

# The Ten Commandments

## Introduction:

The Ten Commandments are like an instruction manual from God. We live in a culture that glorifies self and ignores truth. That needs to change. God’s Word speaks to us in every area of our lives and gives us what we need to hear, not always what we want to hear.

These laws are not the means by which we come into good graces with God; instead, they reveal our shortcomings and our need for God. The Ten Commandments are often described as a mirror that exposes our sins and reveals our need for a Savior.

When that mirror shines on our lives we become convicted of our sinful and lost condition and repent. We can then begin to see the Lord in a new light and recognize the great mercy and grace extended to us.

Love and adoration of the One who has redeemed us leads to a desire to obey God’s standards. The Ten Commandments are the basic commands, or guidelines, that explain how we can live a life pleasing to God.

The Bible says in the Old Testament, *“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man’s all”* (Ecclesiastes 12:13). Here we see the entire relationship of man to God crystallized into a few words: *“Fear God and keep His commandments.”*

In the New Testament, Jesus tells us, *“If you love Me, keep My commandments”* (John 14:15). We see that Jesus took those same commandments given on Mount Sinai and explains how the heart is involved. With the death of Jesus on the cross, we have the Spirit of Truth to lead us as we submit to Jesus’ teachings and are obedient to the commandments. On our own, we continue to fail, but with God’s Spirit leading us, we are able to follow Him through daily sanctification. We obey His commands out of our love for God and our desire to please Him.

As we think on this salvation that we have received through the *“redemption that is in Christ Jesus,”* (Romans 3:24) it is appropriate that we spend some time developing our spiritual muscles and learning about His commandments. The Ten Commandments help us to know how to serve God and how we should live with each other. As the Apostle John states in 1 John 5:3, *“For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”*

## Table of Contents

Introduction.....	1
Lesson 1: The Ten Commandments .....	2
Lesson 2: The First Commandment .....	3
Lesson 3: The Second Commandment.....	4
Lesson 4: The Third Commandment.....	5
Lesson 5: The Fourth Commandment.....	6
Lesson 6: The Fourth Commandment (Continued).....	7
Lesson 7: The Fifth Commandment.....	8
Lesson 8: The Sixth Commandment .....	9
Lesson 9: The Seventh Commandment.....	10
Lesson 10: The Eighth Commandment.....	11
Lesson 11: The Ninth Commandment .....	12
Lesson 12: The Tenth Commandment .....	13
Lesson 13: The Perpetuity of the Ten Commandments .....	14
Lesson 14: The Ten Commandments and Justification by Grace through Faith.....	15

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We are pleased to share these lessons for your spiritual enrichment. As with the ACTS magazine, we would like to take a moment and remind our readers that the General Council Churches of God, (Seventh Day), is in a state of constant growth and we all have different backgrounds, it is possible that your views may differ somewhat from those presented in this study. We pray these lessons may be used as a point of entry for your own study.

*“Test all things; hold fast what is good”* (1 Thessalonians 5:21).

## Lesson 1: The Ten Commandments

*Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is man's all.*

Ecclesiastes 12:13

### Scripture Reading: Deuteronomy 5

**Memory Verse:** *Jesus said to him, "You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."* Matthew 22:37-39

### Introduction:

As we read through the Ten Commandments, we see it divided into two divisions. The first four describe our relationship to God and the last six our relationship to man.

The Ten Commandments are not just a part of the Law of Moses. Look at how they are described in the introduction in Exodus 20. The LORD is not just telling Moses to go and relay a message to the people. The Lord is speaking these words directly to the Israelites. At the end of the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20:19, the Israelites were terrified after hearing from God in this manner and they asked for Moses to be the mediator between them and God. The giving of the Ten Commandments was a high point in the life of Israel. The Ten Commandments, along with Aaron's staff and manna, were placed inside the ark of the covenant (Hebrews 9:4).

The same level of importance is placed on the Ten Commandments by Jesus and then later by Jesus' apostles. When the rich young ruler asked what he needed to do to inherit eternal life, Jesus quoted the commandments relating to loving his neighbor. Jesus challenged the Jewish leaders for their hypocrisy and failure to worship the Heavenly Father from the heart. When Paul gives a summary of what it means to live as a Christian in Romans 13:8-9, he summarizes several of the commandments. Over and over in the New Testament, we see the commandments restated in various ways.

The Ten Commandments were important to God's people in the Old Testament. They also were taught by Jesus and were key to God's people in the New Testament, and they need to be a central teaching for us today. There is, in mankind, a rebellion against authority; the desire for freedom to do what we want when we want. The Ten Commandments are often rejected because they are wrongly seen as a form of bondage to the law. In this first lesson, we will learn the history of the Ten Commandments and demonstrate their importance to us today.

### Lesson Questions:

1. When and where were the Ten Commandments written down? Exodus 19:1; 31:18; 34:1; Deuteronomy 5:22; 10:4
2. The Ten Commandments were written in stone by the finger of God (Exodus 31:18). How does the way in which the Ten Commandments were given affect our view of God's law? Exodus 32:15-16; Deuteronomy 4:15; Psalms 111:10; Ecclesiastes 12:13
3. Why were the Ten Commandments called the "two tablets of Testimony" in Exodus 31:18? Exodus 24:12; 25:16; Romans 7:7
4. What was the purpose of the Ten Commandments? Exodus 19:5-6; Deuteronomy 5:29, 33; 7:6-9
5. What did Jesus teach about the law? Matthew 5:17-20; Luke 16:17
6. In what sense are the commandments like a mirror? Psalm 19:7-8, 11; Romans 7:7-9
7. In Romans 7:22-23 we see that we can delight in the law, but that our sinful nature does not delight in God's law. How can we truly delight in God's law? Psalm 1:1-3; Romans 7:22-23; Galatians 3:3-5; Philippians 1:6
8. Discuss what commandments of God that people of this present world reject so that they may keep their own traditions.
9. The Ten Commandments define our relationship to God and to our fellow man. How does the law bring greater clarity to what it means to love God and our neighbor? Romans 13:8-10; Galatians 5:14
10. In what ways were the series of commands and ordinances that were given by God to Moses different from the Ten Commandments? Deuteronomy 5:31-33; 31:18, 24-26; 33:4; 2 Kings 22:8

## Lesson 2: The First Commandment

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

**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 6:1-15

**Memory Verse:** *And God spoke all these words, saying: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me."* Exodus 20:1-3

### Introduction:

God brought the Israelites out of slavery and out of bondage in Egypt. He also brought them out of the spiritual bondage to false idols. He did this to make Israel a holy nation and a kingdom of priests. God through Moses in Deuteronomy 7 says this very well. It was not because the Israelites were more numerous that the LORD loves them. Instead, it is because the LORD their God is the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love Him and keep His commandments and repays those who hate Him.

