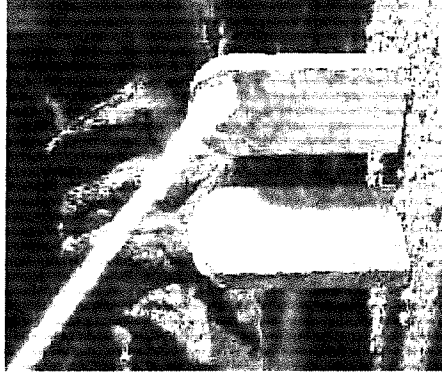


THE

TEN

COMMANDMENTS

1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image . . .
3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.
5. Honor thy father and thy mother.
6. Thou shalt not kill.
7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.
8. Thou shalt not steal.
9. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.
10. Thou shalt not covet.



"I am the Lord thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage."

Preamble to the Decalogue.

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me, (על-פני, before my face.)"

First Precept.

"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image; nor any likeness of any thing that is in Heaven above or in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the Earth; thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generations of them that hate me; and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

Second Precept.

"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain."

Third Precept.

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work; but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates; for in six days the Lord made Heaven and Earth, the sea, and all that in them is; and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it."

Fourth Precept.

"Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

Fifth Precept.

"Thou shalt not kill."

Sixth Precept.

"Thou shalt not commit adultery."

Seventh Precept.

"Thou shalt not steal."

Eighth Precept.

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor."

Ninth Precept.

"Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house; thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife; nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's."

Tenth Precept.

Exodus XX, 2-17.

Let us

then notice, as briefly as possible, simply the main scope and bearing of the several precepts in order.

I. The first implies two things:

1. That all men should worship and serve Jehovah. Scope of the first Precept.

2. That they should worship nothing else.

This precept, then, is opposed to both Atheism and Polytheism, and contains within itself the only sure and firm basis of all religion and morality; and, I may add, of all political, civil, and social order.

II. The second relates to the proper *mode of worship*, and implies three things.

1. That God should be worshiped in spirit and in truth, according to his own prescribed ordinances. Scope of the second Precept.

2. That it is sinful to attempt to worship him under any material forms or images. All such attempts are idolatry.

3. That God can not and will not suffer any of his glory to be given to any thing else. On this so-called Divine jealousy rests the security of the universe.

III. The third Commandment also implies three things:

1. That all men should speak of God with the most profound reverence. Scope of the third Precept.

2. That any vain or irreverent use of any of God's names or titles is very sinful.

3. That God is jealous of his name, as he is also of his person.

Learn hence that sacred things are not to be trifled with.

IV. The fourth Commandment implies,

1. The propriety and necessity of sanctifying to the Lord a portion of our time. Scope of the fourth Precept.

2. That this should be such as God has himself appointed.

3. That all under our authority should be encouraged and required to do likewise.

V. The fifth Commandment implies,

1. That our parents and all in authority over us should be honored and respected. Scope of the fifth Precept.

2. That the Lord will reward and bless all who do this.

VI. The sixth Commandment requires,

1. That we should use all lawful means to preserve the lives, the health, and the happiness of all men. Scope of the sixth Precept.

2. That we should avoid every thing of an opposite tendency, such as anger, wrath, malice, etc. Matthew v, 21-26; 1 John iii, 15.

VII. The seventh Commandment requires,

1. That all our thoughts, words, and actions should be holy, pure, and temperate.

2. That we should avoid every thing that may serve to create within us any impure thoughts or feelings. Matthew v, 27-32.

Scope of the
seventh Pre-
cept.

VIII. The eighth Commandment requires,

1. That we should use all lawful means to preserve the property of other persons.

2. That we should avoid all theft, unjust dealing, and whatever else may serve to destroy or injure the property of others.

Scope of the
eighth Precept.

IX. The ninth Commandment requires,

1. That we should use all lawful means to promote the reputation and the good name of other persons.

Scope of the
ninth Precept.

2. That we should avoid every thing of a contrary and opposite tendency, and which may serve in any way to injure the character of others.

X. The tenth Commandment requires,

1. That we should be satisfied with such things as we have and as we may lawfully acquire.

Scope of the
tenth Precept.

2. That we should avoid all inordinate desires concerning any thing and every thing that is our neighbor's.

THE FOCAL POINT OF LIFE
EXODUS 20:1-3

INTRODUCTION:

1. God calls for His people to be different from the society around them.
2. The Ten Commandments form the ethical and moral basis for this holiness. They cannot save, but they can aid the believer.
3. The commandments touch on every problem we face today as a society. In many ways, they are ageless. Though they are well-known, they are often misunderstood.
4. We live in an age of lost faith, lost hope and empty hearts.
5. We focus our attention upon God in this first commandment. The importance of the first commandment cannot be over-estimated.
6. If men do not obey the first commandment, obedience to the others will not matter.
7. Isn't it interesting that in His guidelines for living, that we begin with God? But, that is where you always begin.
8. The idea of one God - why shout it in our ears again? Have we not accepted it since childhood?
9. "Nobody really believes in the "many god" notion anymore. Why tell us what we already know?"
 - (1) Maybe we know it only with our lips - not our hearts;
 - (2) With some the question is not one God against many gods, but one God against none;
 - (3) We may deny God, not with words, but by vaguely drifting in losing our interest in Him.
10. The Ten Commandments open with a statement of the *primacy* of God being number One.

Exo 20:1

"And God spoke all these words:"

Exo 20:2

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."

Exo 20:3

"You shall have no other gods before me."

DISCUSSION: LET US NOTICE--

I. THE DECLARATION - "I am the Lord your God" - the *Reality*

1. This statement assumes the existence and reality of God. The Bible nowhere tries to prove such. His being and existence are taken for granted.
2. Atheism is not a problem of the head - it is a problem of the heart. Cf. Psalm 14:1; Psalm 53:1. The atheist's head knows better.
3. There are many who may not intellectually deny His existence, but practically deny His existence because they say, "No God for me; I am not interested; I do not want Him intruding into my life."
4. Belief in God is the fundamental postulate of all rational thinking. You cannot even think straight if you do not believe in His existence.
5. However, it is not the existence of God that is discussed here - God is rather talking about His unity.
6. "No other gods before Me" - God is asserting the fact that there is one God. Cf. Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5; 46:9; Ephesians 4:6.
7. God asserts His sole existence; He is not plural; He is One. He is the *only* God.
8. What kind of God is this "One God?"
 - (1) ***He is the God of Creation*** - "Jehovah" - the God who was, the God who is, the God who shall ever be. He is "Jehovah God."
 - A. Cf. Exodus 3:14;
 - B. In the New Testament, Jehovah God has revealed Himself in the person of His Son - the Lord Jesus Christ - Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3; John 1:18.
 - (2) ***He is the God of Creative Activity*** - "God" - Elohim - He who brought the universe into existence.
 - (3) ***He is the Lord of Redemption*** - "I have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage." Cf. John 8:36.
9. This commandment sets before us the *reality* of God. If God is *Who* He claims He is, and is *what* He is, then He has every right to expect us to obey this command.

II. THE LIMITATION - "You shall have no other gods before Me" - *No Rivals*

1. God is not battling "atheism" - the question raised in this commandment is, "How many gods are there?"
2. God is simply saying, "I will have no rivals; I am the only God there is."

(1) *The Un-imaginable Possibility* - People would place other gods before the only God who is real!

