



# Ten Commandments Part 1

## Introduction

Of all the things in the Bible, the 10 Commandments are among the most well-known. Until recently you could find them displayed in many courthouses and public schools (still can in some areas). The American founding fathers knew and quoted them. The 1956 film with Charlton Heston and Yul Brynner won the Oscar for best effects (although if you watch it now they seem pretty low tech).

So how do these commandments, given around 3,500 years ago apply today to you as a follower of Jesus?

## God's Covenant

A covenant is an agreement between two people or groups of people that spells out what each side will do and what each side will provide. For example, a parent and their 16-year-old driver might make a covenant. The driver is expected to drive safely, follow the laws, and pay for the gas they use. In return, they get the use of the family car. The parent is expected to help the driver learn how to drive and keep the car maintained. In return, they don't have to drive the 16-year old around everywhere anymore.

In this covenant, God tells His people, "I am your God and you are My people. So this is how our relationship will work: I'll bless you and care for you and you'll keep My laws. This is how we'll stay connected. And it's how everyone will know that I am yours and you are mine." That was true for the Israelites then, and it's true for us today, too.

## Against and For

Most of the commandments are God saying, "Don't do this." A good question to ask is, "If God is against this, what is He for?" When God tells us not to do something it's usually because He wants something else that's better for us. Sure, God is against stealing. But He's also for generosity and being satisfied with what He's given us. Looking at the commandments as asking, "What is God for?" gives us a much more mature understanding of God and what He wants for us.

You'll find the 10 Commandments and their meanings on pages 11-13 of your catechism. Pages 54-101 have additional questions and answers and Bible references for each commandment.

## Fear, Love, and Trust

These three words come up frequently in the meanings for the commandments. Think of them like this...

**Fear:** does not mean being afraid of... but instead considering God as the most important thing, as the one to devote my life to.

**Love:** to cherish and adore God, to want to please and serve Him.

**Trust:** to rely on God to take care of me and keep His promises.

## **They Point Us to Jesus**

When you read the 10 Commandments you should be struck at how you fail to keep them. Part of the job of the commandments is to point out our shortcomings. Why would God want to make us feel like failures?

To remind us of how desperately we need Him. When we recognize how far we are from being able to keep God's laws on our own it's then that we understand why we need a savior. Jesus kept the commandments perfectly and He gives us His perfection because we can't rely on our own.

## **The First Commandment: You Shall Have No Other Gods**

### **Read:**

Read the first commandment and its meaning in your catechism (Red: pg 11, Black: pg 13) and Matthew 6:25-26 in your Bible.

In its context, 3,500 years ago, the first commandment was a radical statement. All the world's cultures at the time were polytheistic, they worshiped many gods. They had a god for the sun and a god for the rain, for crops, for love, for war, and on and on. But God says, "I am the only God. I am God enough for all your needs. You can look to me for everything. You have no needs for any other gods."

These days we don't worship other gods as they did in Old Testament times. But just like the people of those times, we still look somewhere to find happiness and hope and meaning in our lives.

The first commandment still speaks to us: God is enough. He loves us, cares for us, and provides all we need. And His desire is for us to look only to Him and worship only Him.

### **Reflect:**

Are you guilty of having other gods? Think about these situations...

When you're lonely or sad or when you've had a hard day, where do you turn for comfort?

When you're anxious or worried about something where do you look to take away your fears?

Where do you place your confidence? In yourself? Your wealth? Your abilities? In someone else?

Why did God give this commandment first, before all the others?

**Write:**

What is God against in this commandment?

What is God for in this commandment?

Make a list of your top 5 (or more) priorities (things you value, spend time on, invest in, find confidence or worth in) in life right now:

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

**Respond:**

God demands that we fear (take Him seriously), love (cherish and adore), and trust (rely on) in Him above all things.

What gets in the way of you keeping this commandment?

What is God asking you to turn away from in order to keep this commandment more fully? What is one thing in your life that is, has in the past, or has the potential to outrank God in your list of priorities?

# The Second Commandment: You Shall Not Misuse the Name of the Lord Your God

## Read:

Read the second commandment and its meaning in your catechism (Red: pg 11-12, Black: pg 13) and Isaiah 12:4 in your Bible.

Names are important. Parents spend careful time deciding what to name their child. Our name is what we're known by, it's how people call out to us. Think for a minute how sweet it is to hear someone you love to speak your name. Or how much trouble you know you're in when a parent uses your whole name. If you've ever had someone call you names or twist your name into something to mock or hurt you then you know the power of your name being misused.

