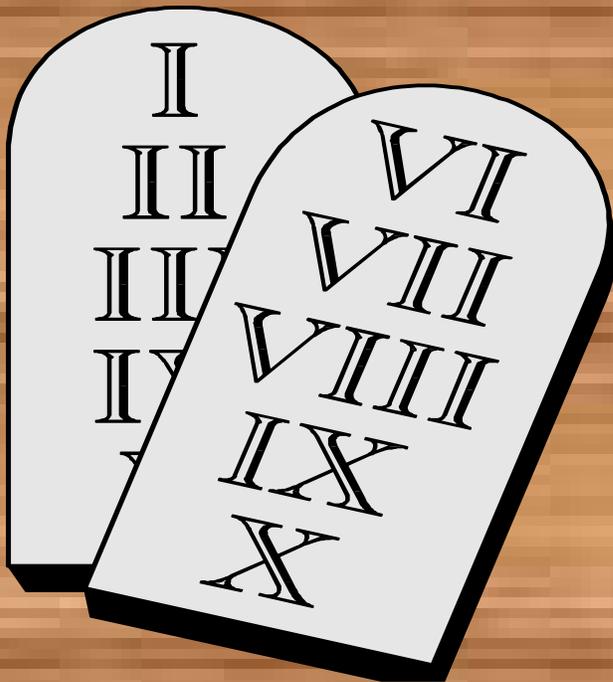


The Ten Commandments

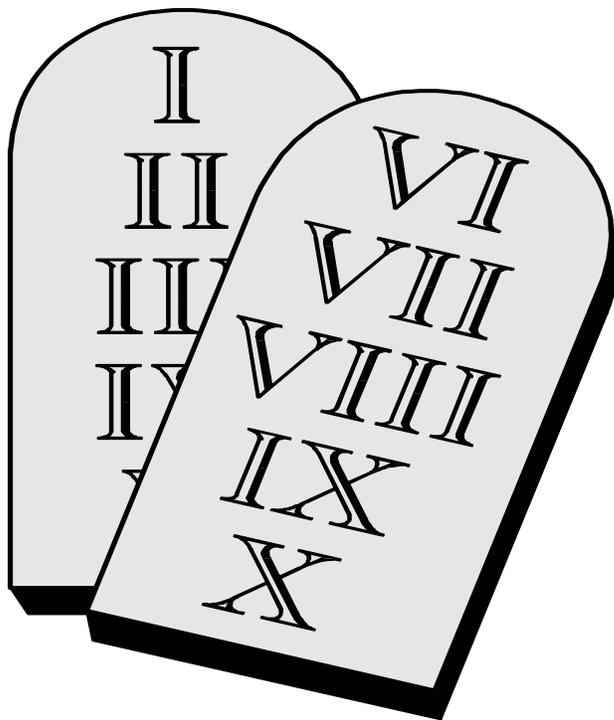
12 Lessons



By
PAUL E. CANTRELL

2010

The Ten Commandments



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By
PAUL E. CANTRELL
84 Northview Dr.
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

pecantrell@juno.com

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"The 10 Commandments—According to Jesus"

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Lesson One

"The Bible Reveals Two Great Covenants, but Three Periods"

"In that He says, 'A new covenant,' He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away."

Our study will be looking at the 10 Commandments (one by one) and then to see how Jesus viewed these commands. But before we do this, it is important that we look at the topic of this first lesson: **"The Bible Reveals Two Great Covenants, but Three Periods."**

Two Great Covenants

The **First Covenant** was given by God through Moses to the people of Israel when they came out of Egyptian Bondage. He made it very clear that this Covenant was only given to the children of Israel (Exo. 19:1-5; 24:1-8; Deut. 4:7-8; Ps. 147:19-20). The approximate date for the original giving of this Covenant was 1500 B.C. The Law contained in this Covenant was to serve not only as a "spiritual" Law for the people, but it was also a "national" Law as well.

This Covenant was given for a definite period of time...*"till the seed should come"* (Gal. 3:16-19). The "seed" in this passage has reference to the coming of Christ! (Gal. 3:16, 21-26) and to the redemption that He made possible through His death. What the Law could not do, Jesus did!

The **Second Covenant** was given by God through Christ and His chosen Apostles and Prophets (Eph. 3:1-6). The reason why a second Covenant had to be given was because of the weakness of this first Covenant (Gal. 3:21, 26). The giving of a New Covenant was foretold some 700 years before the time of Christ (Jere. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13).