- A. People would worship false gods?
- B. Baal-Peor (corruption; Baal-Zebub (flies); Molech (fire).
- C. How pagan! How uncivilized that people would do such! Yet, old gods never die. They simply come back in "new" clothing.
 - a. *Material things* - covetousness; money conscious - Mark 4:19; 1 Timothy 6:10
 - b. *Pleasure* - 2 Timothy 3:4 - "Who comes first in your life?" We have become so amusement-crazed, that we put these kinds of things before the worship of the Lord God?
 - c. *Sex* - novels; TV; advertisements; movies
 - d. *Self* - Matthew 16:24,25; 2 Timothy 3:2
 - e. *Sports* - "We have made the world of sports into a god. Our favorite players have become gods. The stadiums and coliseums have become temples. People will turn their back upon the real God, and drive hundreds of miles to worship their heroes. They will sit and stand and cheer for two or more hours at a time. Huge amounts of money are spent in order to pay homage to their deities."

(2) *The Un-natural Infidelity* - "Don't have any other gods before Me" - Loyalty to a false god involves disloyalty to the true God.

- A. You cannot be faithful to the true God, and be faithful to your own false god at the same time.
- B. Unnatural and unfaithful - yet, that is what people do when they worship another god.
- C. An idol is anything that occupies the place of God.

(3) ***The Unquestionable Futility*** - "You shall have no other gods before Me" - "In place of; alongside of" - an additional god; "excessive attachment.

A. This ushers futility into a life;

B. Idolatry - Neurosis - disintegration;

C. So there is a prohibition against the rivals of God.

III. **THE SUMMONS** - "You shall have no other gods before Me" - the reverence for God.

1. The tremendous invitation in this command is to give reverence to Him, the One who is real, the One who will not tolerate rivals.
2. We are invited to know God - John 17:3; Acts 14:15; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Matthew 4:10.
3. You can love God supremely - God, and God alone.
4. Make Him absolutely Number One. Make Him first in your life. You can love Him supremely.

CONCLUSION:

1. Let a man take 5 minutes to shut out everything but the great fact that he stands alone with God. Some are terribly afraid of spending even as much time as that with their own thoughts.
2. If he will, if he dare, let him ask, as he stands in the light of that first commandment, "What is my God?" "To what do I devote my life?"
3. If the answer indicates anything that puts God in the background, then in the name of heaven, and of his own safety, let him "break down every idol, cast out every foe," and let the God who will be, who is, who was, be his God!
4. Thomas fell down before Jesus and said, "My Lord and my God." (John 21:28)
5. Can you say that?
6. If you are going to live by the rules, you will have to give God first place in your life, and put the things of His kingdom first in your behavior. God will have first place, or no place at all, in your life.

FALSE MENTAL IMAGES
EXODUS 20:4-6

INTRODUCTION

1. If the Ten Commandments were being ranked in order of their relevant importance, his second one might be placed at the bottom of the list.
2. But, there are more references to this commandment in the remainder of the Bible than to any other of the commandments.
3. The First Commandment forbids the worship of any but the One, True God. This Second Commandment warns against the worship of even the One, True God under some false form, or with a distorted vision of His nature.
4. In Exodus 32:1, the people began pressing Aaron to make for them gods to worship.
5. Aaron took gold from the people and melted it down to fashion the golden calf.
6. Notice what Aaron said in Exodus 32:4.
7. As soon as Aaron had unveiled the golden calf, not what he said in Exodus 32:5.
8. Aaron was not trying to substitute some new “god” for Jehovah, but was attempting to represent the covenant God of Israel in some “tangible” manner.
9. He had succumbed to the pressure to try to give the people a visible rallying sign around which they could center their devotion to the Lord.
10. The problem for us today is much the same. We find it difficult to think of God apart from some visible representation, superstitious relic or crude totem.
11. The words of the Second Commandment speak against “false mental images” of God, of which metal and stone images are more truly the result than the cause.
12. We need to keep a clear picture of God:
 - (1) Don’t drag God down to our level;
 - (2) Don’t let ourselves believe that the High, Holy and Spiritual God can be made in the likeness of anything you know in this visible world of ours.
13. We show dishonor to God by trying to re-fashion Him in our image. Cf. John 4:24; Romans 1:22,23.

14. It is extremely important that we understand how to worship God. We understand just how big our God!

DISCUSSION: LET US NOTICE--

I. THE PROHIBITION

1. The second commandment disallows basically two things:
 - (1) We are not to make any graven image, or any likeness of God;
 - (2) We are not to bow down to them, or serve them.
2. There are at least 3 reasons as to why image representation of God is prohibited:
 - (1) No likeness of God would be adequate by being false and misleading - they distort God (John 4:24). You cannot make anything that will represent the God Who is worthy of your worship.
 - (2) God cannot be localized or limited to any one place - when you make an image, you fix God who is unlimited, universal, eternal, spiritual. To bring God down to the level of man, or to that of bugs, frogs, dogs, beasts, or fish is degrading to God.
 - (3) God wants the people's trust to be in Him, and not in some magical icon.
3. Some modern religions are filled with icons, crucifixes, and other images. They are a tangible symbol to help the people focus their attention and thoughts on God.
 - (1) They say, "But these are not our gods; they are only aids in thinking of, and approaching God."
 - (2) That is exactly what the second commandment is designed to forbid.
4. God is not teaching here that there is no art or that art is not a legitimate form to use as an instructive method.
5. God states that art which is intended to be an **object** of worship is prohibited.
6. There has always been a human tendency to do exactly what this commandment says we are not to do. (Romans 1:23,25).
7. Israel had a constant problem with the violation of this commandment. (The golden calf in Dan; the brazen serpent, the ark itself, etc.)

8. This nature thrives in our day. We find the use of statutes and idols as aids to worship.
9. Cf. the statue of Simon Peter - long lines of people would wait for hours just to kiss the toes of the statue. They have been kissed so, they have absolutely been wiped out.
10. God's word emphasizes that you are not make graven images, and you are not to bow down and worship them.
11. This commandment is a prohibition of low, inadequate, and unworthy imaginations of God.
12. God wants His people to have a clear and spiritual vision of Him. As you look carefully at the commandment you see that there is also something that is *protected*.

II. THE PROTECTION - Exodus 20:5

1. "Jealous" - to be inflamed, zeal, on fire. Jealousy is a zeal to protect a relationship.
2. When we enter into a covenant relationship with God, we are in a spiritual marriage relationship.
3. The Bible attempts to help us understand God by using terms that relate to man in his relationship to God.
4. When God says He is a jealous God, He is saying that this is extra special to Him, and which He is going to protect.
5. "You belong to Me; You are special to Me; I'm going to fight to maintain that relationship."
6. We tend to divide aspects of life into the spiritual and the physical, but in God's eyes it is all spiritual - He wants to have our undivided attention and time.
7. "I don't want anyone between you and Me." Idolatry is putting anything between you and God.
8. There are different kinds of idols and images besides those of wood and stone - houses; cars; clothes; material things; etc.
9. God demands total life, total love and total loyalty.

10. This becomes fascinating! Not only ***prohibited*** (no other gods); Not only ***protected*** (jealous); but there is also something ***projected!***

II. THE PROJECTION - Exodus 20:5,6.

1. We need to be exceeding careful because of the way we worship God. How we worship God projects something on our children and grandchildren. This is no minor matter!

- (1) **A VISITATION OF MISERY** - "Visiting iniquities of the fathers on the children" - children sometime pay an awful price because of the sins of the parents.

A. How you worship and serve will have an impact on your children as to how they respond to God.

B. Some are in danger of visiting your iniquities on your own children by the way you worship God and by your attitude toward God.

C. You have a gripe, start fussing and fighting, and you have children who are listening to every bit of it.

D. The way you worship God is serious business.

E. Your attitudes and words are making indelible impressions on your child.

- (2) **A DEMONSTRATION OF MERCY** - "Showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me."