The second commandment is about more than not using God's name to swear. God's name is powerful and it is personal. God gives us His name so that we can know Him (relationship), be in awe of Him (fear, love, trust), call on Him (pray, praise, and give thanks) and so that we can be recognized as His (identity). All of these blessings are wrapped in God's name. Here God invites and asks us to use His name in the way He intended.

## Reflect:

Do you consider saying, "Oh my God!" or "Jesus Christ!" or God \_\_\_\_it!" or "OMG" to be swearing? Why or why not.

When you end your prayers do you ever say, "In your name I pray," or "In Jesus' name I pray"? Why?

Can you have it both ways? Can you say that saying, "Oh my God" is no big deal but then pray in God's name and expect it to be a big deal?

## Write:

What is God against in this commandment?

What is God for in this commandment?

Look at the meaning of this commandment in your catechism. Write it in your own words.

**Respond:**

What do you need to work on when it comes to using God's name properly? No swearing? Praying more? Seeing yourself as a Christian and acting like it?

What are some steps you can take to make better use of God's name?

## **The Third Commandment: Remember the Sabbath Day by Keeping it Holy**

**Read:**

Read the third commandment and its meaning in your catechism (Red: pg 12, Black: pg 13) and Luke 10:38-42 in your Bible.

Our world is going, going, going 24/7. It wasn't too long ago that most stores weren't open on Sundays...these days you can order whatever your heart desires online at any time of day or night. And, in some cases, you can have it delivered to your front door within a couple of hours. There is no slowing down for anything.

The problem is that when we don't slow down we miss things. Like trying to read a book by flipping the pages past your eyes with your thumb. You'll catch some of it, but too much will be missed.

God knows us. He knows that we need to be reminded to slow down and to focus on what's important (remember the story of Mary and Martha that you read just now?)

So God gave us the Sabbath, a rhythm of rest, and growth. God knows we need to pull out of our busyness enough to be refreshed and renewed. And He wants us to come closer and closer to Him as we worship Him and find Him in His word. So from the very beginning of time, He set up a way for us to do both. He gave us the Sabbath way back in the Garden of Eden and then commanded us to schedule our weeks around it still today.

**Reflect:**

Why is it so hard to slow down and rest?

If you had to grade yourself on how regularly you attend worship  
... read the Bible  
... pray

What would your GPA be?

What are the things that get in the way of you experiencing rest and growth with God?

**Write:**

Look back at the story in Luke. Jesus told Martha that Mary had chosen what was better. What did she choose and why was it better?

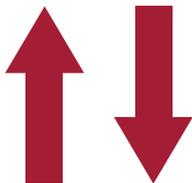
What is God against in this commandment?

What is God for in this commandment?

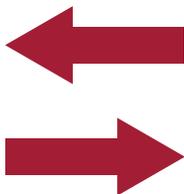
## Pause

Let's take a quick break here and look at something

In the first three commandments, God describes the way we are to relate to Him: having Him as our only God, keeping His name holy, honoring His day: the Sabbath. Think of this as a vertical or up-and-down relationship between us and God.



In the other seven commandments God describes how we are to relate to other people...honoring parents, not murdering, cheating on, lying about, or stealing from. Think about this as a horizontal or side-to-side relationship between us and those around us.



Why did God give commandments that focus both on how we relate to Him and how we relate to others? He doesn't want His people locked away in their own little world ignoring the world around them. Look up Matthew 5:16. What does it say about the effect of a life lived following the 10 Commandments?

By the way, do you realize that the Lord's Prayer was structured similarly, with the first three petitions focusing on God? Interesting.

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## Chapter 3 Ten Commandments Part 1

### Family Homework:

*Family Homework is meant to be an opportunity to get the family talking about spiritual things. Multiple studies show that parents and grandparents are the #1 faith role models in a student's life. We know life is busy, but we want to give you opportunities to grow together. The best time to do this is together in the car, while eating a meal together, or simply anytime you can spend some time together. Don't focus quite so much on the 'perfect' answers, focus on the time together.*

**Respond:**

A two-part experiment in Sabbath moments. **Part 1:** Look at your family calendar and write in 10 minutes each day where you're going to pause everything, sit down and rest with God, and read a Psalm. Read through it 3 times.

Day	Psalm	Time you're going to pause?	How did it go?
Monday	Psalm 1		
Tuesday	Psalm 19		
Wednesday	Psalm 32		
Thursday	Psalm 34		
Friday	Psalm 51		
Saturday	Psalm 121		
Sunday	Psalm 138		

**Part 2:** Identify one day this week to take a technology break for 3 hours, to intentionally rest and connect with people around you. Maybe even do it as a family!

**When are you going to do your technology break?**

**How did the technology break go?**

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_