



What Are the Ten Commandments? Part 2

“Consequently, it is clear that no one can ever be right with God by trying to keep the law.” (Galatians 3:11a, NLT)

In the first four commandments, God focused on the relationship the Israelites should have with him. They were to love him with all their hearts by worshiping only him, honoring and respecting his name and keeping one day a week special (the Sabbath) for rest and worshiping him. In the last six commandments, God taught them how they were to treat each other. If they had a right relationship with him, it would be easy to treat others with love and respect. Notice how God bases each commandment on love.

The relationship with others

“Honor your father and mother.” (Exodus 20:12, NIV) Did you know that God promises a long life of blessings to those who obey this commandment? In the New Testament, God said, *“And this is the promise: If you honor your father and mother, you will live a long life full of blessing.”* (Ephesians 6:3, NLT) Wow! Think of that the next time you are tempted to disobey your parents! To honor is to show your love by respecting and obeying them, unless they ask you to do something God has said is wrong. Can you forgive abusive parents? Love is obedience in action. Don’t miss this blessing!

“Do not murder.” (Exodus 20:13, NIV) If you love someone, would you kill him or her? Human life is precious. God is the one who gives life and no one has the right to take a life. Because God created man and woman in his image, he said, *“And murder is forbidden ... for to kill a person is to kill a living being made in God’s image.”* (Genesis 8:5, 6, NIV) The Hebrew word used for murder refers to a killing that is premeditated and deliberate. It does not refer to accidental deaths, the execution of murderers by the state, or killings in war. However, it does refer to self-murder (suicide) and the taking of the life of an unborn baby (abortion). Life is God’s gift and is in his hands. Jesus said that if you hold a grudge and murderous thoughts in your heart, you are already guilty of murder and in danger of judgment! Murder is a heart attitude! (Matthew 5:22)

“Do not commit adultery.” (Exodus 20:14, NIV) When God created Eve for Adam, he planned that they should stay together forever. (Genesis 2:24, Matthew 19:5, 6) When you marry, you take a vow, “till death do us part.” Committing adultery is breaking that vow by sexual unfaithfulness. (Sex before marriage is fornication.) Disobeying this command causes great heartache to the couple and their children. Jesus explained that

anyone who looks at a woman (or man) with lust (intense sexual desire) has already committed adultery in his/her heart. (Matthew 5:28) Even before marriage, ask God to keep your thought life pure. Refuse to listen to dirty stories, look at pornography or watch movies or television programs that cause wrongful thoughts.

“Do not steal.” (Exodus 20:15, NIV) If you love someone, would you take or keep something that belongs to them? Love is honest. Stealing is much more than robbing a bank or shoplifting. You steal when you borrow something and fail to return it, cheat in a game, copy someone else’s answers or gamble and take money you did not earn. By telling lies about someone, you can steal their good name or reputation. Is there something you need to confess to God and make right with someone?

“Do not testify falsely against your neighbor [lie].” (Exodus 20:16, NIV) Would you tell lies and gossip about someone you love? If you love someone, you are kind. Lying is deceiving or tricking someone to believe an untruth. You may deceive by leaving something out of a story, by telling a half-truth, by twisting the facts, by exaggerating, by inventing a falsehood, or gossiping. Telling untruths can become a habit so that your conscience hardly bothers you. When you are tempted to tell a lie, stop and think, “What would Jesus do?”

“Do not covet.” (Exodus 29:17, NIV) Coveting means “to long after and earnestly desire with envy” what belongs to another. Love is content with what God has given you.. If you love your friend, you will be happy for what he or she has and not covet something that you cannot afford to buy. Things do not make you happy! *“Stay away from the love of money; be satisfied with what you have.”* (Hebrews 13:5, NIV) God will meet all of your real needs if you obey and trust him. (Philippians 4:19)

Jesus summed up all the Ten Commandments in a few words: *“You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. A second is equally important. Love your neighbor as yourself.”* (Matthew 22: 37-39, NLT)

In a way, the Ten Commandments are the heart of Christianity – love. *“For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with love.”* (Romans 5:5b, NLT) How much God loves us for he calls us his children. (1 John 3:1) In return, we love him, and he gives us the love to love others. What a Savior!

Attitude Check:

- What is your attitude towards the people with whom you come in contact?

Explore:

- Read, *“Our Love for Others Mirrors the Condition of Our Heart”* (1 John 2:9-11)
- Memorize these six commandments and review the first four.

Talking with God:

- May my fellowship with you deepen each day. May your love flow through me to others.