A. God will bless you if you will live for Him, worship Him, serve Him, honor Him, and be true to Him.

B. God will bless you on down the road with your children.

3. Jesus said the Father "seeks such to worship Him."

4. The negative side of the second commandment is "Don't worship any graven image."

5. The positive side is "worship Me."

CONCLUSION:

1. When you worship you declare the "worth of God." You are emphasizing how wonderful God is.

2. Cf. Revelation 5:12; Matthew 4:10.
3. God commands us not to make any graven images because He has already revealed Himself in an Image - Colossians 1:15; Hebrews 1:3; John 14:9.
4. The only representation we need of God is the revelation He has given to us in the person of His own Son.
5. If you want to know God, meet Him in the person of His Son - Jesus Christ.

THE DIVINE NAME OF GOD
EXODUS 20:7

INTRODUCTION:

1. Every life needs a clearly marked direction - some integrating, stabilizing, fixed point of standards.
2. These standards are called "rules for living right."
3. The Bible tells us that the very name of God is sacred - Psalm 111:9; Nehemiah 9:5; Psalm 8:1.
4. The Third Commandment came to be interpreted so narrowly among the Jewish people that they began to avoid pronouncing the divine name altogether.
 - (1) The fear in the name evolved to the point that it was pronounced only once a year by the High Priest on the Day of Atonement;
 - (2) They even substituted other names for it, so they would not have to pronounce it;
 - (3) When Scribes were making copies of the Scripture, upon coming to the name of God, they would place their pen down, rise, go bathe themselves and put on different clothes;
 - (4) Then they would come with a pen that had never been used before, and with a brand new pen they would write down the holy name of God.
5. But it was not the correct versus the incorrect pronunciation that God was concerned to protect in the Third Commandment, as much as it was the sacredness of holy things in general.
6. "What does this Third Commandment teach?" "Can we understand it fuller and more meaningful today?"

DISCUSSION: LET US NOTICE--

I. THE DEFINITION.

1. The significance of one's name is no mere assigned "label" in the Bible.
2. It stands for the person - reveals his character - and identifies his role in life.
3. This is why a number of important figures are given new names at crucial points in their lives in the Bible. The names were used for particular reasons.

4. Names speak of character and reputation. Cf. "Nabal" means "Foolish."
5. In God's word we have first of all *a definition of His character*.
 - (1) Cf. Psalm 8:1; 20:5; 111:9
 - (2) Cf. Proverbs 18:10,
6. The name of God is profoundly sacred - it is the revelation of the holy, sacred character of God.
7. What an awful thought it is that someone would drag that name down into the mud.
8. It is also *a revelation of God's nature*. It tells us what kind of God He is.
9. There are over 300 names for God given to us in the Bible. Why so many names? Because no one name can adequately convey all that God is.
10. The nature of God is so wonderful, vast, and tremendous that it takes a multitude of names to identify His character and His nature to us.
 - (1) "Elohim" - The Faithful One; The Strong One
 - (2) "Jehovah" - The Eternal, Self-Existing One
 - (3) "Jehovah-Nissi" - Exodus 17:15 - The Lord is Our Banner
 - (4) "Jehovah-Rapha" - Exodus 15:26 - The God Who Heals.
11. God is declared to be the One True God whose saving power and faithfulness to His people is genuine.
12. It was holy to Israel because it signified the special relationship He had with those people under the Mosaic covenant.
13. The Third Commandment forbids any use of the name of Deity that falls short of divine reality and truthfulness.
14. The name of the Faithful and True God is to be used only in such ways as reflect His own qualities.
15. That would include the prohibition of false swearing by the Lord's name; any other disrespectful, profane, or irreverent use of holy names or holy things.
16. Divine names, institutions and ordinances must be treated with respect.

17. God gave one final, full revelation of Himself in a name - **Matthew 1:21**.
18. That is the full and final revelation of the character and nature of God.
19. When God gave this commandment, He wants us to understand the sacredness of His character and His nature - the definition of God's name.

II. THE DESECRATION.

1. The word "vain" means "empty of content." It means to make void of meaning; irreverent.
2. This commandment says that the name of God is not to be misused or abused. The test of moral cleanliness is the attitude of a man to the name of God.
 - (1) **Irreverent Profanity** - using the name in an irreverent, frivolous and indecent language.
 - A. We are living in a veritable cesspool of immoral, godless and indecent language.
 - B. It is a senseless, foolish form of speech.
 - C. People take that name by which we are saved, transformed and forgiven, and are pulling it down into the muck, mire and slime.
 - D. Euphemisms are a form of cursing - "darn; gosh; golly; gee, etc."
 - E. There is never a place for taking the holy, sacred things of God and putting them down in the gutter and being light and irreverent about the holy things of God.
 - F. The man who professes with his lips to honor God, and yet denies Him in life, does far more to hinder than the man who openly blasphemes and makes no profession of honoring God.
 - (2) **Dishonesty** - attaching the name of God to your dishonest, untruthful statements. Cf. **Isaiah 48:1**,
 - (3) **Insincerity** - professing that which we do not possess; false profession; false praying; false praising - **Matthew 7:22,23**.

- (4) **Personal Irreverence Toward God** - blaming God for fate, grief, disappointment, bitterness, shock - unholy feelings. To use some holy name as an exclamation is not appropriate.

III. THE DECLARATION.

1. Declare God's name as the Scriptures teach us to do.
2. The name of Salvation - Matthew 1:21; Acts 4:12; Romans 10:13.
3. The name of Strength - Colossians 3:17 (sing; preach; pray by His authority).
4. The name of Safety - Proverbs 18:10
5. There is coming a day when people will not blaspheme the name of Jesus - Philippians 2:10,11.

CONCLUSION:

1. This Third Rule for living right is not intended to discourage our use of the name of God.
2. It is designed to insure that we use that name in a way consistent with its intrinsic holiness.
3. If your mouth has been foul and profane - clean it up!
4. If you have been careless with your promises and pledges, start treating your word as your bond.
5. Cf. Matthew 12:36,37.

GOD'S DIVINE NAME
EXODUS 20:7

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 - A. We are living in a veritable cesspool of immoral, godless and indecent language.
 - B. It is a senseless, foolish form of speech.
 - C. People that that name by which we are saved, transformed and forgiven, and are pulling it down into the muck, mire and slime.
 - D. There is never a place for taking the holy, sacred things of God and putting them down in the gutter and being light and irreverent about the holy things of God.
 - E. The man who professes with his lips to honor God, and yet denies Him in life, does far more to hinder that the man who openly blasphemes and makes no profession of honoring God.
 - (2) **DISHONESTY** - Attaching the name of God to your dishonest, untruthful statements. Cf. Isaiah 48:1.
 - (3) **INSINCERITY** - Professing that which we do not possess, false profession; false praying; false praising. Cf. Matthew 7:22,23.
 - (4) **PERSONAL IRREVERENCE TOWARD GOD** - Blaming God for fate, grief, disappointment, bitterness, shock - unholy feelings. To use some holy name as an exclamation is not appropriate.

III. THE DECLARATION

1. We should declare God's name as the Scriptures teach us to do.
 - (1) The name of Salvation - Matthew 1:21; Acts 4:12; Romans 10:13
 - (2) The name of Strength - Colossians 3:17 (sing; preach; pray by His authority)
 - (3) The name of Safety - Proverbs 18:10.
2. There is coming a day when people will not blaspheme the name of Jesus. Cf. Philippians 2:10,11.