It is very appropriate for God to speak plainly as He begins the Ten Commandments. He begins with *"I am the LORD your God"* (Exodus 20:1). By this God declares His authority to enact this law. He asserts Himself to be the only object of worship. They are to obey these commandments because God is the LORD, the creator of the universe. He is worthy of worship. He rewards obedience and punishes disobedience.

He was their God and in a covenant relationship with them. Today, through Christ, baptized believers are in a covenant relationship with Him. We also are to obey because He brought us out of our slavery to sin just as He took the Israelites out of the land of Egypt (John 8:34). By redeeming us, we owe our service to Him. With Christ having rescued us out of bondage to sin, He is entitled to the best service that we can give to Him (Luke 1:74).

The first commandment says, *"You shall have no other gods before Me"* (Exodus 20:3). It is concerned with the object of our worship. It is to be the LORD God and Him only. The Egyptians had many gods and so did other neighboring nations. Disobedience to this commandment for us is when we give glory and honor to any creature which is due to God only. Pride makes a god of self. Covetousness makes a god of money and possessions. Sexual sins make a god of the human body. Whenever something is loved, served, or feared more than God, we will in effect make it a god.

The last words of the commandment are *"before Me."* By this, God makes it clear that He will know if we put other gods before Him and also that He will not overlook this sin.

### Lesson Questions:

1. What did Jesus say was the first and great commandment of the law? Mark 12:28-30
2. Why should God be revered and worshipped? Deuteronomy 4:39; Jeremiah 10:10; Isaiah 45:22-23; 44:6; Revelations 1:8; 15:3
3. Are we able to comprehend the power and wisdom of God? Jeremiah 10:12-13; Isaiah 45:5, 12
4. Given our position compared to God's, what should be our attitude toward Him? Job 40:3-5; Isaiah 55:8-9; James 4:14
5. How did the first commandment get broken before Mount Sinai in Genesis 31:19, 30?
6. What was David's reason for worshipping God alone? 1 Chronicles 16:23-27
7. What statement regarding other gods does Paul make? 1 Corinthians 8:4-6
8. How was the rich young ruler breaking the first commandment? Luke 18:18-23
9. Before his conversion, was Zacchaeus disobedient to the first commandment? Luke 19:8-10
10. What does Jesus say of worshipping the god of mammon? Matthew 6:19-24

### Lesson 3: The Second Commandment

*“You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.”* Exodus 20:4-6

**Scripture Reading:** Deuteronomy 4:1-25

**Memory Verse:** *Oh come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.* Psalms 95:6

#### Introduction:

At first glance it may seem that the first two commandments are saying the same thing. Although idolatry was a common feature of the worship of other gods, the two were not identical. It is possible to make images of God, and it is also possible to worship other gods without making images of them.

God, in His wisdom, saw the need to make this distinction between the first and second commandments. In the first commandment, we learned that God alone is to be worshipped. In the second commandment, we see that God alone is to be worshipped and without any visible images of Himself. The second commandment prohibits the making of false idols, but also prohibits the making of idols of God.

We are not to know the true God through looking at images of Him. No matter how dramatic they portray our God, they will fall short of us understanding God. We are to know God through His creation (Psalm 19:1). We are to know God through His Scriptures (Psalm 19:7-8). And, we are to know God through His Son, Jesus Christ (John 1:18). We are not to know God through images or idols of any kind.

When God gave Solomon instructions to build His temple, He did not allow any images to be made of Himself. He instructed images made of created things, including the sea and cherubim and palm trees and flowers. His point was that He alone was to be worshipped and without any visible images of Himself. With this second commandment, we are directed to not have images or statues or pictures of the one we worship. Isaiah 40:18 says this very well, *“To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?”*

When the temple was finished, the ark of the covenant was brought into the temple and placed in the Most Holy Place. In 1 Kings 8:9, the contents of the ark are described. It did not contain an image of God. Inside the ark were the two tablets of stone that Moses put there at Horeb.

In John 4:19, when Jesus was speaking to the Samaritan woman at the well, she opens up a discussion about where to worship. Jesus says God is not concerned about places. He said in John 4:24 *“God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”* When we try to introduce any other element, such as a shrine or idol, to our worship, we are wrong.

This second commandment is important because images dishonor God. The problem with statues or shrines or pictures is that they conceal most of the truth about the nature and character of God. The way we think of God is very important. If images were important to God, He would have revealed Himself that way. No statue or painting can do God credit. It would only diminish our view of God. God alone is to be worshipped and without any visible symbols of Himself.

#### Lesson Questions:

1. What does the second commandment prohibit? What does it require of us? Exodus 20:4-6; Deuteronomy 5:8-10
2. Does God forbid us from making likenesses of created things? Exodus 25:18-22. Read also Numbers 21:8-9; but see 2 Kings 18:4.
3. Who did Aaron intend the idol to represent? Exodus 32:1-8. Were other commandments broken during this incident?
4. Why does God forbid the worship of any image? Exodus 20:5; Isaiah 43:10-15
5. Why was Moses instructed to destroy the images of the Amorites, Canaanites, and Hittites? Exodus 34:13-17
6. Why did God bring His people out of Egypt and place them in the land of Canaan? Psalm 106:8; Ezekiel 20:9
7. What was the sin of Jeroboam and how did it lead people to sin? 1 Kings 12:25-30. See also 2 Kings 10:29.
8. What does the New Testament say about idolaters? Ephesians 5:5; Romans 1:23; 1 Corinthians 6:9
9. What are modern-day examples of how we make graven images?

