

## The Ten Commandments (Part 2)

Exodus 20:12-17

### Introduction

**Rules:** \*Review\* Rules are not bad (kids “thrive” with rules and structure). Society can’t function without rules (e.g., Motos in Mali). Rules enable us to enjoy our privilege as the people of God.

**Horizontal:** \*Review\* Last week we talked about our relationship with God (**vertical**). This is the foundation of all our relationships (e.g., Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength). The first and great commandment leads to the second (which is like it), to love our neighbor as ourself.

- The way we love God is foundational for the way we love others. If we don’t love God rightly we can’t love others rightly.
- We also image God (e.g., #3) in the way we carry his name, the way we represent him to others.
  - We treat others as God has treated us. His character and his behavior toward us becomes the paradigm for our behavior toward others. He has forgiven us so we forgive. He came to save us and sends us on a mission to proclaim his salvation to others.
  - In many ways, the way you treat others is direct evidence of your understanding of God and his grace toward you. “People give as much grace as they think they need” (Edmondson).

**Honor:** כבד; kā·bēd; heavy (LXX; τιμάω) - The first command today starts off with a command to “**honor**” (your parents). The word can be used to mean glory, heavy, wealthy, etc. E.g., large man is heavy, thick hair is heavy, liver of an animal is heavy. Can also mean wealthy (more gold or silver is heavy; money is weight; pounds). Figuratively to describe ears, eyes, or heart (dull, sleepy, hard-hearted). E.g., “He or she carries a lot of weight” (power).

- E.g., seat of prominence at a banquet, place of prominence at a house (Senior Pictures vs. junk drawer; things you want seen vs. what you don’t want seen); sneakerhead changes way they walk based on value (creases, dead stock, sneakerhead on a budget).
- This word can be positive or negative. Sin can be heavy (i.e., burden), idols can be heavy (i.e., honor the wrong thing) or God can be heavy (i.e., honored).
- We give weight to the opinion of that which we love and worship, but only God can rightfully bear the weight of our honor and worship (weight limit of a hammock).
  - Because God is worthy of all honor and worship, we are called to honor the things he created and values. The way we treat other people is derivative of our worship of God. We love people because God loves people. We honor people because God created them.

<sup>12</sup> “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. <sup>13</sup> “You shall not murder. <sup>14</sup> “You shall not commit adultery. <sup>15</sup> “You shall

not steal. <sup>16</sup> “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. <sup>17</sup> “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

**5. Honor Parents (v. 12)** <sup>12</sup> “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

**Closest Relationship:** Your first relationship is with your parents. In most (ideal) cases it is your first and most important relationship for most of your early life.

- You can’t hide from your relationships at home (e.g., kids behave at school or in public but not at home). Who you really are is known most by God, then by you (hopefully), then by those you live with (concentric circles of relationship). The commandments are moving from God, to home, to society at large.
  - The most practical opportunity to demonstrate the gospel is with the people closest to you. **The gospel can’t go far if it doesn’t first impact what is near.**

**Represent God:** Practically, parents are the most direct representative of authority and love in a child’s life (or should be). Parents, in some way, are *meant* to image God to their children (you are not God but you should point to him).

- Parents, make it easy for your kids to believe that God is a loving father.

**Honor vs. Obedience:** When we live under our parents, in their houses, we are called to honor and obey them. But someday, we will live on our own and we will no longer have to obey them but we are always called to honor them.

- **Obedience is easier than honor.** You can obey someone with hatred, begrudgingly, etc. **Honor speaks to your heart.**
- Your heart can honor your parents whether you’re 6 or 60 and your obligation to honor doesn’t end when you are out of their house.
  - For **little ones**, honor looks more concrete.
  - But many of us (**adults**) need to consider what honor toward our parents looks like as adults.

**Bad Parents:** What if you have awful parents? You are **not called to obey** your parents if what they ask you to do **violates God’s command**. If your parents ask you to do something immoral then you *must* disobey them because **your obedience to them never supersedes your obedience to God**.

- (1) Honoring your parents when they don’t deserve it is an **opportunity to show them the love, forgiveness, and grace** that God has shown you.
- (2) Honoring your parents **does not mean you trust them**, give them access to every area of your life, or negate the harm they did to you.
- (3) You can honor your parents **without idolizing their love** because you have received all the love you ever need (the love you think you need from your family of origin) from God. I.e., the fact that you know your earthly father has let you down points to the reality of your heart that you were created for a relationship with your heavenly father.

- (4) Sin may have robbed you of a healthy relationship with your family of origin, but **grace has given you a faith family** that, in some small way, can provide you with spiritual mothers, fathers, brothers, and sisters.