CONCLUSION:

1. This Third Rule for living right is not intended to discourage our use of the name of God.
2. It is designed to insure that we use that name in a way consistent with its intrinsic holiness.
3. If your mouth has been foul and profane - clean it up!
4. If you have been careless with your promises and pledges, start treating your word as you bond
5. Cf. Matthew 12:36,27.

“WHAT ABOUT THE SABBATH TODAY?”

Exodus 20:8-11

INTRODUCTION:

1. Of all of the commandments given to Moses by God, this fourth one seems irrelevant today.
2. Yet, many people of various religious backgrounds make arguments for the Sabbath day to be in force for today.
3. Arguments have been made very forcefully that at times, honest souls have been led astray by them.
4. Would you be able to answer these arguments? What is the truth about the Sabbath?

DISCUSSION: LET US NOTICE--

I. ARGUMENTS OFTEN GIVEN FOR CONTINUED OBSERVANCE.

1. “God sanctified the seventh day and rested on it.” Genesis 2:3. “It was observed from creation, not just later under Moses.”
2. “It was on the Ten Commandments, thus a part of the continuing ‘moral’ law. It was a sign throughout your generations’...for a ‘perpetual covenant...for ever.’”
3. “Jesus kept the Old Testament law, including referring honorably to Sabbath observance.” (Matthew 24:20; Mark 2:27)
4. “Paul went into synagogues and taught on the Sabbath.” Cf. Acts 13:14,27,42,44; Acts 15:21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4.
5. “Sunday was originally a day of pagan worship of Sun worshipers.”
6. “The Sabbath was changed to Sunday by Constantine, rather than changed by any inspired New Testament writers.”

II. “WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT THESE ARGUMENTS?”

1. When was “Sabbath observance” required, and for how long?
 - (1) The people who observe the Sabbath say that it was from the time of creation when God rested, Yet, no record exists of its observance for 2500 years.
 - (2) That “God rested” is a statement of fact - not a command.

- (3) Moses wrote Genesis, presumably after Sinai, and "Sabbath" is not mentioned.
- (4) Genesis does not say when God sanctified it and gave it to man, but later verses tell us: Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:1-3, 12-15; Nehemiah 9:13,14; Ezekiel 20:10-12.
- (5) The first mention of Sabbath is Exodus 16:23-25. Moses had to tell them what the day was. Its newness to them was shown by the fact that some violated it anyway, and in Numbers 15:32-36, a violator had to be jailed long enough for them to find out the penalty - which would not have been necessary had it been a long standing law.
- (6) Do today's observers mete out the same penalty?

2. Are the Ten Commandments still binding? To whom did the Sabbath commandment apply?

- (1) The Bible does not make the distinction between moral law and ceremonial law, to imply that moral law is still binding.
- (2) Cf. Exodus 31:13-17. It was a "sign" between God and the Jews - which was not possible if all nations had been observing it earlier.
- (3) Gentiles could not observe it in memory of Egyptian bondage, as they were not in it.
- (4) The Old Testament law was given to the Jews who "were us" - Exodus 19; 20:1,2; Nehemiah 9:9-15; Jeremiah 31:31.
- (5) "How long was it to be observed?"
 - A. "Perpetual" meant "Continuously, without interruption" - the same word is used regarding other "ceremonial acts" done away - Exodus 12:14,15; 29:42; 30:8,10,16; Leviticus 23:21,41.
 - B. Cf. 1 Kings 9:3 - commanded continual temple service has ceased.
 - C. Cf. "Throughout your generations" implies temporary status and to the Jews only.
 - D. Identifiable Jewish ancestry and lineage cannot be proved today - their "generations" as a special people ceased.
 - E. The Aaronic priesthood was to have been everlasting, throughout their generations, but it has ended - Exodus 40:15.

3. "How do you explain Jesus' teaching and practice about the Sabbath?"

- (1) Jesus was born under the law - kept it - and fulfilled it.
- (2) Jesus also kept the rest of the law, including the "ceremonies."
- (3) Cf. Galatians 4:4 - He also took all the law away - Colossians 2:14-17.
- (4) He said "Pray that your flight be not in winter, neither on the Sabbath day."
Why? The unconverted Jews would have the gates closed, hindering their safe flight - Cf. Nehemiah 13:19.
- (5) All of Jesus' teaching stressed the grace and truth and the higher motive for serving God than just the rigidity of Sabbath keeping.

4. "Did Paul and the early Christians observe the Sabbath for Christian worship?"

- (1) "Sabbath" occurs 60 times in the New Testament, 43 during the life of Christ and 17 times after.
- (2) Of the 17 after, 16 refer to worship of unconverted Jews - Colossians 2:16 is the other. It clarifies that Christians are not to observe the Sabbaths.
- (3) Paul assembled in synagogues on the Sabbath day, but not for Christian worship. He went where the people were and utilized opportunities to speak to teach them differently.
- (4) They said, "This fellow persuades men to worship God contrary to the Law."
Acts 18:13.
- (5) Christians worshipped on the "first day of the week." Not the Sabbath - Matthew 28:1; Hebrews 10:24,25; 1 Corinthians 16:1,2; Acts 20:7.

5. "Should Sunday be avoided due to earlier use as a day of heathen worship?"

- (1) If so, Saturday should be avoided as well. It was "Saturn's Day" for the Roman god, Saturn.
- (2) Neither of the words is in the Bible, but we read of "the first day," "The Lord's day."

6. "Was the Sabbath changed by Constantine?"

- (1) Christians from the beginning met regularly on the first day of the week.

- (2) After Constantine became favorable to Christianity, he declared it a holiday.
- (3) This was a great accommodation to Christian slaves and all who were Christians, but it was not a change from what they had been doing for 300 years prior to his decision.
- (4) The practice of worship on the first day was existent from the beginning of the church.

III. IF THE SABBATH IS STILL BINDING, IT SHOULD BE FULLY OBSERVED.

1. Yet, those who plead for its observance do not observe all that is required.
2. They should observe the following as well:
 - (1) No fire was to be kindled - Exodus 35:3;
 - (2) No food was to be cooked - Exodus 16:23;
 - (3) Two lambs were to be sacrificed - Numbers 28:9;
 - (4) No work was to be done - Exodus 35:22;
 - (5) Violators are to be put to death - Exodus 31:14;
 - (6) No burdens are to be carried - Jeremiah 17:21,22.

CONCLUSION:

1. The way of Christ is superior.
2. For the first 2500 years of human history and from the time Christ died, there is no commandment for "Sabbath observance" - no example binding - no promised reward or punishment regarding observance.
3. It was a "sign" between God and the nation of Israel - it was taken away by Christ.
4. We can be Christians and worship on the first day of the week as the early Christians did.

THE BASIC STRUCTURE
EXODUS 20:12; EPHESIANS 6:1-4

INTRODUCTION:

1. The Fifth Commandment brings us to a fundamental responsibility in human relations.
 - (1) Jesus referred to this command twice, and Paul quoted it once in the New Testament.
 - (2) It is the first of the commandments that deal with our relationship with each other.
 - (3) The keeping of the first four commandments would make it easier to keep this fifth commandment.
2. Common sense tells us that we need some rules for preserving and strengthening family life and values.
3. Lives are shattering like eggshells in reference to the American family.
 - (1) The family is being challenged for its right to endure.
 - (2) In a 10 year span the number of people under 25 years of age living alone tripled.
[556,000 to 1,670,000]
 - (3) 1,500,000 couples are living together without being married.
4. Those who do choose the traditional arrangement are having problems keeping things together and achieving stability.
5. One member of the Maryland legislature introduced a bill to legalize renewable 3-year contracts for marriage.
6. For both adults and children involved, divorce hangs on to haunt us for the rest of our lives.
 - (1) One million children each year suffer the breakup of their family.
 - (2) One of every five children in the U.S. lives with only one of his parents.
 - (3) These children achieve less in school, are absent more, and have more disciplinary problems.
7. The family is fundamental to God as a means for blessing and guiding our lives.