This New Covenant was not only given to the Jewish people, but to all Nations of people (Jere. 31:31-34; Matt. 28:18-20; Eph. 3:6). This Covenant message is to be proclaimed to all people beginning in Jerusalem (Luke 24:44-49; Mark 16:15-16). Upon the death, burial, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus—his New Covenant (Law) went into force (Heb. 9:14-17).

What happened to the First Covenant? It had served its purpose in God's scheme of things and has been taken away and replaced by a New and Better Covenant (Heb. 10:9; 8:13). This means that the First Covenant, with all of its commands and promises, has been replaced by a New and Better Covenant. We are no longer under its ordinances and statutes. We are now under a Covenant made possible by the death of the Son of God on our behalf (Rom. 8:1-4). This does not mean that we should not read and study the Old

Testament and profit by its knowledge (Rom. 15:4); but we are not under obligation to do its commands or to enjoy its promises.

Three Periods

One way to help understand about the two Covenants is to recognize and understand the three Periods in the Bible.

The first Period. This Period is recognized and given a name by most Biblical Scholars. It is referred to as the Period of the Patriarchs. All people were under Law to God, but evidently not written down like the Old Covenant or New Covenant. They were responsible for keeping the Law that was written on their hearts (Rom. 2:14-15). This Period lasted from Adam and Eve (in the beginning) up to the coming of Jesus—**except for the Jews**. They were given the Law of Moses (Covenant) as a special Covenant. A second Period began **for the Jews** when they were given the First Covenant (Law of Moses). However, for the **Gentile World**, this second Period never came....they continued under the first Period (Patriarch Period).

The second Period was only for the Nation of Israel and lasted up until the coming of Jesus the Messiah. They were under obligation to keep God's statutes and ordinances that were given to them by Moses from God.

The third Period was then begun for both Jews and Gentiles in the first Century after the birth of Christ. All have been invited to come under this Covenant with its commands and promises.

What about Keeping the 10 Commandments?

Since the 10 Commandments were given primarily to the Jews, should Gentiles feel any obligation to keep these commands? And, since the First Covenant has been taken away and replaced by a New and Better Covenant, why should we go back to the Old Covenant and keep commands that were given to the Nation of Israel? The 10 Commandments were definitely a part of the First Covenant (Deut. 4:12-14). Since Jesus was a Jew and He was under and lived that First Covenant perfectly, He would naturally have taught and encouraged people to keep the 10 Commandments (Luke 18:19-21). But even the Apostle Paul taught people to keep the Commandments (Rom. 13:8-10). Is there something about these Commands that are universal in nature? Also, we need to answer the question: *"Were all of the 10 Commandments carried over and bound on Christians?"* We will be studying and looking for answers to these and other questions as we go through this series of lessons.

Concluding Thoughts

As we study each of these Commands we will be looking at how Jesus used them and also if the New Covenant contains all of them. We hope that we have raised some questions that will challenge us to do more studying on these topics. One thing of interest

that you may not be aware of is how the present religious world views these Commands. In the Creed books of at least 3 or 4 major religious groups, the 10 commandments are changed slightly to avoid Idolatry. And most all of the major religious groups feel we should keep these Commands—even the one about keeping the Sabbath Day Holy! They call it the "Christian Sabbath." *Information of the above can be furnished if requested.*

Questions for Discussion

True or False

1. There are only two Covenants mentioned in the Bible?
2. At least three major Religious groups have changed the 10 Commandments.
3. The First Covenant was given to the descendants of Abraham.
4. The First Covenant only lasted until the "Seed" should come.
5. The Second Covenant was given because of the weakness of the First Covenant.
6. Is there such a thing as the "Christian Sabbath?"
7. The New Covenant repeats all of the 10 Commandments.
8. Since the first Covenant is "obsolete," we have no reason to read and study the Old Testament Books.
9. All three Periods of the Bible have applied to all Nations of people.
10. Jesus' New Covenant did not go into force until after His death.

Lesson Two

"I am the Lord your God..."

"In the Beginning, God....." (Gen. 1:1a).

This God can be known!

- a) *"The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands."* (Ps. 19:1)
- b) *" that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."* (Rom. 1:19-20)

For centuries, people have debated the question of God's existence. But the Bible clearly states that a person can come to believe in the true God of Heaven. However, for a person to claim to believe in "God" is no guarantee that he believes in the God of the Bible or the one and only true God of Heaven. Man can be blinded by prejudice or false information or deceived into believing in an inferior concept of God. These passages are saying that God can be rightfully deduced from seeing what He has made!

Attributes of God

From a "rational" standpoint as well as a "Biblical" standpoint, mankind can come to a knowledge of the true God of Heaven. Look at His attributes as described in Scripture and see if you do not agree with these points.