**Promise:** that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>1</sup>Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. <sup>2</sup>“Honor your father and mother” (this is the first commandment with a promise), <sup>3</sup>“that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land” (Eph 6:1-3). There are lots of blessings for obeying God and curses for disobeying God.

- (1) The blessing may **specifically** apply to this command (parents) but it is a **representative** of obeying all of God’s commands (e.g., stuck in the middle). Obeying God is the path to a blessed life.
- (2) It’s a **proverbial blessing** not a guarantee (e.g., “only the good die young;” we don’t know anyone who has lived long and been dishonorable to parents 😞).
- (3) It **practically** makes sense. The only way for a society to be healthy is for the old and young to care for one another.
- (4) The land of the OT is a promise of God’s **new heavens and new earth** for those who trust in Christ. For those who belong to Christ, honoring your parents is not a means of eternal life but evidence of God’s regeneration, and the ultimate reward is the blessing of eternal life.

**6. Honor Life (v. 13)** <sup>13</sup> “You shall not murder. (לֹא תִרְצַח) Two Hebrew words: “not murder/never murder.”

**Kill or Murder:** King Jimmy<sup>KJV</sup> did us dirty with the “thou shalt not kill” translation (though it makes more sense with the use of words like “slay” common in the 1600s).

- The word here is not the word kill but is the word used only for “unjust” killing (i.e., murder). There’s a difference between killing and murder.

**Image of God:** The negative prohibitions is “don’t murder” but the positive command is to value the life God has created.

- So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (Gen 1:27).
- “Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image” (Gen 9:6). Noah. The reason God enacts divine capital punishment on murderers is *not* because life is disposable but because it is valuable. The punishment must fit the crime.
- The reason we oppose and grieve any unjust killing (e.g., euthanasia, abortion, suicide) is because we value every person as made in the image of God, full of dignity, purpose, worth, and value.

**Image of God:** Gen 1: everything is made “according to its kind.” But humanity is made in the “image and likeness of God.” Humanity is set apart in position, value, and role in God’s creation. God is most glorified, and **we are most fully human** when we are reflecting the image of God.

- Because every human being is made in the image of God, he or she is valuable. People are not valuable because of external accomplishments but because God made them in his image. “The face of a child with down syndrome is equally as beautiful as an airbrushed supermodel” (Mohler). “The soul of the worst criminal is equally as valuable as the most outstanding citizen” (Me). From unborn baby to bedridden elderly, all are valuable. “When I refuse to recognize [God’s image] in people, I refuse to recognize God as God” (McRoberts). “Take all human beings infinitely seriously.”
  - In a broken world it is easy to compartmentalize people as less valuable, less important, less useful. We see burdens and challenges, rather than **image bearers**.
- We must value every human life from conception to death **regardless**. We don’t determine anyone’s value merely by their external circumstances. Jesus allows us to see the intrinsic dignity of each person as an image-bearer of Christ regardless of money, nationality, ability or disability, ethnicity, or any other external factor (*contra* Feudal Europe or Ancient Rome).
- How you value the art shows how much you value the artist. How you treat image-bearers reflects your value of their creator.

**From the Heart:** At least I haven’t done that! (murder). Jesus tells us that murder flows from the heart (Matt 5:21-22). Anger toward another opens you up to the same punishment as murder.

- God is not just calling us to “not murder” but ultimately to “love like Christ.” We are loved by Christ and are called to love as he loves.
  - When you think of people as less than made in the image of God, you devalue life. We are called to value life. We are called to encourage and support image-bearers. Nothing should be more valuable than human life.
- **We want to incubate a culture that values life.**
  - This certainly includes doing everything we can to mourn and fight against the epidemic of murderous violence in our community. It also means we mourn and grieve the conditions of poverty and helplessness that treat people as less than valuable.
- How can you participate in creating a culture that values every person as made in the image of God?

## 7. Honor Marriage (v. 14) <sup>14</sup> “You shall not commit adultery. (לֹא תִזְנֶה אִשָּׁתְּךָ)”

**Nature of Marriage:** Later covenant stipulations about sexual immorality, but here **marriage is clearly shown as foundational**. The primary reason **sexual immorality is wrong** is because it violates the nature of the marriage relationship, a relationship established by God in the beginning and ultimately pictures **the love of Christ for his church**.

- <sup>4</sup> Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterous (Heb 13:4).
- When we honor marriage we avoid sexual immorality. Sex is made for the context of marriage because Christian marriage is a covenantal relationship. If not, sex will be not be a joy but a burden.