## Lesson 4: The Third Commandment

*“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.”* Exodus 20:7

**Scripture Reading:** 1 Chronicles 16:8-36

**Memory Verse:** *Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt His name together.* Psalm 34:3

### Introduction:

If you were to say that one commandment was not as important as the others, would you say it was the third commandment? Why does God tell us it is wrong to misuse the name of God? We need to understand why this is important and what it means to disobey this commandment.

Names mean something. This is true especially with the name of God. The proper name of God, which is often translated as LORD in our English Bibles, is YHWH in the Hebrew Bible. God explains His name to Moses in Exodus 3:15, *“Moreover God said to Moses, ‘Thus you shall say to the children of Israel: “The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you. This is My name forever, and this is My memorial to all generations.”’”* This is the name that God is to be remembered by for all generations. Beyond that, God revealed who He is to Moses in that same passage when He describes Himself as *“I AM WHO I AM”* (Exodus 3:14). *“I AM\*”* is translated from the verb that means “to be.” And He says to tell the people of Israel that *“I AM has sent me to you”* (Exodus 3:14). By these words God was describing His nature. He is not a god of man’s creation like other gods. He is beyond our comprehension. He is all powerful. He is all-sufficient. He is self-existent. He is perfect. He is the God of justice. He is the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. He is I AM. These concepts of the LORD God are described throughout Scripture. By these descriptions, we learn to trust in Him and to receive encouragement and rest in challenging times. Because of who He is, He is worthy of honor above any other god and we should not dishonor Him with how we use His name.

The commandment says we are not to take the name of the LORD in vain. We need to understand what it means to obey this commandment. We can abuse and misuse the name of God in three ways: by swearing, by lying, and by hypocrisy. When we use the name of God as a swear word to strengthen the importance of what we are saying, we blaspheme the name of God. When we use the name of God in anger, we use His name in vain. We misuse the name of God when we make a vow under God to love and cherish our spouse and then don’t carry through. When a Christian business portrays itself as “a Christian business” and cheats or lies to their customers, their hypocrisy misuses the name of God. We misuse the name of God when we joke about it in a hypocritical way. or when we treat His name irreverently.

### Lesson Questions:

1. What are some names of God revealed in Scripture? Genesis 1:1; 14:18-20; 17:1; 22:14; Exodus 3:14-15; 17:15-16
2. Which of these names most strengthens your faith as you think on its meaning?
3. How does Mary, the mother of Jesus, speak of God’s name? Luke 1:46-49. How does David describe His name? Psalm 111:9
4. Why is God worthy to receive glory and honor? Psalm 33:9-11; 135:13; Revelation 4:11
5. Describe how the Jews in Jeremiah’s time profaned the name of God. Jeremiah 34:8-16
6. How did Israel profane God’s holy name and cause others to blaspheme? How did God remedy that? Ezekiel 36:19-22, 36. See also Romans 2:23-24.
7. What does the Bible say about swearing and profanity? Ephesians 4:29-32; 5:1-5. The Hebrew and Greek words for profane speech both carry the meaning of defiling, polluting, or treating as common.
8. How did Jesus enlarge upon the meaning of the third commandment? Matthew 5:33-37; Mark 7:6-9; Luke 6:46-49

\* “H1961 - hāyâ - Strong's Hebrew Lexicon (nkjv).” Blue Letter Bible. Web. 20 Jun, 2023.  
<<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h1961/nkjv/wlc/0-1/>>.

## Lesson 5: The Fourth Commandment

*“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”* Exodus 20:8-11

**Scripture Reading:** Exodus 16:4-30

**Memory Verse:** *So the people rested on the seventh day.* Exodus 16:30

### Introduction:

In Romans 3:19-20, the Apostle Paul explains that by the law of God all the world becomes guilty and by the law is the knowledge of sin. The law is a mirror to shine light on the sins of the world. By the deeds of the law nobody will be justified or be accepted by God. In Romans 3:21-22, we find that righteousness comes by faith in Jesus Christ unto all that believe. With this faith comes a freedom, not to do what we want, but to do what the law requires (Romans 8:2-4). We are to bow before our God and humbly ask Him to teach us from the Scriptures how to be obedient.

And so, as the redeemed of the LORD, we come to the fourth commandment where God tells us to remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. The LORD is concerned about the sanctity of the seventh day. This is one of the Ten Commandments; it cannot be excluded. It is to be obeyed from the heart.

A person’s outlook on Sabbath observance tells much. Is the Sabbath day an observance of custom or is it an internal conviction? If the view of the Sabbath is based on an internal conviction, then that guides our perspective. Some people might say about Sabbath observance, “Who do they think they are! It is my time, and I will use the day how I please!” They say that the modern world is too complex to set aside a whole day for rest and worship.

Others recognize that every breath they breathe is a gift from God. Their perspective is that the God who created time has said that our use of time will bear testimony that we are His covenant children. Therefore, from that heart conviction, they bow down and follow the command to sanctify the Sabbath day. They take care to make the Sabbath different because God distinguished the seventh day from the rest.

In this lesson, we will look at the principles of the Sabbath day. The next lesson will look at the details of Sabbath day observance.