1. He is eternal and self-existent. (Isa. 40:28)
2. He is creator of all things. (Gen. 1:1; Isa. 42:5)
3. He is all-powerful. (Gen. 17:1; 18:14)
4. He is all-knowing. (Isa. 46:10; 1 Jn. 3:20)
5. He is everywhere present. (Ps. 139:7-9; Acts 17:28)
6. He changes not. (Heb. 1:12; Jas. 1:17)
7. He is Faithful. (Deut. 32:4; 2 Tim. 2:11-13)
8. His Holiness, Wisdom, Justice, and Goodness are perfect—no flaws! (Deut. 32:4; Rom. 3:26; Ps. 147:5; 1 Sam. 2:3).

It is important that we get an over-all view of God and not a "one-sided view!" God is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8). He changes not and is dependable. He keeps His promises (Deut. 7:9-10).

God is the God for all Nations

Even though God chose out a peculiar people (Israel) to be a special people unto Himself (Deut. 6:24-25); yet He was still the God for all peoples—if they would serve Him. The Great Commission indicates that God is the God for all peoples (Matt. 28:18-20; Mark 16:15-16). It is God's desire for His special people, then and now, to be a kingdom of priests for all nations.

The Unbeliever's Ultimate Problem

A key question needs to be asked by every person, but especially those who claim they do not believe in God:

1. Could there be a point at which absolutely nothing existed?
2. Could there ever be non-existence?
3. Is non-existence possible?

The answer to these questions must be a resounding "NO!" If there was "non-existence," then there could never be existence. Or.....one must accept the idea that "something came from nothing." Such is totally illogical and contradictory to common sense. How in the world can "Matter" be eternal? We don't have a problem with there being an "eternal Mind!" This deals with intelligence and the power to create. The Bible begins with this concept of an eternal mind that created all things. This makes sense to a rational mind. Unbelievers can claim that there is no God! But they cannot know that nor prove such. It is obvious that a person cannot be everywhere at once; therefore, where he isn't may be where God is!

It is interesting to notice that the Bible does not feel the need to prove God's existence. The Bible begins with the assumption... *"In the beginning, God..."* It is expected that mankind will believe that God exist....and the biggest majority of people have accepted the concept of a higher being, but not a proper view of God. God makes it clear to Israel when He chose them to be a special people unto Himself, *"I am the Lord your God..."* He rightfully expected them to acknowledge Him, obey Him, and to worship Him and Him alone (Matt. 4:10).

Concluding Thoughts

The primary and central concept for Israel was to worship and serve this God—the only true and living God! The first and greatest commandment that Jesus emphasized was: *"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment."* God is to be Supreme in our lives for He is the ultimate One! No other deserves His place! We must recognize Him as the Lord our God!

It is obvious that both the Old Testament and the New Testament emphasizes the necessity of acknowledging and being obedient unto the One and Only God of Heaven. And for those today who would believe in Him, He is to be recognized as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—yet, but ONE GOD!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ 1. The Bible says that the existence of God is evident.
- ___ 2. There is a difference between "believing in God" and "believing in the true God of Heaven."
- ___ 3. The Bible teaches that mankind can come to rightfully believe in the True God from observing what He has made.
- ___ 4. God's power and knowledge is unlimited.
- ___ 5. No flaws can be found in God.
- ___ 6. God has always been the God for all Nations of people from the beginning.
- ___ 7. The unbeliever's ultimate problem is the question—"*Can something come from nothing?*"
- ___ 8. Nobody really believes that "Matter" is eternal!
- ___ 9. It is important that God proves His existence by what He says in the Bible.
- ___ 10. A proper view of God is more important than to believe that there is a higher power in this universe.

Lesson Three

"You shall have no other gods Before me!"

"Their land has also been filled with idols; they worship the work of their hands, that which their fingers have made." (Isa. 2:8)

There is a continual craving in the human mind for visible forms to express religious concepts. We believe that this could be one of the main reasons why Idolatry has had such an appeal to humans. The following six items suggest some possible reasons for the popularity of Idolatry:

1. Idols offer a materialistic and tangible object to worship.
2. Idolatry has often had elaborate rituals and colorful ceremonies that appeal to people.
3. The "Mother goddess" helps to identify with the family—father, mother, children.
4. Sexual activities and extreme immoral orgies are often connected with the worship of Idols.
5. Idolatry is often designed to appeal to the mysterious.
6. The felt need for "gods" to bless their crops, lands, efforts, etc.

These and possible other explanations can be given for the belief in and the practice of Idol worship.

What is Idolatry?