8. With the failure of so many homes, the will of God is being defeated.
9. One of the rules for right living points to the need for keeping the family strong is one for the lesson today.
10. We need to get personal now because this commandment deals with our relationships with one another.
11. If we can't learn to get along with our family, then we are going to have problems getting along with anyone else in society.
12. The family is the basic structure of human civilization.
13. One way to remember this commandment is--
 - (1) The Parents - "Honor you father and mother"
 - (2) The Precept - "Honor"
 - (3) The Promise - "Your days may be long"
14. Let us see the importance of this commandment in our study.

DISCUSSION: LET US NOTICE--

I. THE FORGOTTEN MORALITY - Respect for Parents.

1. The Old Testament places great emphasis on respect for older people generally, and for parents in particular - Leviticus 19:32; Exodus 21:15,17; 1 Timothy 5:4.
2. Older people were given a place of special honor - it almost bordered on veneration. (The Chinese stress the same virtue of respect for parents).
3. Today, it seems that this tradition has come to be despised. Age is scandalized, and youth is esteemed.
4. Our values in this regard have been turned upside down.
5. Even in the days of Jesus - Mark 7:9-13.
6. Notice what Paul says in Ephesians 6:2,3.
7. Disrespect for parents is a sign of apostasy from God - Romans 1:30; 2 Timothy 3:2.
8. Parents have a right to certain courtesies from their children.

9. Those who help build a society where age has a place of honor secure that place for themselves one day.
10. Those who abhor their parents, and resent the wisdom of age, will reap the fruits of their own disrespect.
11. "Honor" means to 'to give weight to; to hold in high esteem; reverence; respect; to acknowledge worth or value.'

II. THE REASONS FOR RESPECTING PARENTS.

1. Parents are to be honored because *it is the right thing to do.*
 - (1) Cf. Ephesians 6:1.
 - (2) Even without the Bible, there are some things that commend themselves to us as proper and right.
 - (3) Respect for those who brought you into the world, fed you, in sickness, etc.
 - (4) God has placed parents in a certain relationship of responsibility to, and authority over, their children.
 - (5) To resist any God-ordained authority is to resist and dishonor God. Dishonoring one's parents is an insult to God.
 - (6) "Obey" means "to hear under" - the concept of authority, I.e., ***Children, listen to your parents!***
2. Children owe their parent a ***huge debt for the provision and love received at their hands.***
 - (1) The one pair of people in all the world that we knew would always believe in us.
 - (2) Who would love us even when we failed at something.
 - (3) Never kicked us when we were down.
 - (4) The parable of the "Prodigal Son" is such a believable story because it has been repeated time and time again in history.
 - (5) How can we ever repay our parents for their time, money and love?

3. Children can always glean ***great personal benefit*** from seeking and heeding the counsel of their parents.
 - (1) A child who has finished high school, or a few years of college, may already have more education than his parents.
 - (2) What the child may not realize is that he is not yet as smart as his parents.
 - (3) There are some things that nobody learns except by living, experience, failing and victory.
 - (4) The best lessons about life come from the good counsel of Godly parents.
 - (5) They have lived long enough to learn life's lessons, and will share their wisdom with you.
 - (6) There are four stages to life -idolize; demonize; utilize; humanize.
4. We honor our parents because ***the day will come when we cannot show them the honor we would like to give them.***
 - (1) "I never told my father, or mother..."
 - (2) If you have been reluctant, embarrassed, or thoughtless about giving them these expressions of your love, don't make the mistake of others.

III. THE "TWO-WAY" STREET.

1. Respect is a two-way street.
2. Parental authority over children does not justify tyranny or abuse.
3. As many as 6,500,000 children are harmed by their parents or other family members each year.
4. Most of these children are physically battered.
 - (1) 700,000 are deprived of food, clothing and shelter.
 - (2) Between 60,000 and 100,000 are sexually abused.
 - (3) An estimated 5,000 die every year from abuse or neglect.
5. The Bible teaches that children need discipline.

6. But it is discipline with patience, tenderness and love - Proverbs 13:24; Ephesians 6:4.
7. Obedience must be learned, and it is the job of parents to teach it to their children.
 - (1) Cf. Proverbs 22:6
 - (2) To indulge children in their “little” irreverence’s and disobediences is to teach these traits as a way of life.
 - (3) The matter of rearing children is a place for wisdom, care and prayer and importantly - common sense.
8. But children need to cooperate with their parents in creating a good home.
 - (1) Cf. Ephesians 6:1.
 - (2) “In the Lord” means “in harmony with the Lord’s will” or “within the sphere of the will of the Lord.”
 - (3) We honor our parents when we obey them.
9. The primary test of the religion of any young person is the ability of that young man or woman to relate to his or her parents properly.

CONCLUSION:

1. This fifth commandment was the “first commandment with promise.”
2. All cultures know that respect for parents is a virtue that enhances both the quality and quantity of life one can expect on the earth.
3. This commandment is pivotal to the Decalogue.
4. Neither religion nor morality works when a child is denied a stable home in which he learns to honor his mother and father.
5. We dare not neglect so important a rule in the formation of our values and the living of our lives.

GUARDING THE SANCTITY OF LIFE
EXODUS 20:13

INTRODUCTION:

1. We come face to face with the sanctity of life with this sixth commandment.
2. This commandment guards the sanctity of human life.
3. Life was cheap in many ancient cultures.
 - (1) Unwanted or deformed infants were routinely exposed in Greek and Romans times.
 - (2) The brutal practice of gladiatorial combat to the death was a favorite past-time "sport."
 - (3) Tyrannical rulers would have generals, friends, and family members killed on the spot for the pettiest of offenses.
4. There is reason to believe that we have not come very far in our regard for human life.
 - (1) 23,000+ people are murdered each year;
 - (2) 1,500,000+ abortions are performed annually in our country.
5. Watching the papers and TV closely you discover murders for the pettiest of reasons.
 - (1) In Channelview, Texas, a mother hired a hit man to kill the mother of another girl who was competing with her daughter for a slot as a cheerleader.
 - (2) In New Hampshire, a 17 year old boy, on his birthday, tearfully admitted the murder of the husband of his school teacher. He shot him with a .38 caliber pistol.
 - (3) In his testimony he said, "I wanted to be with Pam. That's what I had to do to be with Pam."
 - (4) Pam, the school teacher who talked him into killing her husband, testified that she didn't want him to kill her husband in front of her dog, lest her dog suffer psychological harm!
6. The Senate Judiciary Committee declared that America has become the most violent, most self-destructive nation of the earth.
7. Human life is sacred by virtue of the fact that it is in God's own image - Genesis 1:27.

8. We honor God when we respect and preserve His image in one another -we sin against Him by treating other human beings with contempt.
9. If we are to live by the rules, we need a healthy respect for human life.