- You will use it (or be used for it), idolize it, or demonize it. We are such binary thinkers that it is easy to think that sex is always good (modern view) or always bad (e.g., Augustine), when the reality it is good when it is in the right context (e.g., disordered love). It is not enough to love the right things and hate the wrong things, you must love the right things the right way (e.g., love family but not before God). True love must be rightly directed. It must be in God's order. Love is love (blue is blue; truism, tautology). But there is such a thing as misplaced and misdirected love. There is a difference between God's love and false love. In this case, sex was made for the context of God-ordained covenantal marriage. In Christian covenant marriage, sex becomes an opportunity to selflessly give yourself to another rather than selfishly take for yourself.

**Societal Safeguard:** You don't even have to be a Christian to see the effect of broken marriages on society. Secular social scientists have repeatedly proven that stable marriages are the best context for healthy families.

- The data is clear, women and children and most harmed by broken marriages.
- The claim of the sexual revolution that sex means nothing and you are free to sleep with who you want when you want has proven to be a lie. We have witnessed the dissolution of families, the fracturing of culture, the spiritual enslavement of generations to pornography, and even the literal enslavement of (mainly) women to feed these evils. It has not liberated us, it has enslaved us.
  - **When God calls us to view sex, intimacy, and relationships a certain way, it is not to restrict our fun but to enable our freedom.**

**Like Christ:** <sup>2</sup> And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God... <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her (Eph 5:2, 25).

- Faithfulness to your spouse is meant to picture the gospel. God is faithful, so we should be faithful. We should love like Christ (this is why Israel is described as adulterous in their sin). \*To highlight the grace of God we see his love for them even in their spiritual adultery (cf. Hosea, just how bad their sin is and just how extravagant God's love is).

**From the Heart:** Jesus makes clear in the SOTM (Matt 5:28) that adultery starts in the heart. If you "lust" you have committed adultery. **There are many ways to be unfaithful.** Adultery is simply the physical embodiment of all sorts of emotional and even spiritual unfaithfulness (e.g., emotional porn; Twilight; romance novels; 50 shades; etc.)

- Lust is the opposite of love. It views someone as an object. It sees people as expendable and consumable commodities to be used rather than image bearers to be loved and cared for.

**Tense Marriage:** We have to be careful not to idolize or trivialize marriage. **Marriage is not ultimate, God is ultimate.** But marriage is important because it was designed by God for our good.

- We value the gift of singleness given to some for a season or a lifetime.

- We champion and support families through the journey of marriage.
- We apply the grace of God to those who have experienced broken marriages, sexual sin, and toxic relationships.
- We provide a spiritual family to stand in the gap for single parents and children in times of need.

## 8. Honor Other People's Stuff (v. 15) <sup>15</sup> "You shall not steal. (לֹא תִגְדֹּל). Not complicated.

**Stealing:** Stolen Amazon package. When you take something that belongs to someone else, it says a lot about how you view yourself and others.

**From the Heart:** Stealing belies your heart. It might display your jealousy, ingratitude, materialism, or entitlement.

- We steal when we think we are more important than others, or our needs matter more than theirs. **Stealing devalues others and overvalues us.** It is a myopic sin.
- We steal when we think we are owed something or entitled to something, rather than recognizing that all of life is a gift.

**The opposite of stealing is generosity** (which is why Zaccheus went from a thief to a generous man; 120% vs 400%; 10% tithe to 50%).

- Sometimes our stealing looks more like stinginess than thievery.
- Do you use your time, gifts, money, relationships, skills, connections, etc. **generously** for the good of others and the glory of God or **stingily** for your own comfort?

## 9. Honor Your Word (v. 16) <sup>16</sup> "You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

**Lying? Yes, but...:** Again, it's about lying (don't lie) but more than that. Implies truthfulness (not lying) but is specifically related to neighbors (\*first use of neighbor in Decalogue). **Who is my neighbor?** We should not ask where our neighborly obligation ends (least effort required) but how I can be a neighbor to all (Lk 10, Good Samaritan).

- It actually doesn't use the word "lie." There are examples in the Bible when not telling the truth is good (e.g., Rahab, Hebrew Midwives). And we know that in modern world (if your girlfriend asks you if she looks good in an outfit). We know that not telling the truth is not always the same as sinning (e.g., late to an appointment).
- Not telling the truth is a sin when you intend to harm someone else or falsely bolster your own righteousness (I'm not saying be a liar; God is a God of truth and we should be people of truth).

**False Testimony:** The context of #9 is false testimony (i.e., witness) in court. You lie to harm your neighbor. You besmirch their reputation either to harm them or make yourself look better. If convicted falsely in court the consequences could be severe (e.g., modern false convictions; death penalties; Since 1973, at least 190 people have been exonerated from death row in the U.S., according to the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC). A 2014 study estimated that at least 4% of those sentenced to death are innocent).



