



Life Principles Notes™

The Ten Commandments

Summary:

Are the Ten Commandments important to your daily life? Some people insist that these laws were given specifically to the nation of Israel, but to no one else. Others see the commandments as a means of salvation, even though no one can keep all the commandments perfectly. In truth, the Ten Commandments are God's unchanging moral standard for regulating the conduct of all men.

There are three kinds of law mentioned in the

New Testament. The Law of God is a way of referring to The Ten Commandments. The Law of Moses is the entire body of legislation given to the Israelites during their period in the wilderness. The Law of Christ is the Law of God interpreted and expanded by Jesus, and applied to every believer. He came to fulfill the moral law of God by dying on the cross as total payment for all our sins, and by living fully and completely the Ten Commandments.

These commandments are God's eternal standards for daily living. Because they are the Word of God, they endure forever.

Scriptural Principles:

1 The inspiration of the Ten Commandments. Much like the commands of a general, God's laws are not options for our consideration. They are meant to be obeyed without question. They have come to us by the voice of God, as spoken to His servant Moses on Mount Sinai. Some say they are written by men, but this cannot be so—people would never have created such a set of laws, even if they could. This is because the commandments are too demanding and too wise to be the product of any human origin. In only ten statements, God has given us His moral standard for the regulation of society. Romans 1 tells us that God has implanted His laws in the hearts of all people. Therefore, all cultures sense that stealing, murder, and lying are wrong, even if they have never read the Bible. The Ten Commandments are eternal, essential, and international.

2 The intention of the Ten Commandments. Why did God give us these commandments in the first place? First, He gave them to enable us to fully understand His nature as a righteous and holy God. He is pure, and therefore He demands that we live in purity before Him. Sinful behavior is an offense to His standards and requires His rightful judgment. The commandments show us not only His perfection but our sinfulness, because we know that we violate these laws too often. No human being but Jesus Christ has ever succeeded in keeping the Ten Commandments perfectly. Therefore, these laws of God establish His position as holy and awesome, and our position as sinful and imperfect. They are the beginning of our wisdom.

3 The protection provided by the Ten Commandments. God intended to give us the Ten Commandments for our own protection. He gave them to us because He loves us and wants to help us avoid destroying ourselves. He has foreknowledge of the effect of people trying to live in a world without order and righteousness. Each of these commandments is our insurance against self-destructive

behavior—killing, stealing, lying, dishonoring our parents, following false gods and the rest. We are to obey these commandments not only because it is right, but because it is wise. Those who ignore the Ten Commandments fail to realize the genuine danger to their own lives. We reap what we sow, and rebelling against God’s laws brings about God’s judgment, but obeying God’s laws brings about God’s protection.

4 The inadequacy of the Ten Commandments. The commandments are essential for our daily life, but they are inadequate for our eternal life. Some people believe they can be saved by obeying the Ten Commandments. If that were true, no one would be saved. The commandments contain no provision for forgiveness. That was not their purpose. They were given by God to tutor us, as Paul teaches in Romans 8:1-3. By the Ten Commandments we understand our sinfulness. We recognize our need for God’s grace and forgiveness. “What the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh” (Romans 8:3). Galatians 2:16 affirms that we cannot be justified before God through keeping God’s laws, but only through Christ.

5 The indestructibility of the Ten Commandments. People have always tried to destroy God’s laws, but they have endured for thousands of years because they are God’s unchangeable moral standards. Moses did not break the commandments, only the stones upon which they were written. In the same way, we cannot break the commandments, only ourselves by violating them. We cannot lose our salvation by disobeying God’s commands, but we are certain to reap the consequences. We may perish, but the laws of God cannot be destroyed—no matter how many times men have tried to do so. Wisdom and maturity lead us to the joy of living in consistent obedience to His eternal and protective laws for us.

6 Insight into the Ten Commandments. What do these laws from Exodus 20 really say to us? The first four commandments establish our holy relationship to a holy God. First, we can have no other gods. Any person, idea, or thing we place ahead of the Lord in life represents a violation of this commandment. Second, we shall not create idols. We should need no representation of God to know His presence and His reality. Third, we may not misuse the name of the Lord. However we mean it, the names of God are awesome and holy, and they cannot be used lightly. Fourth, we must keep the Sabbath holy. God intends us to have one day of rest per week—a day to honor Him.

7 Insight into the “social” commandments. The final commandments establish how we should relate to one another. The fifth law commands us to honor our parents, even when they themselves are not honorable. Parents are responsible for training, and children are responsible for obedience. Sixth, we are forbidden to commit the murder of another human being. This commandment does not refer to war but to killing as an act of vengeance. Seventh, we are not to commit adultery. Marriage is a holy and pure institution, and God requires us not to violate it. Eighth, we are never to steal. We are to have respect for the property of others—even if that property is time or some other intangible item. Ninth, we should not lie because words are sacred. Tenth, we should not covet, which is to harbor a resentful desire for what is not ours.

Conclusion:

The living Word of God is our most precious possession because it is the mind of God. If we are willing to live a godly life, through the help and strength of the Holy Spirit, we can live in the way that He intended for us on this earth. There will be times when we stumble and displease God through violating one of His commandments. There will never be a time when we do not struggle to obey these simple, clear laws of God. Even so, we can confess our sin and feel His immediate forgiveness.

James 2:10 tells us that “whoever keeps the whole law and stumbles in one point . . . has become guilty of all.” We cannot avoid being completely guilty, but we have God’s promise of complete forgiveness through His grace. Therefore we need not live with the burden of trying to live perfectly. We can obey His commandments simply because it brings us joy to do so. God longs to use these sacred laws to program our minds, to heal our problems, and to revive our nation. 🙏

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