DISCUSSION: LET US NOTICE--

I. WHAT THIS COMMANDMENT DOES NOT MEAN.

1. What is prohibited is not all taking of human life, but a particular type of life taking.
2. The Hebrew word translated “kill” in most English translations is a very specific one which has to do with malicious and unjustified killing - “You shall not murder.” (NIV)
3. The commandment does not prohibit all life taking, for the penalty for violating it has already been shown to be death (Deuteronomy 19:11-13).
 - (1) If the rule in question is an unqualified prohibition of all life-taking, it forbids anyone to execute the penalty for its violation.
 - (2) Such an understanding turns scripture on its head and makes the Old Testament incoherent and self-contradictory.
 - (3) All murder is killing - but not all killing is murder.
 - (4) The Law of Moses condemned all acts of murder - killing a man in order to steal his money, but he did not condemn all acts of killing such as executing the thief and murderer.
4. The Law distinguished at least three types of homicide:
 - (1) Premeditated murder - planning ahead; lying in wait (Numbers 35:16-21)
 - (2) Accidental homicide - unintentional causes (Numbers 35:22-28)
 - (3) Justifiable homicide - Exodus 22:2
5. Of these three types of homicide, only the first is specified by the Sixth Commandment.

6. The following, then, are not prohibited by this rule, or the eternal principle of respect for life underlying it--
- (1) Capital punishment - required by the Law for murder, rape, kidnapping and offenses against the theocracy of God in Israel (Genesis 9:6; ~~Deuteronomy 22:5~~; Exodus 21:16; Deuteronomy 13:5; 17:2-7).
 - A. The New Testament upholds the same teaching;
 - B. God's love has never allowed Him to ignore justice;
 - C. The civil circumstances identified in the Old Testament for the taking of life are acknowledged again in the New Testament.
 - D. Cf. John 19:10,11; Romans 13:1,4; Acts 25:11!
 - E. The death penalty is the prerogative of the state (courts), and not of the private citizen.
 - F. Neither Jews nor Christians have been allowed by God to bear personal malice or to "get even" for criminal offenses.
 - (2) Police action - in effect in Exodus 32:27, God swore in the tribe of Levi as a police force to deal with the outbreak of idolatry in Israel's camp.
 - A. Peter teaches that Christians are to acknowledge the right of the state, its rulers, and their agents to punish wrongdoers.
 - B. Cf. 1 Peter 2:13,14.
 - (3) Justified war - Israel fought both defensive and punitive wars with the blessings of God:
 - A. Against the Amalekites - Exodus 17:8-16
 - B. King Saul - 1 Samuel 15:1-3
 - C. In the New Testament, soldiers are not required to give up their careers in view of the appearance of Christ - Luke 3:14; Acts 10
 - D. To the contrary, Romans 13 says the state is constituted for the purpose of executing God's vengeance on evildoers.
 - E. "Justified war" - when a nation uses its military force to turn back a genuine threat to the security of its people.

F. The death penalty, police functions; and military campaigns are things all Christians would like to see eliminated.

G. The ideal situation would be to create a society where the necessity of taking another human life - execution of criminals - would be eliminated.

H. But in a non-ideal, sin-filled society, these functions are necessary.

7. This commandment also does not forbid the killing of animals (**Genesis 9:3**) - there is a difference between animal life and human life - and self defense.

II. WHAT THIS COMMANDMENT DOES MEAN.

1. Three areas would be covered - directly; indirectly and inwardly.

2. Notice "Directly" -

(1) Murder - violation of the eternal principle which underlies the divine rule of life. The Jews were forbidden to show pity to anyone who committed deliberate homicide (**Deuteronomy 19:13**).

(2) Suicide - the taking of one's life. There are over 30,000 suicides every year, and 400,000 attempt suicide every year.

A. Several Biblical characters committed suicide - Ahitophel; Zimri; Abimelech; Samson; Saul; Judas.

B. Suicide is against nature - a sin against family and friends - selfish.

(3) Abortion - the taking of life of the unborn. Since 1973 nearly 30,000,000 unborn babies have been killed in America (1 1/2 million each year).

A. Cf. **Jeremiah 1:5** '

B. Cf. **Psalms 139:13-16**

C. Four reasons: (1) the victim is innocent; (2) the victim is helpless; (3) the order to kill comes from the victim's own mother; (4) it is a reasoned, calculated, intentional act.

3. Indirectly - a person can kill indirectly.

(1) The mother who hired the hit man;

- (2) King David and Uriah;
 - (3) Drunken driving;
 - (4) Alcohol - 50% of traffic deaths; 45,000 people killed by drunken driving; the sale of alcoholic beverages in indirect killing;
 - (5) A person may rationalize it however they may wish - alcohol has many defenders but no defense.
 - (6) In 50-80% of all murders, alcohol is involved; in 30% of all suicides, alcohol is involved.
 - (7) Cf. **Habakkuk 2:12,15.**
 - (8) Narcotics are involved - cocaine, heroin, uppers, downers, dope - thousands of murders are committed per year because of dope.
 - (9) America's escalating crime rate is directly linked to alcohol and other drugs.
4. Inwardly - you can kill people by other ways, also - you can kill a reputation; whispering criticisms; unjust and unkind statements.
- (1) You can violate this commandment and never go to jail, or serve one day of your term. You may violate this commandment, and it will never be seen.
 - (2) Cf. **Mark 7:20,21; Matthew 5:21,22**
 - (3) There is anger; jealousy; negativism.

III. THE GREATEST MURDER OF ALL.

- 1. "I've had it pretty easy in this lesson - I've never violated this commandment - I have never killed anyone directly, or indirectly."
- 2. But, you are guilty of the greatest murder ever committed on this earth.
- 3. Cf. **Acts 3:14,15** - we are guilty not only of homicide, but also guilty of "Dei-cide." We are guilty of the death of Christ.
- 4. It was your hands and mine that drove the nails into His hands.
- 5. It was our hard hearts that plaited the crown of thorns and pressed them upon His brow.

6. It was our wicked souls that thrust the spear into His side.
7. But there is good news - the gospel - the forgiveness of sins. Jesus died for you and for me. He shed His blood that we might be forgiven of our sins.

CONCLUSION:

1. This Sixth Commandment, perhaps appearing totally negative to you at first, has tremendous positive impact.
2. It addresses so many contemporary issues for which the Christian should be seeking the guidance of God.
3. It certainly does not follow that this commandment is irrelevant to you because you are not a murderer.
4. All of us have to deal with the problem of keeping our hearts free of hatred and grudges.
5. Is the issue of abortion a contemporary one? What of proposals to end the lives of the senile, or suffering old people?
6. God's word says that human life is too sacred to be treated as mere animal existence.
7. We must not sit by idly as it is cheapened in our world.

MARRIAGE, FAMILY AND SOCIETY

EXODUS 20:14

INTRODUCTION:

1. The sin of adultery is tearing our nation and the church apart.
2. Adultery is a word that invokes the worst of thoughts.
3. The Bible is anything but a prudish book when dealing with this subject. The Song of Solomon was at one time considered not a part of the Bible because of its "erotic" nature.
4. Many passages in the Bible have things to say about the sacredness of this aspect of human experience.
5. Sexuality is such a powerful part of human personality and behavior that we would naturally expect the Bible to address the subject.
6. So powerful a part of our nature needs divine direction. We need to know the rules by which this part of life is to be governed.
7. The Bible has a very balanced approach to matters pertaining to sex.
 - (1) It is always tasteful, yet very clear in what it says on the subject;
 - (2) It avoids the mistake of placing sex in either of two extreme positions that human thought and conduct usually give it
 - A. It stays clear of puritanical dispositions to ignore or deny sexual passion in human beings;
 - B. Yet, it shuns the materialistic tendency to focus all of life around this one aspect of personality.
8. Sexuality is treated as an important part of human personality, and sexual acts are ordained of God as a means by which a husband and wife may express their love for and commitment to one another.
9. This commandment has to do with:
 - (1) The Virtue of Marriage;
 - (2) The Sanctity of the Family;
 - (3) The Preservation of Society.

