated the nations around them although the Lord had ordered them, “Do not do as they do,” and they did the things the Lord had forbidden them to do.” – 2 Kings 17:15 NIV

“Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things. Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.” – Romans 1:22-25 NKJV

Fallen man has always looked for a physical object of his trust and affection... to worship something seen with earthly eyes. Even today, millions hope for prosperity, health and protection through manmade articles (idols, charms, crucifix or even a photo). Some choose to trust in other people of power or influence. Placing our faith and trust in any earthly object is affront to God's redemptive love, reassuring promises and sovereign power.



**Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. – Exodus 20:7**

“that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” – Philippians 2:10-11 NKJV

“Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” – Acts 4:12

Misuse of God's name pervades our society in conversation, social media, literature, television, video games and cinema. Even professing Christians often fail to stand apart from the world regarding this commandment. Why is it that the name of Jesus Christ is singled out on on a global scale for ridicule, slander, misuse, cursing and blasphemy? People don't dare to curse using the names of other revered religious leaders. There is only one name by which every knee will bow, one name by which there is salvation, one name that is feared by the prince of this world.



Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. – Exodus 20:8-11

Wouldn't it be fair to say that regardless of your beliefs... all have broken this commandment at some point?



“Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. – Exodus 20:12

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and mother; (which is the first commandment with promise;) That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. – Ephesians 6:1-4

Can you say that you've never disobeyed your parents, never fussed, never argued with an instruction, never complained to a friend about a rule or restriction, never spoken to them with disrespect?



“Thou shalt not kill.” – Exodus 20:13

“Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.” – 1 John 3:15 NIV

“If anyone says, “I love God,” yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen.” – 1 John 4:20 NIV

“But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.” – Matthew 5:22 KJV

The Hebrew word ‘retsach’ is used 47 times in 40 verses in the King James Version of the Old Testament and is used in the context of murder or the unlawful killing of another human being (either intentional or through negligence). The New Testament clarified God's intent behind this law by ‘raising the bar’ further saying that anyone who even hates his brother is guilty of breaking God's law by committing murder in his heart. Who then can be innocent regarding this commandment? Be honest!



## “Thou shalt not commit adultery.” – Exodus 20:14

“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” – Mat 5:28

“Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.” – 1 Corinthians 10:6

“This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.” – Galatians 5:16

Jesus raised the bar on this sin also... Man's heart is laid bare by the omniscient eyes of God's Holy Spirit. Is there any man or woman who is not guilty of violating this commandment?



## “Thou shalt not steal.” – Exodus 20:15

“Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.” – Malachi 3:8

“Unequal weights are an abomination to the LORD, and false scales are not good.” – Proverbs 20:23  
ESV

Can you say that you've NEVER taken anything... even the smallest thing that does not belong to you? What about 'stealing' an answer on a test? What about stealing 'time' from your employer when you're at work? What is it when you 'borrow' and fail to give it back?



## “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.” – Exodus 20:16

“There are six things the Lord hates, seven that are detestable to him: ... a false witness who pours out lies and a man who stirs up dissension among brothers.” – Proverbs 6:16, 19 NIV

“Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds;” – Colossians 3:9

“I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.” – 1 John 2:21

“And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them.” – Ephesians 5:11 NKJV

“If a person sins because he does not speak up when he hears a public charge to testify regarding something he has seen or learned about, he will be held responsible.” – Leviticus 5:1 NIV

To bear false witness is to lie. False witness could include omitting important information leading to a wrong conclusion concerning an event or crime. What about when you see wrongdoing and fail to report or help to cover it up? Are you then not a partner in the misdeed?



Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. – Exodus 20:17

“And he said unto them, Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” – Luke 12:15

“But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints;” – Ephesians 5:3

“Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry:” – Colossians 3:5

“Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” – Hebrews 13:5

Coveting can lead to an avalanche of other sins.... stealing, adultery, etc. Isn't coveting a big part of Lucifer's original sin? Wanting to 'be like God'.... Would not an honest self-examination yield evidence of covetousness on occasion in each one of us?

---

***The law will shut the sinner's mouth as to his own righteousness. It will put him face to face with his grave sin and eternal damnation... ushering him, through the conviction of the Holy Spirit, to the foot of the cross.***

“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” – Galatians 3:24

“For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.” – James 2:10

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast.” – Ephesians 2:8-9

“I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.” – Galatians 2:21

“But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith.” – Galatians 3:11

---

**Are the 10 Commandments still relevant to one who has already become a follower of Jesus Christ?**

Sometimes, believers become complacent to the stern instructions in God's law, enjoying their salvation by grace through faith and therefore become careless concerning compromises with the world and basic laws that God established from the beginning. “But I live in the New Testament! I'm under grace...” you might say. Indeed, God has given us a New Covenant... where the standard of holiness is higher still. The standard has not changed. Consider these New Testament verses below:

“He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God,

and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?” – Hebrews 10:28-29

“But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.” – Luke 12:48

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law. For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand: let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light. Let us walk honestly, as in the day; not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying. But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.” – Romans 13:8-14

***The 10 Commandments list and notes may be useful in self-study or for teaching in adult small groups, classrooms, children’s Sunday School, kids VBS, evangelism training or for sermon notes. These notes are NOT to be incorporated into any ‘for sale’ products.***

Copyright © 2020 Teen Missions International. All Rights Reserved.

*All scripture quotations are taken from the Holy Bible, King James Version unless otherwise noted.*

*Scripture quotations marked (NIV) are taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version®, NIV®, Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by Biblica, Inc.™ Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved worldwide. [www.zondervan.com](http://www.zondervan.com)*

*Scripture quotations marked (ESV) are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version® (ESV®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*

*Scripture quotations marked “NKJV™” are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.*