### Lesson Questions:

1. Did God create time? Did God create the seven-day week? Genesis 1:5, 14-15; 2:2-3. How does this knowledge about God affect our observance of the Sabbath?
2. In the fourth commandment, God also said *“Six days you shall labor and do all your work.”* Genesis 1:26-28; Exodus 20:9. Do I have a biblical attitude towards work? 2 Thessalonians 3:10-11
3. What is to be our attitude towards the Sabbath day? Isaiah 58:13-14; Psalm 92:1-5
4. From creation, we know that Saturday was the seventh day of the week. What was one way God helped the Israelites remember the seventh day Sabbath while in the wilderness? Exodus 16:4-5, 21-30. How do these verses in the New Testament affirm a seventh-day Sabbath? Matthew 28:1; Mark 16:1-2; Luke 24:1
5. Why did God command us to remember the Sabbath day? Exodus 20:11; 23:12; 35:1-2; Deuteronomy 5:13-15
6. Review the context of Hebrews 3 and 4. How does it affirm the need for a Sabbath day to Christians? Hebrews 3:11, 18; 4:1, 3, 5, 9
7. How does Jesus saying He was *“Lord of the Sabbath”* and that *“the Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath”* affirm a Sabbath observance to us? Mark 2:27-28; Matthew 11:25-30; Hebrews 4:9
8. Discuss the different reasons God said to keep the Sabbath in Exodus 20:8-11 and Deuteronomy 5:12-15. How do these reasons affirm that we should keep the Sabbath?

## Lesson 6: The Fourth Commandment (Continued)

*“For the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.”* Matthew 12:8

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 12:1-13

**Memory Verse:** *“Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep? Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.”* Matthew 12:12

### Introduction:

Have you ever had a discussion about what are appropriate activities for the Sabbath day? Can you think of past arguments by sincere believers about whether this or that activity should be done on the Sabbath? As we read the Ten Commandments and seek to follow them, the Sabbath commandment is one of the more controversial commandments about what actions are appropriate for believers.

As we ask ourselves questions about Sabbath observance, the key is the internal heart conviction of the individual. Are we convinced in our hearts about the distinction and sanctity of the Sabbath? If so, our conversation, our use of time, and our focus on the Sabbath day will all bear testimony that we are His covenant children. Proper observance of the Sabbath comes from a strong belief that God set apart this day for our good and for His glory. It then becomes a privilege to make the day different.

The rest God has ordained is a rest from labor and to Him. Study of Scripture, acts of mercy, fellowship, acts of kindness, charity, and worship are all ways to spend our Sabbath day. God has provided this day for us to devote to Him.

At the same time, let's guard against an attitude where Sabbath observance becomes a custom or tradition. It must not be legalistic, nor should we provide pat answers to every question of behavior down to the smallest detail of right and wrong. This is especially important as we teach our children about Sabbath.

Why do we have the Sabbath? The Sabbath is not intended to be a burdensome or restrictive commandment. Isaiah said that the Sabbath was to be a delight. Jesus said, *“The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath”* (Mark 2:27). The Sabbath was made to supply something that we as human beings need. It is to help us, not to hinder us. We think that we have too much to do to take time to rest, but really, we need what the Sabbath provides and will not do our work effectively without it.

The word, “Remember” refers to the past, all the way back to creation. The command to observe the Sabbath day was from creation, as we see by the words in Exodus 20:11, *“For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth...and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.”* The Sabbath existed from the first week of this world. It will continue to exist until the end of the age as a weekly celebration of God being our God.

### Lesson Questions:

1. What was the issue with the merchants in Amos' day and their observance of the Sabbath? Amos 8:4-6
2. In Isaiah 58:13-14, find the phrases describing actions that show how we can make the Sabbath day holy. Will those actions then lead to the delight in the Sabbath day that Isaiah describes? Why or why not?
3. What types of activities did Jesus describe as being lawful on the Sabbath day in Matthew 12:1-13? Hosea 6:6; Micah 6:6-8
4. Why did Jesus heal on the Sabbath day? John 9:1-7
5. In Matthew 12 and elsewhere, we find Jesus condemning the Pharisees' observance of the Sabbath. How can we obey the Lord's command to observe the Sabbath without falling into this trap of legalism and self-righteousness? Zechariah 7:5-10
6. Who is Lord of all? Ephesians 1:20-21; Philippians 2:9-11; 1 Peter 3:22. What is His relation to the Sabbath? Matthew 12:8; Mark 2:27
7. How does Matthew 24:20 show that Jesus was expecting His disciples to keep the Sabbath after His ascension?
8. Some say that because the law of Moses has specific laws dealing with the Sabbath that this one commandment does not fit in with the other nine. For example, see not lighting a fire on the Sabbath in Exodus 35:3. How would you answer that statement?

## Lesson 7: The Fifth Commandment

*“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.”* Exodus 20:12

**Scripture Reading:** Mark 7:1-12

**Memory Verse:** *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. “Honor your father and mother,” which is the first commandment with promise: “that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”* Ephesians 6:1-3

### Introduction:

The fifth commandment directs us to honor our parents. It is most certainly deserving of this place in the commandments. God knew that the welfare of mankind depended, among other things, upon order, respect for authority, respect for equals, and respect for those under our authority. The father is to be the head of the household and the wife is to submit to his leading. In order to learn reverence to God, children must first learn reverence for their parents. The intent of the commandment is to teach respect for authority beginning with respect for parents. This is in opposition to the view of many.

The rebellion of children against parents is very prevalent in our modern world. Those restless, uncontrollable youth protest authorities of all kinds and their rebellion takes many forms. They indulge themselves in the things that even society once considered off-limits. They delight in disrespect for the law and for our great heritage of justice. They show a lack of honor to parents and a lack of respect for all that is good and wholesome. At the heart is a reaction against the authority of God and His authority over our lives.

The commandment says to honor our parents *“that your days may be long upon the land which the LORD your God is giving you.”* Ephesians 6:3 says to honor your parents *“that it may be well with you and you may live long on the earth.”* This certainly had application to the Israelite people, but it goes beyond that to all mankind. Yes, this is not to be considered a motive for keeping the command. In other words, we don’t honor our parents so that we will live long. There are many parent-honoring children who die young and others that have not honored their parents who live a long life. Regard this statement in a general way, applying to our society, rather than individually.

