

LESSON 10 The Law of God

Worship no god but me.

Do not make for yourselves images of anything.

Do not use my name for evil purposes.

Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy.

Respect your father and your mother.

Do not commit murder.

Do not commit adultery.

Do not steal.

Do not accuse anyone falsely.

Do not desire anything another man owns.

(Exodus 20:1–17)

God wrote the Ten Commandments on two tables of stone and gave them to the great leader of Israel, Moses, for his people. Even though they are ancient laws, they can be applied today.

The Plan

- A. Meaning and Purpose of the Law
- B. Obedience to the Law

The Goals

1. Identify the Ten Commandments.
2. Indicate the responsibility of the believer toward the law of God.

A. MEANING AND PURPOSE OF THE LAW

Goal 1. Identify the Ten Commandments.

The Lord said to Moses, “Chisel out two stone tablets like the first ones, and I will write on them the words that were on the first tablets, which you broke.” (Exodus 34:1)

In Exodus 20, the Ten Commandments that God wrote are written for us. He gave them as guidelines for His children to follow. Let us look at each law individually

Worship no god but me. As we learned earlier, we are to give God first place in our lives. This commandment is repeated in Matthew 4:10: ““Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.””

Do not make for yourselves images of anything. Our allegiance is to God—we cannot have divided loyalties. Jesus said that no man can serve two masters (Luke 16:13), for he will love one and despise the other. We want to be true to the Lord, loving Him with our whole heart.

Do not use my name for evil purposes. People break the third commandment by cursing and using God’s name in vain. We will always give that Name which is above all names a place of love, honor, and respect.

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)

Do not swear at all: either by heaven, for it is God's throne; or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. (Matthew 5:34–35)

Observe the Sabbath and keep it holy. This is the only commandment not repeated in the New Testament. Most Christians do not observe the Hebrew Sabbath. They keep Sunday instead because it was on the first day of the week that Jesus rose from the dead. Every Lord's Day can remind us of the Resurrection! It is important that we set aside a day for rest and worship, but which day we choose is secondary. Colossians 2:16 says, "Do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day."

One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. (Romans 14:5)

Respect your father and your mother. Exodus 20:12 gives a special promise to obedient children: "Respect your father and your mother, so that you may live a long time in the land that I am giving you." The New Testament reinforces the commandment.

"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you." (Ephesians 6:1)

Do not commit murder. The first murderer was Cain who killed his brother Abel. Perhaps Cain thought no one saw what happened, but God did. God asked Cain, "'What have you done? Listen! Your brother's blood cries out to me from the ground'" (Genesis 4:10). Murder is a sin with chain reactions—it hurts the families and friends of both the murderer and the murdered. It is also a grave offense against God who made man in His own image.

Do not commit adultery. Adultery is the sin of breaking the marriage vow by having sexual relations with someone other than the marriage partner. Hebrews 13:4 says, “Marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”

Do not steal. It is wrong to take anything that does not belong to you, even if the person you took it from is rich and does not need it.

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)

Do not accuse anyone falsely. The ninth commandment includes all lying in word or deed. God does not make a difference between “good” lies and “bad” lies—all false accusations are wrong. Psalm 101:7 says, “No one who practices deceit will dwell in my house; no one who speaks falsely will stand in my presence.”

The cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the
murderers, the sexually immoral, those who
practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—
their place will be in the fiery lake of burning
sulfur. This is the second death. (Revelation 21:8)

Do not desire anything another man owns. To wrongly desire what belongs to another is called coveting. Luke 12:15 puts it this way: “‘Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.’”

God gave us these laws to teach us right from wrong, to guide us when we make decisions.

What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. . . . So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. (Galatians 3:19, 24)

Application

1 Read Exodus 20. Then write each commandment in brief with its Scripture reference.

- a) One:
- b) Two:
- c) Three:
- d) Four:
- e) Five:
- f) Six:
- g) Seven:
- h) Eight:
- i) Nine:
- j) Ten:

2 Read Hebrews 13:5. What commandment or commandments could the writer have had in mind when he wrote that verse?

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B. OBEDIENCE TO THE LAW

Goal 2. Identify the responsibility of the believer toward the law of God.

The Lord asks that we keep His commandments not only in action, but in attitude as well—an attitude of love, of preferring others above ourselves.

The commandments, “Do not commit adultery,” “Do not murder,” “Do not steal,” “Do not covet,” and whatever other commandment there may be, are summed up in this one rule: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” (Romans 13:9)

This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome. (1 John 5:3)

We already know that keeping commandments will not save us. We are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. Ephesians 2:8–9 confirms it:

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast.

However, we do obey the Lord because as His children we want to please Him. If we do break one of His commandments, we should immediately ask God to forgive and cleanse us from sins.

I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world. (1 John 2:1–2)

We have learned that our main responsibility as Christian believers is to love God. We keep His commandments because we love Him. So, our relationship with God is one of love.

First Corinthians 13 gives a beautiful description of love. Verses 4–8 tell us that love is patient and kind, not jealous, conceited, proud, ill mannered, selfish, or irritable. It does not keep a record of wrongs nor is it happy with evil, but with truth. Love never gives up—it is eternal. This may sound like an ideal picture of love. But it is this kind of love that every Christian believer should have for God and others. It is this unconditional love that God gives to us.

It is no accident that the chapters before and after 1 Corinthians 13 are about God’s gifts to believers. The chapter on love is tied in with the chapters on gifts because love also is a gift. Loving and giving go together; when we love others we want to give them what will please them most.

Have you sometimes felt weak and maybe even disobedient? The Lord Jesus can give you the help and strength that you need. Would you like to ask for His help right now?

Heavenly Father, I ask forgiveness for failing to love you as I should. Help me not to sin and disobey you when I know better.

Lord, I want to love You and defend Your Name even more than I would love and defend my own family. Give me Your strength, I pray, because I ask in the name of Jesus who gave His life for me. Amen.

Application

3 Read 1 John 3:15–18. According to these verses which of the following statements are TRUE?

- a)** The attitude is as important as the action.
- b)** He who hates his brother is a murderer.
- c)** To love God and your brother is also a commandment.

4 Read Romans 8:3–4. Fill in the correct completions to the following statements.

- a)** God condemned sin in human nature by
- b)** The demands of the law are fully satisfied in us who live according to



Check Your Answers

1 Compare your answers to the following verses:

- a)** Exodus 20:3
- b)** 20:4–6
- c)** 20:7
- d)** 20:8–11
- e)** 20:12
- f)** 20:13
- g)** 20:14
- h)** 20:15
- i)** 20:16
- j)** 20:17

4 a) sending His own Son.

b) the Spirit and not according to human nature.

2 The writer could have been referring to “Worship no God but me” because some people love money above God.

Or he could have referred to “Do not steal” because he says that God will never abandon you, so there is no need to steal.

Or he could have been thinking of “Do not wrongly desire anything another man owns” because he says, Be satisfied with what you have.

3 All of the statements are true.