Idolatry is basically the paying of homage to false gods, graven images, and Idols that represent the false gods. To show their respect for their Idol gods, they will make their images out of expensive materials, such as Silver and Gold. (Isa. 2:18-20). However, this is not always the case (Isa. 44:19). They are carved things made with men's hands (Isa. 2:8); yet they give reverence to them as though they were Deity (Lev. 26:1)

But Idolatry can also be the giving of honor or devotion to any creature--which belongs to God alone. It is the supposed worship of Jehovah by visible symbols. It is the way of expressing human will over God's will. It is the deification of the natural forces around us. It is the exalting of the created things over the Creator. It is to kneel or prostrate oneself before an idol or to stretch out one's hands to them in adoration.

The New Testament goes even further in direct statements or inferred statements about what is idolatry. The Apostle Paul states that Covetousness is Idolatry! (Col. 3:5). The very fact that we are commanded to *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"* (Matt. 6:33) would seem to indicate that anything that is put before God becomes an Idol.(Ezek. 14:7). The worship of Idols is identified with worshipping "Demons!" (1 Cor. 10:19-20). Idolatry, in a real sense, is the "remaking of God" in an inferior "image." Not only is the

worship of idols very inferior to the true God, but it is also a degrading of God! (Ps. 115:1-8). This passage shows the extreme foolishness of Idolatry!

Warnings About Idolatry

The Gentile world was wholly given over to Idolatry. God chose the Nation of Israel to be a special people unto Him to help them turn from Idolatry; but, to also help the Gentile world to see and understand the true and living God. God's efforts were continual in teaching and warning the Israelites about turning to Idolatry. The following can help to illustrate how hard God worked at trying to keep them from Idolatry.

Leviticus 19:4 _____

Ps. 106:6 _____

Isaiah 45:16 _____

Ezek. 14:6 _____

Ezek. 20:7 _____

Ezek. 20:31 _____

Ezek. 23:49 _____

The New Covenant continues this warning to Christians not to get caught up in Idolatry:

Rom. 22 _____

1 Cor. 5:10 _____

1 Cor. 10:14 _____

1 John 5:1 _____

Rev. 21:8 _____

Idols have generally been connected with the worship of "spirits" that supposedly controlled the forces of Nature. But it has also been involved with miraculous powers given to idols to cure diseases, etc. The "Sign of the Cross" and the "Intercession of 'saints,' special "medallions," etc, are examples with which "Christians" have been involved. All are in reality trying to usurp the place of the Creator. "gods" are the inventions of men, not God! Men worship in vain the idols made with man's hands and are cursed by God.

Concluding Thoughts

God is a jealous God (Exo. 20:3-5; Deut. 5:7-9). Idolatry is identified as "spiritual adultery!" (Exo. 32:25; Num. 25:1-9). Every true prophet of God, from Moses to Malachi, preached with great earnestness and power for the people to avoid or turn from Idolatry. Unfortunately, both Israel and Judah went into captivity because of Idolatry (2 Kings 22:17). Judah's captivity helped to wean them from Idolatry.

God alone is God—all other so-called "deities" are non-entities (Lev. 19:4; Isa. 2:8; 19:1-3; 31:7; 44:9-20).

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ 1. The human mind throughout the existence of man has craved to worship what they could see.
- ___ 2. Idolatry has in the past made appeal to the mysterious.
- ___ 3. Idolatry is more than just bowing before an carved image.
- ___ 4. Anything that is put before God becomes Idolatry.
- ___ 5. Demons have no connection with Idolatry.
- ___ 6. To bow before an idol is only giving recognition to the true God of Heaven.
- ___ 7. Some idols, medallions, and special objects do exert miraculous power.
- ___ 8. In reality, an idol is "nothing," therefore it is alright to bow down before them.
- ___ 9. The Jews were not idol worshippers when they were called out of Egypt by God.
- ___ 10. Idols are not gods, they only remind us about God.

Lesson Four

"You shall not take the name of The Lord your God in Vain..."

"God said to Moses, 'I AM WHO I AM'; and He said, 'Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, I AM has sent me to you.'" (Exo. 3:14).

It is obvious that the "gods" of humans all have names given to them by those who revere and worship them. The names are not only important to the people, but those names are to be treated with reverence and respect because they are "holy" and "sacred."

It should be no surprise that one of the 10 Commandments stresses the importance of the name of the true God of Heaven. This concept is stressed continually throughout both the Old and New Testaments. And, in the midst of giving the Law of God through Moses to the Israelites, God stressed: *"be on your guard; and do not mention the name of other gods, nor let them be heard from your mouth."* (Exo. 23:13).