The word “honor” in Hebrew is from the word, “kabad\*.” It is a verb with the definition of, “to be heavy.” In other words, to regard as worthy of a weight of respect. The Greek word for “Honor” is “timaō\*\*” which means to fix a right evaluation of their worth.

How do we teach children to honor their parents? The Hebrew Shema in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 comes to mind. We teach children to be respectful by showing them courtesy and respect. We teach honor by showing genuine love. We teach honor by demonstrating honor and care of our own parents.

### Lesson Questions:

1. What was Jesus’ example of showing honor to parents? Luke 2:51
2. What was the penalty for disrespect to parents in the law of Moses? Leviticus 20:9. Why should disrespect to parents be considered a sin?
3. What does Solomon say about honoring father and mother? Proverbs 6:20, 22; 13:1; 15:5
4. How had the Pharisees elevated their traditions above the commandments in Matthew 15:1-9? What was Jesus’ view of the commandment here? Note: It was a tradition of the Jews that a son or daughter might pay a sum of money known as “corban.” They were then freed from any further obligation to help their parents.
5. Discuss why it is inconsistent to say we are Christian when our life reflects that we are not devoted to honoring our parents?
6. What does Paul say about obedience to parents? Ephesians 6:1-3 What about those children whose parents are not Christian? Are children to obey those parents and in what circumstances?
7. What is the parents’ duty to their children? Ephesians 6:4; Colossians 3:11. How can parents cultivate genuine love in their relationship with their children?

\* “H3513 - kāḇaḏ - Strong's Hebrew Lexicon (kjv).” Blue Letter Bible. Web. 20 Jun, 2023. <<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/h3513/kjv/wlc/0-1/>>.

\*\* “G5091 - timao - Strong's Greek Lexicon (kjv).” Blue Letter Bible. Web. 20 Jun, 2023. <<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g5091/kjv/tr/0-1/>>.

## Lesson 8: The Sixth Commandment

*"You shall not murder."* Exodus 20:13

**Scripture Reading:** Genesis 4:3-15

**Memory Verse:** *"You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment. But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment.' And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire."* Matthew 5:21-22

### Introduction:

Man was created in the image of God. We honor God by protecting His image. And so, the commandment, *"You shall not murder"* challenges us to value our fellow man and to preserve life.

God is our creator. Psalm 139 speaks of mankind as being *"fearfully and wonderfully made"* (Psalm 139:14). It also speaks of God knowing the length of our days on earth before we were even born (Psalm 139:16) and knowing *"my sitting down and my rising up"* (Psalm 139:2). Even the very hairs on our head are numbered (Matthew 10:30); all 8 billion of us. How great is our God! That God knows each of us this well expresses His love for us. He cares for each person and desires the best for us. The life of each person is a precious gift. Each day of our life is to be appreciated as a gift from the Heavenly Father.

God also made a distinction between man and animals. The creation account in Genesis 1 makes this distinction. From the beginning, man was to have dominion over the animals. The Bible describes this by saying that men have one kind of flesh and animals have another (1 Corinthians 15:39). Man was created by God, and also man was created *"for Him"* (Colossians 1:16). Only man, not animals, has this higher purpose.

The Bible is very clear that God spoke, and the world came into being. Man did not evolve through time and chance. Understanding and believing this provides the foundation for the commandment, *"You shall not murder"* (Exodus 20:13). Since the sin of Adam, man is controlled by his sinful nature and does not like to recognize the God that created the universe. The view of the world that all life has evolved and that discounts the truth of the first 11 chapters of Genesis, diminishes the value of life. It leads to drive-by shootings, abortion, and even suicide.

The words, *"You shall not murder."* (Exodus 20:13) are speaking of intent. The laws of Moses describe what it means to "murder." This command protects the weak from the strong. It protects the unborn in the womb. By this command, suicide is prohibited, we do not have the right to rob our fellow man of our presence. Jesus gives more meaning to the command when he says that whosoever says to his brother, *"'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire"* (Matthew 5:22). This commandment then prohibits slander and gossip, where we wish death on someone else by our words or thoughts.

### Lesson Questions:

1. Genesis 1:27 says that mankind was made in the image of God. In what sense are we made in the image of God?
2. Who was the first murderer? John 8:44; 1 John 3:8
3. Envy is defined by Webster as discontent at another's possessing what one would like for himself. What was God's view of Cain's attitude? Genesis 4:6-7; 1 John 3:12. Cain's sin of envy led to what two other sins? Genesis 4:8-9
4. What is the source of murder? Matthew 15:19; Galatians 5:19-21
5. Does this commandment negate the death penalty? Genesis 9:6; Romans 13:4; but see Ezekiel 33:11
6. Life is God's most precious gift to man. Who, only, has the right to take it? Deuteronomy 32:39; Psalm 68:20
7. Many people who would not think of harming another believe suicide is justifiable. Why is taking one's own life a sin? Genesis 1:27; Ezekiel 18:4
8. Do we break the sixth commandment when we choose not to use medical intervention to prolong the life of a loved one who does not have a great chance of survival? Genesis 3:19; Ecclesiastes 3:1-2; Psalm 103:14-16; Hebrews 9:27
9. Discuss the broader application Jesus gives to the commandment in Matthew 5:21-22.
10. How does John describe a person who hates his brother? 1 John 3:15; 4:20

## Lesson 9: The Seventh Commandment

*“You shall not commit adultery.”* Exodus 20:14

**Scripture Reading:** John 8:1-11

**Memory Verse:** *“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”* Matthew 5:8

### Introduction:

The Bible teaches a high view of marriage, including the physical enjoyment from the union. It comes to us as a creation ordinance. Marriage is the LORD’s design for the continuance of the human race. Marriage is not to be entered into lightly. A man leaves his mother and father and is joined to his wife and the two become one flesh in a covenant relationship under God.