DISCUSSION: LET US NOTICE--

I. THE VIRTUE OF MARRIAGE.

1. Marriage was originated by God (Genesis 2).
2. There is nothing dirty about sexuality - Hebrews 13:4.
3. There should be no blurring of distinctions. There is a spiritual side as well - it is not to be lowered to animal level.
4. Sex was placed within a certain sphere - 1 man plus 1 woman for 1 lifetime - it is called "marriage."
5. According to the Bible, there are two purposes for sex--
 - (1) Propagation - Genesis 1:28
 - (2) Fulfillment - Ecclesiastes 9:9
6. There is the value of relationship - 1 Corinthians 7:1-5.
7. "You shall not commit adultery" - within the circle of marriage God encourages sexual relationships between husband and wife married to each other.

II. THE SANCTITY OF THE FAMILY

1. The family maintains sexual purity. We must have rules, guidelines and restrictions.
2. God makes the prohibition - Hebrews 13:4.
3. Basically, there are at least three ways to commit this sin--
 - (1) Physically;
 - (2) Mentally;
 - (3) Legally
4. ***Physically.***
 - (1) Fornication and Adultery - 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5.
 - A. Adultery is unlawful sexual relations between two married people not married to each other.
 - B. No other sin a human commits involves his person and personality so directly as sexual immorality.

- (2) There is a special sort of guilt that attaches to the sin of adultery.
- (3) It does not matter what the standards are today, or "everyone else is doing it!"
- (4) Many people choose not to believe what God says.
- (5) It causes homes to be broken; alienates family members; destructive to one's health and body (1 Corinthians 6:18), causes emotional distress and trauma.
- (6) Distress comes to the guilty, the exploited victim, and the innocent children and family members caught in the backlash - shock, resentment, bitterness, loss of objectivity and rationality, guilt, neglect, petty spiteful retaliation, financial strain and often ugly legal battles.
- (7) Adultery is wrong because it is--
 - A. Done in secret;
 - B. Causes fear and guilt - can ruin your life;
 - C. God says it is wrong! The most powerful of reasons is given in the Bible.
 - D. Cf. 1 Corinthians 6:13-20.

3. **Mentally**. Cf. Matthew 15:19.

- (1) Cf. **Matthew 5:27,28** - the deliberate stare; the second look with intended lust
- (2) Cf. **2 Peter 2:14** - sexual addiction
- (3) Cf. **Matthew 5:29,30** - the "heart" problem

4. **Legally**

- (1) Cf. **Matthew 19:6,9; Romans 7:2**
- (2) Divorce for any reason other than immorality is not acceptable to God.

III. **THE PRESERVATION OF SOCIETY**

- 1. God says, "You shall be pure!" The positive view.
 - (1) This commandment not only forbids adultery and fornication, but also rape, seduction, lewdness, wantonness, lasciviousness, polygamy, sodomy, whoredom, homosexuality, bestiality and pornography.

(2) "No nation has survived obsession with sex and impurity." (The American Revolution" - Pitirim Sorokin)

2. Cf. Aids, prostitution, pornography - God's judgment is on the sin of sexual immorality.
3. You owe it to yourself and your marriage to keep your marriage pure - make up your mind to keep purity in your marriage.
4. Cultivate love - Ephesians 5:25 - God commands it!

CONCLUSION:

1. The permissive attitudes of our day have degraded sex and marriage.
2. We live at a time in history when extra marital affairs are so common that the temptation to be involved in such a relationship comes easily and frequently.
3. Unfortunately, even with divine and human forgiveness, some scars may remain and be painful for the rest of a person's life.
4. By returning to the sacred view of sex and marriage embodied in this commandment, the purpose and beauty are restored.
5. Cf. **Proverbs** 6:27,29,32.

NOTE: "The willful violation of the marriage contract by either of the parties, through sexual intercourse with a third party...all manner of lewdness or unchastity in act or thought seems to be meant." (Unger)

FORNICATION - a broader term used comprehensively in the New Testament to include adultery and all sexual immorality.

The "sexual revolution" has glamorized these sins. Literature and entertainment have promoted acceptance of the sins and stigmatized those who object - a reversal of public reaction from years past.

RESPECTING THE PROPERTY OF OTHERS EXODUS 20:15

INTRODUCTION:

1. These three commandments are tied together in one thought -
 - (1) "You shall not murder" - safeguards life;
 - (2) "You shall not commit adultery" - safeguards marriage;
 - (3) "You shall not steal" - safeguards property; the dignity of ownership.
2. These commandments are the basic building blocks of a moral society.
3. Stealing is a breach of one's fundamental obligation to love others, and treat them as one would want to be treated (Matthew 22:39).
4. In many of our nation's schools, we have rejected spiritual values.
5. "This is one of the great problems in American public schooling. The teachers are afraid to bring up moral, let alone spiritual questions, for fear that they are going to violate the Constitution." (Time Magazine, January, 1990, quoted by Robert Coles of Harvard University).
6. Perhaps in the near future it will be possible once more to teach the foundational building blocks upon which a substantial national morality can be taught.
7. On the surface this commandment seems very simple. We all know what stealing is - taking something which does not belong to us. But it is far more serious than this.
8. Synonyms for "steal" include - extort, seize, burglarize, defraud, filch, heist, cheat, beguile, bulk, misappropriate, chisel, pilfer, pillage, plunder, rob, snatch, swindle, swipe, fleece, film-flam, gyp, sham, embezzle, bamboozle.
9. We are dealing with a subject that is far more complicated than we may think.
10. When God gives a commandment, to violate that commandment is an extremely serious matter - Cf. 1 Corinthians 6:10; Ephesians 4:28.

DISCUSSION: LET US NOTICE--

I. SIMPLE STEALING

1. Burglaries -

2. Shoplifting -

- (1) 35,000,000 people go undetected while 5 million are caught.
- (2) At least one in every 52 customers in the average American business attempts or succeeds in shoplifting - stealing something out of a store without paying.

II. SOPHISTICATED STEALING.

1. Embezzling - misuses money that belongs to someone else - white collar crimes; fraud; employer not paying fair wage; employee not returning fair amount of work; kickbacks; broken contracts; lying; padded expense accounts; extortion - Luke 3:14.
2. Stealing of goods - taking something that doesn't belong to you on the job.
3. Paying income tax - Romans 13:7.
4. Cheating in school.
5. Copyright laws concerning cassettes; tapes; sheet music; books; published and printed materials.
6. Cf. Romans 12:17; 2 Corinthians 8:21.

III. SPIRITUAL STEALING.

1. Gossip/slander - stealing a person's good name by innuendo or statement; innocence; character; reputation; spirituality; betraying confidences; violating trusts.
2. Giving to God - Malachi 3:8-10.
3. Cf. Romans 13:8.
4. Cf. Ephesians 4:28
 - (1) "Let him that stole, steal no more" - integrity;
 - (2) "Let him labor, working with his hands the thing which is good" - industry;
 - (3) "That he may have to give to him that needs" - generosity.
5. Preachers/Teachers - fail to teach the truth, thus robbing of people's life giving principles - Proverbs 23:33.
6. The use of our time - Ephesians 5:16; Romans 12:1.

IV. THE "HOW" OF DEALING WITH THIS SIN.

1. Work on the heart - Matthew 15:17.
2. See things of this world from a Biblical viewpoint - Proverbs 23:5; Ecclesiastes 5:10; Luke 12:15; 1 Timothy 6:7; 2 Peter 3:10,11.
3. Value the spiritual over the physical - Matthew 6:33; 16:26.