Names are obviously important to all of us. It is our means of identifying one another. We all have a name. How would you feel if you were never given a name by your parents? If names are important to us, then we can expect God's name to be of much greater importance. When Moses was being sent to the Israelites in Egypt, he was told to tell them that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had sent him to deliver them. This is when God also told Moses to tell the people that "I AM" has sent him. This name carries with it the concept of "the ever existing One!" (Exo. 3:13-15). This seems to have been the first time that this name had been used by God with mankind (Exo. 6:3). Our translators have used a means to indicate when this special name is used. When "Lord" is written this way, it is the general word for God. When "LORD" is written this way, it refers to the special name of God—usually understood as 'JEHOVAH.'" A possible reason is given for using this name in Ps. 83:18—*"That they may know that You, whose name alone is the LORD, are the Most High over all the earth."* The expression, the "Most High" is also used in the New Testament in reference to God, the Father (Mark 5:7; Lk. 8:28). Several other expressions are used to identify the true God of Heaven, such as: "Holy One" (Isa. 57:15; "LORD of hosts (Isa. 54:5); "Wonderful" (Isa. 9:6), etc.

The importance of God's Name is indicated by the warnings in regards to His Name:

Exo. 20:7—Not to take it in vain!

Lev. 18:21—Not to profane his name!

Lev. 19:12—Not to swear by His Name falsely!

Deut. 10:20—To swear by His Name only.

Deut. 28:58—To fear His glorious name.

Lev. 24:16—To be put to death by stoning if someone blasphemed His Name.

How to Show Respect for God's Name

Ps. 8:1--Regard His Name as Excellent.

Exo. 34:5—Proclaim His Name.

1 Chron. 16:10, 29—Give glory in His Name.

1 Chron. 16:35-- Give thanks in His Holy Name.

1 Chron. 17:24—His Name is to be magnified forever.

1 Chron. 29:13—Praise to be given to His glorious Name.

Lk. 11:2—Regard His Name as Hallowed.

During the period of the Kings of Israel, as Solomon built the Temple, it was said that this House (Temple) was to be built for the Name of God to be made known among all peoples and that they would come to fear Him (2 Chron. 6:33).

Under the New Testament, God the Father is praised through His Son and His willingness to be obedient unto death—even the death of the cross. His Son was given a Name—"Jesus". (Matt. 1:21). He was also referred to as "Emanuel." Isa. 9:6 foretold that the coming Messiah's name would be: "Wonderful," "Counselor," "Mighty God," "Eternal Father," and "Prince of Peace." We are told that we can have "life in His Name." (John 20:31; Acts 4:12). He has been highly exalted and given a name which is above every name—that at His Name every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father (Phil. 2:9-11). Those who believe in His Name have the promise of eternal life (1 Jn. 5:13).

Concluding Thoughts

Both the Old and New Testaments exalt God and His Name, and repeatedly warn about not showing proper respect and reverence for such. The person that will not give due respect to the Name of God will not go unpunished! (Deut.28:58-61).

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ 1. Names given to idol gods have no real significance in reality.
- ___ 2. Israel was warned by Moses to not even mention the names of idol gods.
- ___ 3. The expression, "I AM THAT I AM," is said to be the special Name of God.
- ___ 4. The Name "Jehovah" is identified with this expression of "I AM THAT I AM."
- ___ 5. The expressions, "MOST HIGH," "HOLY ONE," and "LORD OF HOSTS" all are used to identified the true God of Heaven.
- ___ 6. There is no difference in taking God's Name in vain and profaning it.
- ___ 7. It was okay for Israelites to swear by the Name of God.
- ___ 8. The best way to show respect for the Name of God is not to use it in our conversations.
- ___ 9. The Temple was allowed to be built by Solomon so that the whole world to come to know the Hallowed Name of God.
- ___ 10. A new expression is used in the New Testament to specifically identify the true God of Heaven. It is "Father."

Lesson Five

"Remember the Sabbath Day To Keep it Holy"

"Let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths, which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ." (Col. 2:16)

Moses, by inspiration of God, was guided to write an early, but brief, history of mankind up to the beginning of the Jewish Nation. In this brief history, he tells of the creation that took place in "6 days" and that God rested on the 7th day from his work. Moses stated that God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it because He had rested from all His work (Gen. 2:2-3). However, there is no mention of it being observed as a holy day by men up until the Israelites were brought out of bondage and were in the Wilderness area working their way to Mt. Sinai where they would be given God's Law to the Nation of Israel. God's instruction to Moses for the people was to gather enough Manna for each day only. Then, He said to Moses, I will test the people to see if they will be obedient. He told Moses to tell the people that on the 6th day they were to gather twice as much so they would not have to gather Manna on the 7th day. The people were to rest on the Sabbath. No Manna would be provided for them by God (Exo. 16:1-36). A short time later, God gave them the 10 Commandments in which was the command to remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy (Exo. 20:8-11).