After the sin of Adam, man began to turn what God gave as a beautiful gift into lust and fornication. The focus turned to the sexual relationship. To warn against this, we see the commandment telling man, *“You shall not commit adultery”* (Exodus 20:14). In today’s world, instead of joining in a marital relationship under God, a couple will go out and become one flesh and later seek to legitimize the sexual relationship with marriage. All ages have easy access to pornography through smart devices. Colossians 3:5 challenges us to put to death those things. Ask yourself the question of whether there is anything that I am doing in private that would be embarrassing if it were flashed up on social media for the world to see.

The impact of adultery is a chain reaction. It is a sin against God, against the partner, against a spouse, and against the partner’s spouse. If you are not married, it is a sin against a future spouse and partner’s spouse. Abstaining from sexual relationships before entering the marriage covenant and living in fidelity after marriage will mark us as being distinct from our culture.

In Ephesians 5, we find marriage represented as a type of our union with Christ. Christ is represented as the groom and the church as the bride. Our marriage to the Lamb calls for a love relationship in this present life with Him. We can’t have that relationship with Jesus and be promiscuous in our sexual relations with the opposite sex or in marriage. Therefore, it is written, *“You shall not commit adultery”* (Exodus 20:14).

### Lesson Questions:

1. In Matthew 5:27-28 Jesus describes how the command to not commit adultery can be broken in our hearts. What is the difference between adultery of the heart and actual adultery?
2. What is Jesus’ point in proposing such drastic solutions to avoid adultery of the heart in Matthew 5:29-30?
3. What was God’s plan for marriage and the establishment of a home? Genesis 2:18, 24
4. How did Jesus confirm God’s plan for marriage? Matthew 19:4-6
5. For how long was the marriage to be binding? Romans 7:2; 1 Corinthians 7:39
6. What lessons do you see from the account of the scribes and Pharisees bringing the adulteress to Jesus? John 8:1-11. Did Jesus condone the woman’s adultery?
7. Describe the marriage relationship as Paul outlines it in Ephesians 5:22-33. How can husbands love their wives as Christ loves the church? Ephesians 5:25. How can wives submit to and respect their husbands *“as to the Lord”*? Ephesians 5:22, 33
8. Colossians 3:5 challenges us to put to death our earthly members, saying that it leads to idolatry. How do we do that while living in the world? Colossians 3:8-11
9. Describe some of the admonitions Proverbs 5 gives for the young man. How do these apply to the challenges in our world today?

## Lesson 10: The Eighth Commandment

*"You shall not steal."* Exodus 20:15

**Scripture Reading:** Joshua 7:10-22

**Memory Verse:** *A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold.*  
Proverbs 22:1

### Introduction:

The eighth commandment indirectly establishes private ownership. God's forbidding one man to take something from another establishes the right of man to "have and to hold." This is one of the principles of economics.

The God-given right to possess things for our very own has been recognized from the beginning. At creation, God gave the world and its resources to mankind. The man and the woman were commanded to subdue the world and have dominion over it. The right of property ownership is demonstrated in Abraham's purchase of a plot of land to bury his wife Sarah in Genesis 23. By this, we see the right of private ownership was recognized even then.

From the concept of private ownership of possessions comes the command that we should not take something from another because it is his to have and to hold. As men and women find Jesus and come into a relationship with God, they become aware that the right of private ownership is more of a privilege. We begin to see that *"the cattle on a thousand hills"* (Psalm 50:10) are our Heavenly Father's and that we are tenants that have been granted use of those resources for a brief lifespan. In Deuteronomy 10:14, we see *"Indeed heaven and the highest heavens belong to the LORD your God, also the earth with all that is in it."* God is the owner of the earth and all that is in it, and He desires individuals to be His stewards of His creation.

Like some of the other commandments, stealing is deeply engrained within us as being wrong. Romans 2:14-15 describes how the Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature, do what the law requires. By this, they show that the work of the law is written on their hearts.

Instead of stealing, God wants us to give and share. He wants us to be generous and considerate of our fellow man and to give out of consideration for the blessings we have received from Him.

### Lesson Questions:

1. What was to be done with the spoils taken in the battle of Jericho? Joshua 6:17, 19
2. What was the sin of Israel and Achan and what was Achan's confession? Joshua 7:1, 11, 20-21
3. How was the eighth commandment described in other parts of the law given by Moses? Exodus 22:7; Leviticus 6:1-7; 19:11, 35-36; Deuteronomy 25:13-15
4. How does the Lord regard dishonest scales? Proverbs 11:1; 20:23; Micah 6:11. Discuss modern-day examples of this.
5. What might cause someone to do something like use short weights, cheat, defraud, and other similar dishonest practices? Why will men risk their eternal life by doing this? 1 Timothy 6:9-10
6. What advice does Paul give to the thief that is now a Christian? Ephesians 4:28
7. What are some other ways that we can break the eighth commandment today? Can you steal something that isn't a physical object?
8. Is stealing always wrong? How is stealing sometimes justified in our culture today?
9. How does James 1:17 encourage us to be content with the good gifts we have been given?

## Lesson 11: The Ninth Commandment

*“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”* Exodus 20:16

**Scripture Reading:** Proverbs 6:12-19

**Memory Verse:** *Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers.* Ephesians 4:29

### Introduction:

A witness is one who is supposed to have first-hand knowledge and who can testify concerning an event. To be of any value in helping arrive at proper conclusions, witnesses must tell the truth. In court today witnesses are asked to promise to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. This is no more than God requires of us.

This emphasis on truth is why in the law of Moses it took at least two witnesses to condemn someone of a capital offense (Deuteronomy 17:6-7). A person could not be put to death on the evidence of one witness. A second safeguard against a false witness was that the hands of the witnesses were to be the ones to cast the first stone. If they were false witnesses and it was found out that an innocent person was killed, then the law would consider them murderers. Also, once the false witness is found to be a liar, the same punishment of death would be upon them (Deuteronomy 19:18-19). This demonstrates how important truthfulness was to the Israelite community.