**How You Treat Others:** The gospel is others-focused. Jesus gave, Jesus loved, Jesus served (Phil 2). Gospel people worry more about the reputation of others than for themselves.

- When we lie about ourselves and others is anti-gospel. It comes from a place of insecurity in an attempt to build ourselves up by tearing others down. <sup>16</sup> For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice (Jas 3:16).
- “If any man thinks ill of you, do not be angry with him. For you are worse than he thinks you to be” (Spurgeon).

**Telling the Truth:** We want to be a kind of people that does not misrepresent ourselves or others. Our words are never used to hurt our neighbors.

- We love the truth and we love our neighbors because we love God.
  - We don’t revile (false negative) or flatter (false positive). Flattery is the subtle “pickpocket” of reviling (“when a compliment is not a compliment”). Flattery means you don’t love someone enough to tell them the truth.

**10. Honorable Desires (v. 17)** <sup>17</sup> “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”

**Heart:** Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength. It really means to love God with everything. Just looking at the construction of the Great Commandment (Matt 22:35-40) we can see the **main verb** is “love,” the **object** of that love is “the Lord your God,” and the **extent** of that love is “total” (i.e., “all”). “Love the Lord your God with total commitment (heart), with your total self (soul), to total excess” (Wright on Deut 6:5).

- At the core of life, behavior, purpose, is not primarily what you do (that flows out of this) but what (who!) you love! “Whether for good or evil, each man lives by his love” (Augustine). Too often in our vision of discipleship we’ve focused on what you know (which matters) and what you do (which matters) but to the exclusion of what you love! The reality is that our loves are in the driver’s seat. So we have a lot of people who know Christian things (e.g., theology, doctrine, etc.) and do Christian things (e.g., tithe, worship music, Christian t-shirt, attend church) but **don’t love God**.
- If all that matters is what you do and what information you have, then God would have made all of us robots. But God desires our worship. He deserves our love. So he made us free creatures that can love him (and not love him). You are not a mindless automaton who just *does things* but a free being who loves things, and you are called to love God.
- And there’s a beautiful relationship between obedience. The more you love God, the more joyfully you will obey him. **Obedience is the fruit of the tree of faith that has been nurtured in the soil of love.**

This command gets to the heart (literally). It’s not about what you do but what you **desire**. All the other behaviors are outwardly observable, but covetousness hides in the heart.

- “We are the belated announcement of what we have been thinking about for the past thirty days” (obsessing over what I want to buy).
- In some ways, coveting is the first sin. Adam and Eve wanted what they didn’t have.

**Negative or Positive:** Negative (don’t covet) = Positive (be content).

- “Contentment makes poor men rich; discontentment makes rich men poor” (Benjamin Franklin). Contentment is not about finding something new as much as it is about seeing what God has given you as the gift it is. We can live called and content, embracing what we have in Christ rather than seeking something else.
  - Social media thrives on generating discontent (boring, etc.).
- When you root your true identity in Christ you can celebrate the joys of others without be jealous. You can also see the social media charade for what it is. **In Christ we have all we need, so we don’t have to look elsewhere.** You don’t have to go somewhere else, or buy something else, or accomplish something else. You can be where God has you now because he is there with you. There is a powerful contentment that comes from trusting in Christ. We are all restless until we rest in Christ (Augustine). Chasing contentment outside of Christ will not lead to joy.
- You should not envy the gifts of others or the things you don’t have. God’s people are different. It does no good to “look with envy at the different hand which has been dealt” to others “but to make the most of what you do have” (France).
- “Contentment has nothign to do with what you have, but everything to do with what you are.” A rich person can be content or discontent, and the same with a poor person.
  - “Why do we lie, or fail to love, or break our promises, or live selfishly? Of course, the general answer is “Because we are weak and sinful,” but the specific answer is that there is something besides Jesus Christ that we feel we must have to be happy, something that is more important to our heart than God” (Keller).

## Conclusion

**Be a People that Images God Well:** God honors his creation, so we honor his creation. God is faithful, so we are faithful. God is a God of life, so we are a God of life. God has everything, so we can be content. God is the author of truth, so we can love truth.

- **(1) For Our Good:** Path of freedom and peace (e.g., don’t live in fear of keeping up with your lies; let go of bitterness toward parents; lay down the burden of discontentment).
- **(2) For the Good of Others:** Only the path of God can create a community that flourishes, a place of grace where others are protected, built up, and valued.
- **(3) For the Glory of God:** “God has made all people to reflect, to be imaging beings. People will always reflect something, whether it be God’s character or some feature of the world. If people are committed to God, they will become like him” (Beale). When people see us, they can see, in some imperfect but real way, the character of God. And that magnifies God!