Regulations Concerning the Sabbath

As far as we know, the keeping of the Sabbath as a Day of Rest was instituted by God only for the Jewish Nation (Lev. 23:3; Exo. 31:13; Deut. 5:1-5; Ezek. 20:9-12). There is no indication otherwise of which I am aware. Sabbath keeping was never given to the Gentile world. The Jews were to observe it, treat it with reverence as a holy day (set aside, sanctified) (Exo. 20:8; Lev. 26:2; Deut. 5:12). There was to be:

- a) No burden bearing or work on the day (Jer. 17:27; Num. 15:32)
- b) No buying or selling (Neh. 10:31)
- c) No fire kindled (Exo. 35:3).
- d) Special sacrifices to be offered (Num. 28:10).
- e) Show bread to be prepared on Sabbath (1 Chron. 9:32).
- f) Gates of the City to be closed (Neh. 13:19).
- g) However, acts of mercy were allowed (Matt. 12:10-12; Mk. 3:2; Lk. 13:15-16).
- h) Severe punishment to those who break it (Neh. 13:18; Jn. 7:22-23; Exo. 314; Num. 15:32-36).
- i) There were exceptions (Lk. 13:15-15; Jn. 7:22).

Jesus observed the Sabbath Day because He was under the Covenant with the Jewish people. He never disobeyed His heavenly Father—He did not sin! (2 Cor. 5:21). He also made it clear that the Sabbath was made for man's benefit—it was not meant to be a burden on man (Mk. 2:27).

The Sabbath is no longer binding on anyone!

The Sabbath keeping was still in force during the time of the "Gospels." Jesus lived and died under the Ten Commandments (and the Sabbath keeping). However, when the Old Covenant was taken away and a New Covenant was given—the Sabbath was no longer a part of the New Covenant.

1. God promised to give a New Covenant to Israel that would be different from the Old Covenant some 600 years before Christ came (Jer. 31:31-34).
2. The Hebrew writer affirms this had been done (Heb. 8:6-13).
3. The Old Covenant became obsolete when the New Covenant was given (Heb. 8:13).
4. It was necessary for God to take away the Old Covenant (first) in order to establish the New Covenant (second) (Heb. 10:9).
5. Jesus not only kept the Sabbath Himself but He commanded others to keep it (Lk. 18:18-21).

Nowhere in the New Testament Scriptures can we find where God commands us to keep the Sabbath Day holy—but rather the very opposite (Col. 2:14-17). What mention that is made is of the Jews who were still keeping the Sabbath because they had not come under the New Covenant (Acts 16:11-15)

A New Day is Given!

A new Day has been given to the Christian—it is called "**the Lord's Day.**" (Rev. 1:10-11). It is also referred to as the "**first day of the week.**" (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). The Sabbath was recognized as the 7th day of the week; so, the first day after the Sabbath would be the Day that Christians were to meet and worship together (as a special Day). Nowhere is this Day referred to as a "day of rest!" Neither is it referred to as "the Christian's Sabbath." These last two concepts have been started by misinformed or misguided men. Historical records of the early Christians (outside of the New Testament) show that this Day was the Day that God's people were to meet together for worship (Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Clement of Rome, Tertullian, etc.).

The significance of this new Day is seen in its connection with the resurrection of Christ. Jesus was raised on the first day of the week (Matt. 28:1-6; Mk. 16:10-6; Lk. 24:1-6; Jn. 20:1-9). Jesus' death was a necessity for our redemption (2 Cor. 5:17-21; Rom. 5:6-10). But if there had been no resurrection, His death would have been in vain! (1 Cor. 15:12-17). But God has designed that His new people meet and observed Jesus' death each week, but with the understanding that He has been also raised up—that gives us hope.

Concluding Thoughts

There is only one Command out of the Ten that has not been carried over into the New Covenant—Sabbath keeping! All the others are specifically repeated and placed in the New Covenant Scriptures.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ 1. The Sabbath was to be kept by all mankind from the beginning of time.
- ___ 2. The Hebrew word for "Sabbath" means to decrease, stop, no activity.
- ___ 3. The first mention that is made of the observing of the Sabbath was in the wilderness wanderings (in connection with Manna).
- ___ 4. The Jews were allowed to buy things on the Sabbath, but not to sell things.
- ___ 5. Special sacrifices were to be offered on the Sabbath that was not considered as breaking the Sabbath.
- ___ 6. The first mention made of punishment for those who broke the Sabbath was of a person who picked up sticks on the Sabbath.
- ___ 7. Jesus was accused of breaking the Sabbath on more than one occasion, but He did not break it.
- ___ 8. The Law of the Sabbath was taken away by Jesus when He died on the cross.
- ___ 9. Nowhere in the New Testament Scriptures can we find where the Sabbath was to be observed by Christians.
- ___ 10. Christians have been given a new Day to worship on that ties in with his death on the cross.