What are the motivations for being a false witness? Think about Satan and the lies he told to Eve. What was his motivation? People have a variety of motives for being deceitful. It might be because of selfishness, because of embarrassment, for money, to not offend people, or to save face. Our motivation to lie might even be out of fear. But the Bible says that God will honor those who honor Him. Sin is a reproach against God. *“Righteousness exalts a nation”* (Proverbs 14:34).

What are some ways we bear false witness? We can commit perjury in a courtroom. We can lie by exaggeration. We can lie by flattery. We can lie by creating false impressions or by not correcting false statements. We can allow lies to stand by carelessness or by careless talk. We can lie by spreading rumors that we know are untrue or haven't been verified.

Notice which of the things mentioned in Proverbs 6:16-19 God hates the most. First, it reads that there are six things the LORD hates, then it says there are seven that are an abomination. We see, however, that the LORD hated lies so badly that it is repeated. A false witness is a lying witness. Bearing false witness was one of the greatest of all the things God hates. How do we measure up in this area?

### Lesson Questions:

1. How do we know that God does not lie? Numbers 23:19; Malachi 3:6; Titus 1:2; Hebrews 6:18; James 1:17. How does God's truthfulness encourage you to be more truthful?
2. Why is Satan called the “father of lies”? John 8:44; 2 Corinthians 11:3
3. Look at the following examples of liars in the Bible. What were their motivations for their deceit?
  - Cain - when God asked him, “Where is Abel, your brother?” Genesis 4:9
  - Abraham - when he lied to Abimelech that Sarah was his sister. Genesis 20:2-4, 10-12
  - Rahab - when she hid the spies and lied about it. Joshua 2:2-4, 8-12
  - Gehazi, the servant of Elisha, - when he asked for payment from Naaman for God healing him through Elisha. 2 Kings 5:20-27
  - Ananias and Sapphira - when they lied about giving all the proceeds from the sale of a property to the apostles. Acts 5:1-10
4. Explain how the ninth commandment fits in with the commandment, *“Love your neighbor as yourself.”* Romans 13:8-10
5. Why do we tolerate white lies, such as exaggeration or even by staying silent, more than outright mistruths? Does the commandment intend to distinguish between the two? Ephesians 4:25; Colossians 3:9
6. How can slander or gossip bear a false witness? Proverbs 11:13; Proverbs 17:9; Proverbs 26:20
7. Discuss what is said about false witnesses in Proverbs 12:17 and 14:5.
8. What are the seven things that the Lord sees as an abomination? Proverbs 6:16-19

## Lesson 12: The Tenth Commandment

*“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s”* Exodus 20:17

**Scripture Reading:** Matthew 19:16-30; Mark 10:17-30

**Memory Verse:** *Incline my heart to Your testimonies, and not to covetousness.* Psalm 119:36

### Introduction:

*“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s”* (Exodus 20:17). These are instructions from God.

The Bible does not promise that we will be healthy, wealthy, or wise because we have faith in God. Often, the ideas about the Gospel have become mixed up with the American dream, so that we expect that if we behave in a righteous manner God will protect us with good health and give us freely of His good possessions. When this is our attitude, faith is nothing but a path to materialism. Instead, we are to have contentment and peace that comes from our Heavenly Father through our relationship with His Son, Jesus Christ. The tenth commandment challenges us to not put our focus on material things of the world but on our Heavenly Father.

The command, *“You shall not covet”* (Exodus 20:17) is unique among the commandments in that it relates to the desires in our hearts. This is interesting because Jesus taught the same messages about the heart when He said not to hate our brother, or we would commit murder and not to look at a woman with lust lest we commit adultery. It is important that we understand that we sin not only by our actions but by our desires. The heart attitude is key to understanding our faith.

As we think of coveting, we begin to realize that many disagreements and ruined relationships come from not following this commandment. It is impossible to love your neighbor if we covet what they have.

Even though we are told to not covet our neighbor’s possessions, it is not forbidden to own possessions or to possess them. Think of Abraham and Job, for example. Both were righteous men and had many possessions. The challenge with our possessions is to view them as belonging to God and coming from Him. They are to be seen as gifts that are to be freely shared with others, just as God has freely shared the gift of His Son with us. It is better to give than to receive and infinitely better to give than to covet that which is another’s.

### Lesson Questions:

1. What are the heart attitudes that lead to covetousness? Luke 12:15-21; Psalm 62:10; Hebrew 13:5.  
Note: Covetousness can be defined as a strong desire for that which belongs to another.
2. Ahab coveted Naboth’s vineyard. How did his covetousness lead to other sins? 1 Kings 21:1-16
3. How did covetousness lead to other sins in David’s situation? 2 Samuel 11:2-5, 15
4. What does Paul declare covetousness to be? Colossians 3:5, 6; Ephesians 5:3, 5 Why?
5. What warning did Jesus give about covetousness? Mark 7:20-23
6. Is the *“love of money”* the same as covetousness? 1 Timothy 6:9-10
7. What is the danger of trusting in riches and what is the solution? Mark 10:23-27
8. Who gives man the ability to gain wealth? Deuteronomy 8:18. Where does wealth ultimately come from?  
1 Samuel 2:7; 1 Chronicles 29:12
9. Discuss what someone might covet other than material things.

## Lesson 13: The Perpetuity of the Ten Commandments

*Here is the patience of the saints; here are those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.* Revelation 14:12

**Scripture Reading:** Psalm 89:1-8, 27-37

**Memory Verse:** *The works of His hands are verity and justice; all His precepts are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.* Psalm 111:7-8

### Introduction:

These lessons have assumed that the Ten Commandments are in effect today. What does Scripture tell us about their permanence? How do we know that they are intended for all time, including under the New Covenant? Why do some Christian denominations use Scriptures to say they are not now in effect?