CONCLUSION:

1. We have not reached the point in history that this commandment is either irrelevant or unnecessary.
2. Let us resolve that we will not be guilty of theft that will keep us out of heaven.
3. Cf. Matthew 6:19-21.

RESPECT FOR TRUTHFULNESS EXODUS 20:16

INTRODUCTION:

1. Cf. Revelation 22:15.
2. Each commandment guards something valuable - father/mother relationships; the right to life; sanctity of the home; property, and now - the right of reputation.
3. God hates lying! The echo of this law reverberates throughout the Old and the New Testaments.
 - (1) Proverbs 6:16,17,19; 12:22; 18:21;
 - (2) 2 Corinthians 12:20; James 4:11; Colossians 3:9; Revelation 22:15
4. We can speak words that will build, bless and encourage; or, we can speak words that will tear down, do damage and harm greatly. Bearing false witness is a crime against God and mankind.
5. In every imaginable area, lying has become a commonly accepted method of operation.
6. In a culture where truth is regarded so lightly, it is easy for us to minimize our deceptions, half-truths, and often, out-right lies.
7. A lie is a statement of untruth with the intention to deceive - a statement which is contrary to fact and told intentionally to deceive.

DISCUSSION: LET US NOTICE--

I. DEFINING LYING

1. Its origin -

- (1) Cf. John 8:44; Genesis 3:4,5
- (2) Job 2:3-5
- (3) When we lie we put ourselves in bad company! We align ourselves with the devil and his angels!

2. Its operation -

- (1) In human personality - 1 John 1:6-8
- (2) We lie to other people, and then we begin to lie to ourselves - 1 John 1:10.

3. Its outcome -

- (1) Cf. Psalm 52:2 - they cut;
- (2) Cf. Psalm 55:21 - they pierce;
- (3) Cf. Psalm 120:4 - they penetrate;
- (4) Cf. James 3:8 - like a poisonous snake!

- (5) Cf. the hearts that have been damaged; the lives that have been hurt; the reputations that have been marred - by untruthful, slanderous, unkind words!

- (6) Cf. Revelation 21:8 - the ultimate destiny of liars!

II. DESCRIBING LYING.

Jesus was accused of gluttony; drunkenness; blasphemy; demon-possession; and insurrection.

He suffered crucifixion when He was condemned as a felon by means of false testimony.

From the Jordan River to the cross, evil insinuations, whisperings, backbiting, falsehoods, distortions and open perjury persisted.

It did not cease with His crucifixion - lies were manufactured to discredit His crucifixion; the guards at the tomb were bribed with gold; His disciples were accused of stealing His body!

1. ***Lying by slandering*** - malicious untruth with the intention of doing harm - Psalm 101:5
2. ***Lying by talebearing*** - Leviticus 19:16; 1 Timothy 5:13 - can spread by innuendo.
3. ***Lying by gossiping*** - the verbal pests of society! Buzzing, swarming, striking, kicking, stinging, and hurting! Proverbs 18:8; 26:20.
4. ***Lying by whispering*** - Romans 1:29,30; 2 Corinthians 12:20 - backbiters are those who don't have the courage to say something face to face with an individual.
5. ***Lying by insinuating*** - saying very little; a little nod; arching of the eyebrows; tone of voice - Proverbs 6:12,13.
6. ***Lying by flattering*** - Proverbs 26:28 - the giving of insincere praise, not the giving of legitimate praise - Psalm 55:21.

7. *Lying by condoning* - allowing people in your presence to say things that are unkind, untrue, and malicious about another individual; giving consent by silence.

III. DEFEATING LYING

1. The positive of this commandment - "Tell the truth!"
2. This commandment is founded on the nature of God - John 14:6.
3. Three ways to defeat lying -
 - (1) Love the truth! Psalm 51:6; Jeremiah 17:9 - the heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.
 - (2) Learn the truth! Ephesians 4:21; Philippians 4:8.
 - (3) Live the truth! Ephesians 4:25; 4:15; Revelation 21:27.

CONCLUSION:

1. Extraordinary efforts should be made to restore respect for truthfulness, so trust can be renewed in the human community.
2. If the Christian would rise above the gross sins forbidden by God, and detested by right thinking persons, he must positively think about the good, the pure and the beautiful.
3. Cf. Psalm 120:2; 141:3

GOD'S LAW FOR CONTENTMENT
EXODUS 20:17

INTRODUCTION:

1. "You shall not covet" - that sin that produces all of the other sins. There is no conceivable type of sin and wickedness which does not grow out of a disregard of this law.
2. It is an inward sin that is manifested in all the other nine commandments of the Decalogue.
3. The word "covet" is really a combination of two words - "Have" and "More," i.e., the desire to have more.
4. It is an excessive desire for something you do not have (a ruling passion of your life) - greed - materialism.
5. It is also an envious desire for something which belongs to someone else - jealousy; envy.
6. There are some things that are perfectly legitimate for us to desire - peace of mind; happiness; education; Christian mates; tranquillity and peace.
7. This commandment concerns excessive desire for what you do not have, or for what someone else has.
8. It is important for us to be able to identify this dangerous tendency within ourselves, and to cultivate a spirit which will hold it in check.

DISCUSSION: LET US NOTICE--

I. EXPLAINING COVETOUSNESS.

1. There are three things which will help explain the meaning of covetousness.
 - (1) It is a sin of the *heart*. Cf. Mark 7:21-23; Ephesians 5:3. Sin really lies in the heart, and not in the hand.
 - (2) It is a sin that *is hidden*. Cf. 1 Thessalonians 2:5. We tend to cover over. Cf. Luke 16:13,14.
 - (3) It is a sin that *hideous*. Cf. Romans 1:29; Colossians 3:5; Ephesians 5:5.

2. Cf. Matthew 19:16-22. The man's sin of covetousness for material things kept him from following Jesus.

II. EXAMINING COVETOUSNESS.

1. Cf. Achan's sin (Joshua 7:20-22). Note the progression: "I saw - I took."
Covetousness starts with desire, and left untended, it will move to a deed, and then it will move to deception.
2. Cf. Luke 12:13-21. A desire; a deed; a deception of self.

III. EXPELLING COVETOUSNESS.

1. In order to drive out covetousness, there has to be three things to consider.
 - (1) You must **realize** it is there - Romans 7:7,8.
 - (2) You must **resist** covetousness - Colossians 3:5 ("Put it to death; nip it in the bud); Romans 13:8,9 (You resist by loving).
 - (3) You must **replace** covetousness - put first things first.
 - A. Cf. Psalm 119:36 - we fill our minds and hearts with God's truth.
 - B. Cf. Hebrews 13:5,6 - replace covetousness with contentment.
2. Discontentment is the expression of illegitimate desires - Philippians 4:11; 2 Corinthians 9:5.
3. Cultivate your own strengths - learn to rejoice with others over their good fortune - be content with the things you have (1 Timothy 6:6-8).

CONCLUSION:

1. It is said that when Alexander the Great had conquered the known world, he instructed his officers that when he died his hands were to be left outside the coffin so that all might see that though he had conquered the world, he could carry nothing with him into the hereafter. Cf. Job 1:21; 1 Timothy 6:7.
2. We are born into this world grabbing and grasping, but when we leave this world, we die with our hands open and extended.
3. God says, "Don't make the mistake of just living your life in constant desire for that which you do not have."

4. Desire that inheritance that is incorruptible, undefiled, and that fades not away. Cf. Colossians 3:1-3.
5. The best source of good deeds is good desires - a properly oriented heart, and genuine change.
6. Cf. Proverbs 21:26.
7. Contentment comes to us when we escape our slavery to things; when we find our wealth in friendship; and our joy in caring about people.