Lesson Six

"Honor your Father and your Mother"

"Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise: 'that it might be well with you and you may live long on the earth.'" (Eph. 6:2-3)

One of the great joys of parenthood is to have children who "honor, respect, or reverence" them. There is probably no greater compliment to parents than to have their children to show honor and respect.

We now begin with the commands that deal primarily with man's relationship to his fellow-man. The first four commands dealt with our relationship with God—His existence, His worship, His Name, and His Day. Some writers call this 5th command a "representative command." It points out the parallel between God's relationships with humans as compared to parents' relationship to their children. Man needs to be right with God so it will be easier to be right with his fellow-man. It is interesting to notice that Jesus gave the two great commands—Love God—Love Neighbor (Matt. 22:37-40). If children will not be respectful to their parents, they will be less likely to be respectful of God. So, it is possible that the 5th command is the "phase over" or the "connecting link" between the first four commands and the last five commands.

The Importance of the Family

To honor one's parents is something that is universally recognized by all nations of people. It would seem to be "instinctively" understood! In the two major listing of sins found in the New Testament—both condemn those who are **"disobedient to parents."** (Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2). Some translators use the expression **"without natural affection."** So, it would seem that loving subjection and respect for parents are basic to the very existence of the family (as God has designed it). Children are to give honor to them because they are their parents—not because they are "perfect" parents! It is a special command for children. They are to be taught such; it should be done with diligence; it should be done constantly; and it should be done seriously (Deut. 6:4-9). And a strong curse is pronounced upon those who do not do such (Rom. 1:30; 2 Tim. 3:2).

This command is the first and only one of the ten that has a promise connected with it—**"that your days may be prolonged and that it may be well with you on the land which the Lord Your God gives you."** This again seems to be connected with the first four commands that make possible our relationship with God. Be obedient to God and you will be blessed! Be obedient to your parents and you will be blessed with longer lives and things can go well with you.

Jesus took advantage of a situation that helped to drive home the importance of the family. It is found in Matt. 15:1-9. Some of the religious leaders had taken this command of

honoring parents and changed it around so that they would not have to give honor to their them. He quotes the Old Testament passages that states such and shows how they had made void God's command by their tradition that they had set up. He even went further to point out:

1. That they were hypocrites;
2. How they make a pretence of honoring God, but their hearts were really far from Him;
3. And by such they had made their worship vain.

Honoring parents is evidently very serious business with God! Therefore, it ought to be very serious with us as well.

Questions to challenge us

1. What makes this command so important? _____
2. In what sense will our days be long on the earth? _____
3. What if you have ungodly parents? _____
4. What if you have abusive parents? _____

How can I show honor to my Parents?

The following thoughts are meant to encourage discussion and further enlightenment about the "how" of showing Honor to Parents.

1. Obey parents in all things. (Col. 3:20; Tit. 1:6)
2. Listen to their words with respect. (Prov. 23:20)
3. Do all we can for them. (1 Tim. 5:7)
4. Anticipate their needs and wishes. (Prov. 23:20)
5. Strive to spare them shame, embarrassment, or problems. (Prov. 19:26; 17:25).
6. Be willing to be corrected by them. (Prov. 29:17)
7. Strive to make them proud of you. (Prov. 15:20)
8. Be willing to accept discipline from them. (Prov. 15:10-12)
9. Even if you have bad parents—show that you recognize the obligation of this relationship.
10. Learn to appreciate their sacrifices and acts of love for you.
11. Speak to them and about them respectfully.

We also need to see the value of honoring our parents:

1. We gain from their instruction. (Prov. 4:1)
2. We will have a place of refuge. (Prov. 13:22; 14:26).
3. We will be blessed. (Prov. 20:7)
4. We will be open to be taught the Word of the Lord. (Isa. 54:13)
5. Great will be our peace. (Isa. 54:13).

Now, let's look at some wrong actions and the outcome:

1. We can be nourished and brought up by them, and then rebel! (Isa. 1:2-3)
2. We can become children of evil deeds. (Isa. 1:8).
3. Woe is pronounced upon rebellious children. (Isa. 30:1)
4. Disrespect can bring weeping for us. (Jer. 31:15)
5. We will be tempted to rise up against them. (Matt. 10:21)
6. The wrath of God can come upon us. (Eph. 5:6).