Let us look at arguments some use to say the Ten Commandments are not in effect today. Colossians 2:14 is used to say that the law of Moses, including the Ten Commandments, was “nailed...to the cross” with Christ. Hebrews 1:1-2 is quoted to say that God now speaks to all men through Christ, whereas in the past God spoke to Israel through the Law of Moses and lump the Ten Commandments with the laws of Moses. Some say that nine of the laws found in the commandments are part of the New Covenant and must be obeyed today as part of the New Covenant. However, they argue that the Sabbath commandment was for the Jews only and since it was a memorial of God delivering them from Egypt, it lost its significance under the New Covenant.

Are these arguments correct? How do you refute these points? First, did the Ten Commandments need to be updated under the New Covenant? Absolutely not! Jesus said that He did not come “to destroy the Law or the Prophets,” (Matthew 5:17) which is what we call the Old Testament. Instead, He taught their deeper spiritual application. When asked which commandments were the greatest, He did not say that they were being replaced. Instead, He summarized the 10 as loving the LORD and loving your neighbor. In Matthew 19:17, when the rich young man asked what he must do to have eternal life, Jesus said to keep the commandments, referring to the Ten Commandments.

Paul describes the permanence of the Ten Commandments. In Romans 7:7, he says that he would not have known sin if not for the law. In Romans 3:20, Paul says that through the law comes knowledge of sin. Romans 3:31 says that we do not overthrow the law by our faith. Instead, we uphold it. In Romans 4:15, Paul says that where there is no law there is no transgression. 1 Corinthians 7:19 says that keeping the commandments of God is what matters. These verses were not speaking just to New Testament laws.

This lesson reviews why the Ten Commandments remain in effect today and why it continues to be the standard of righteousness for God’s covenant people.

### Lesson Questions:

1. Take a moment to reflect on your experiences with other views of the 10 commandments. What Scriptures were used to support those other views?
2. Did the Ten Commandment law exist before Mount Sinai? Genesis 4:7; 13:13; 18:20; 26:5; Romans 4:15; 5:13-14
3. Did Moses write the Ten Commandment law? Exodus 24:12; 31:18; 32:16
4. What does Moses mean when he says that God added no more to these? Deuteronomy 5:22. Was a distinction made in Deuteronomy 4:13-14?
5. What did Jesus mean when He said He did not come to destroy the law? Matthew 5:17-19
6. Was James referring to the Ten Commandments law in James 2:10-11?
7. What law is indicated in 1 John 3:4-6 when John says, “sin is lawlessness”?
8. What law was Paul referring to in Romans 3:20 when he says, “by the law is the knowledge of sin.”? Romans 7:7-12
9. How does Hebrews 4:9 demonstrate that the Sabbath commandment is still in effect today? Note: The Greek word for “rest” in this verse is “sabbatismos\*” which literally means “a sabbath rest.” Many modern translations use the words “sabbath rest” here.
10. What does Paul mean when he says we are “not under the law”? Romans 6:14-15; 1 Corinthians 9:20; Galatians 5:18. How can that statement be misunderstood?
11. Considering the context of Colossians 2:6-17, what was nailed to the cross in Colossians 2:14? Explain why Colossians 2:16-17 do not refer to the Sabbath commandment.

\* “G4520 - sabbatismos - Strong's Greek Lexicon (nkjv).” Blue Letter Bible. Web. 20 Jun, 2023. <<https://www.blueletterbible.org/lexicon/g4520/nkjv/tr/0-1/>>.

## **Lesson 14: The Ten Commandments and Justification by Grace through Faith**

*For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John 1:17*

**Scripture Reading:** Galatians 5:1-15

**Memory Verse:** *For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. Ephesians 2:8-9*

### **Introduction:**

In these studies, we have said that the Ten Commandments law is a mirror that leads us to recognize the inability of our own efforts to live according to the perfection that God expects.

We have studied that law and learned its complexity and the high standards God expects of His people. That they are described in just ten simple commandments. Can we live even one day without transgressing these commandments? Are we honest in the words we speak and not speaking in half-truths to protect ourselves? Do we have thoughts of envy for our neighbor's possessions? Are we putting ourselves and our projects at the center of the universe instead of God? Obedience in all these areas is impossible by our efforts, and that is a key to our understanding of the Gospel.

Our means of righteousness has always been by grace through faith. In the New Covenant, we are not under a new dispensation as some would argue. Righteousness was by grace through faith for Abraham and Moses. Then as now, salvation by grace produced in hearts the desire and power to obey God's law (Genesis 26:5). Instead of the law being a stairway to climb to a higher level, it is the mirror that teaches us of our need for a redeemer.

And so, as we step out in faith, we are justified by the grace that we have received from God through Jesus Christ. That gives us a new identity and it begins our Christian walk. From there we learn to live in obedience to His laws. The Spirit of God lives in our hearts and sanctifies us and teaches us to grow in obedience to Him and to His perfect law. As we grow in faith, we are led to an ever-growing trust in our Almighty God. This sanctification comes not by our efforts alone, but with God's help.

We are called to liberty. The liberty to love God and through love to serve one another. This liberty gives freedom from the penalty of the law described in Deuteronomy. But it is not freedom from the commands of the Ten Commandments law.

### **Lesson Questions:**

1. Was Jesus able to keep the law perfectly? Hebrews 4:15. What does that mean for us? Hebrews 10:19-23
2. Who is considered a sinner and in need of justification and by what means are we justified? Romans 3:23-24; Ephesians 2:8-9; 1 John 1:8
3. How were Abraham and others who lived before Jesus justified from their sins? Romans 4:1-3, 9-10, 16
4. What is the role of faith in justification? Romans 1:16-17; Hebrews 11:6; Jude 1:3
5. What part does the law play in our justification? Romans 7:7
6. Having been justified, what does it mean to grow in sanctification? Ephesians 2:10; 4:14-16
7. What is meant by the "*perfect law of liberty*"? James 1:22-25; Galatians 5:13-14
8. Are we at liberty when living under grace to violate the law? Romans 6:14-23
9. Now that you have gone through these lessons, take a moment to reflect on what motivates your obedience to the commandments.