

#### 4. HONOR YOUR FATHER AND YOUR MOTHER.

Commands: love; respect; obedience on the part of children; care on the part of parents for the spiritual and temporal welfare of their children; obedience to civil and religious superiors.

Forbids: hatred of parents and superiors; disrespect; disobedience.

#### 5. YOU SHALL NOT KILL.

Commands: safeguarding of one's own life and bodily welfare and that of others.

Forbids: unjust killing; suicide; abortion; sterilization; dueling; endangering life and limb of self or others.

#### 6. YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY.

Commands: chastity in word and deed.

Forbids: obscene speech; impure actions alone or with others.

#### 7. YOU SHALL NOT STEAL.

Commands: respect for the property of rights and others; the paying of just debts; paying just wages to employees; integrity in public office.

Forbids: theft; damage to the property of others; not paying just debts; not returning found or borrowed articles; giving unjust

measure or weight in selling; not paying just wages; bribery; graft; cheating; fraud; accepting stolen property; not giving an honest day's work for wages received; breach of contract.

#### 8. YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOR.

COMMANDS: truthfulness; respect for the good name of others; the observance of secrecy when required.

Forbids: lying; injury to the good name of others; slander; tale-bearing; rash judgment; contemptuous speech and the violation of secrecy.

#### 9. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S WIFE.

Commands: purity in thought.

Forbids: willful impure thought and desires.

#### 10. YOU SHALL NOT COVET YOUR NEIGHBOR'S GOODS.

Commands: respect for the rights of others.

Forbids: the desire to take, to keep, or damage the property of others.

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## **The Ten Commandments**

The Ten Commandments (also called the Decalogue) were given to Moses, the great leader of the Hebrews, over 3,000 years ago, after the Hebrews were delivered from slavery in Egypt. While the Law of Moses is made up of over 600 rules, the Ten Commandments were a succinct list of rules from which the others were developed. They are recorded in two chapters of the Hebrew Scriptures (specifically the Pentateuch): Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21. Both references have essentially the same content:

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son,

or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it. Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God gives you. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbors" (Ex. 20:1-17).

When Jesus was asked, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?" he replied: "You know the commandments: 'Do not kill, Do not commit adultery, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Do not defraud, Honor your father and mother'" (Mark 10:19). Notice that Jesus attests to the importance of the Ten Commandments. This is why Christians still accept them.

About the numbering: there are at least two sets of numbering used, and both are very old, at least 1,600 years. Most Protestants use the numbering adopted by Josephus and Origen, but Catholics and Lutherans use the numbering of St. Augustine, who took it from a Hebrew list in the fifth century. The numbering is not in the Bible.

The Jewish tradition (according to Scripture) viewed the Law as a gift from God, not an

option or curse. Christian tradition views sin as enslavement rather than something enjoyable we are denied. To accept salvation is to be freed from slavery to sin and raised to a new life. In the table below, you can see the commandments and how they free us from sin and free us for a new life.

The Ten Commandments are found in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* in the section on living the Christian life (2052 - 2557).

When Jesus was asked, "What is the greatest commandment?" he responded with two: Love God and love your neighbor. (cf. Mark 12:28-31)

These are the ten precepts to which Our Lord referred when He said: "If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt., 19:17). There are two main principles of all the Commandments, namely, love of God and love of neighbor. The man that loves God must necessarily do three things: (1) he must have no other God. And in support of this is the Commandment: "Thou shall not have strange gods"; (2) he must give God all honor. And so it is commanded: "Thou shall not take the name of God in vain"; (3) he must freely take his rest in God. Hence: "Remember that thou keep holy the Sabbath day."

In accord with this, we see the first three commandments as directed toward the first of these (love of God), and the last seven as relating to the second: love of neighbor.

## **What do the Ten Commandments Command of Forbid?**

**1. I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD: YOU SHALL NOT HAVE STRANGE GODS BEFORE ME.**

Commands: faith, hope, love, and worship of God; reverence for holy things; prayer.

Forbids: idolatry; superstition; spiritism; tempting God; sacrilege; attendance at false worship.

**2. YOU SHALL NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD YOUR GOD IN VAIN.**

Commands: reverence in speaking about God and holy things; the keeping of oaths and vows.

Forbids: blasphemy; the irreverent use of God's name; speaking disrespectfully of holy things; false oaths and the breaking of vows.

**3. KEEP THE SABBATH HOLY.**

Commands: going to church on Sundays and holy days of obligation.

Forbids: missing church through one's own fault; unnecessary servile work on Sunday and holy days of obligation.