Concluding Thoughts

These few thoughts in this lesson should be sufficient to help us see the extreme importance of the family and keeping a right relationship in that family. Blessings in abundance can come; or, the reverse—curses! We make the choice by our attitude and actions.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ 1. Parents should feel complimented when their children show them respect.
- ___ 2. The fifth command is called by some as the "representative command."
- ___ 3. Being disobedient to parents or not having natural affection for them is sin.
- ___ 4. To honor parents is the first command with a promise.
- ___ 5. Jesus called religious people "hypocrites" because they did not honor their parents.
- ___ 6. Respect for parents is shown by one's willingness to be disciplined by them.
- ___ 7. Woe is pronounced upon rebellious children.
- ___ 8. Ungodly or abusive parents must be respected.
- ___ 9. Respectful children are promised "long life."
- ___ 10. Blessings and curses can come to disrespectful children.

Lesson Seven

"You shall not Murder!"

"Whoever sheds man's blood, by man his blood shall be shed, for in the image of God He made man." (Gen. 9:6)

The old King James Version reads: **"Thou shalt not kill!"** In other words, "You must not take another person's life!" A question needs to be asked that will help to clarify this term—*"Do you believe that all killing is wrong?"* If your answer is yes, then you may have a problem with this study. While it is obvious that the general statement in Gen. 9:6 seems to indicate that all killing is wrong; yet, what do you do about the later part of the above statement that says: **"By man his blood shall be shed?"** If it is wrong to take a life (period), then how can the shed blood of the person killed be avenged? If a person reads very much of the Old Testament, it becomes crystal clear that all killing is not wrong—for God Himself order His people to kill men, women, and children at times! (1 Sam. 15:1-3).

From my study of the Hebrew and Greek terms that have to do with taking a person's life, there seems to be no distinctions made between taking a life purposefully and taking it justly. This distinction has to be made from the context or some way of describing the kind of actions or attitudes that are involved. This can be illustrated by the following:

Numbers 35:22-29

1. A person can accidentally be killed by pushing him or throwing something, but with no malice or enmity, no lying in wait, nor seeking his injury. This is not considered something worthy of death.
2. However, if this person leaves the city of refuge and the blood avenger finds him, he can slay him and he is not be guilty of blood.

Numbers 35:30-35

1. A person who intentionally kills another is to be put to death.
2. However, there must be at least two witnesses before this is done.

In our English language, various terms are used to try to make a distinction between what is called "unpremeditated killing" and "cold-blooded murder." (**Assassinate, execute, slaughter, massacre, etc**). The two terms that we use possibly the most are **"to kill"** or **"to murder."** The term "murder" is often used in the sense of intentional, maliciously, or hatefully taking another person's life. This may be the reason our translators used this term in their later versions.

Evaluate the distinctions in the following passages:

Exodus 21:12-17 _____

Deut. 19:15-21 _____

"The Jewish Theocracy"

The Laws of God given to the Israelite nation through Moses was not only to serve as religious and spiritual instructions, but they were to also serve as civil Laws of the Nation. Christianity (under the New Covenant) is different. God's instructions to us are primarily religious and spiritual in nature. However, General statements are made that indicate that we are to be governed in a civil sense by the Laws of the Nation in which we live (Rom. 13:1-7, etc.). If this distinction is not recognized, we tend to warp our understanding of some of the teachings in the New Testament—we go to an extreme as some religious people have done. We believe that the basic principles given in the Old Testament are also applicable to us in the New Testament regarding the taking of human life. Notice as follows:

1. The taking of human life is generally wrong. (1 Tim. 1:9; Rom. 1:29). But this must be clarified to have reference to those who take that life maliciously, hatefully, intentionally, or unjustifiably.
2. God has provided a way for such people to be punished—by the Nations ruling body or courts. (Rom. 13:1-7)
3. So, there is obviously justifiable taking of life and unjustifiable taking of life—as in the Old Testament.

Unjustifiable and Justifiable Killing

I do not believe that anyone would dispute that the unjustifiable taking of life of an innocent person is sinful and wrong—and such will be punished! Jesus made this clear in Matt. 5:21-22. However, He went to the source of the problem—man's anger, his hate, and his vindictiveness (1 Jn. 3:15). **"Murder"** could be defined as: *"The deliberate killing of a person and not in self-defense or with any other extenuating circumstances recognized by :Law."*

There is a danger that the Christian must watch for in regards to the taking of human life unjustifiably. It is called *"Taking vengeance!"* We are warned not to take vengeance! (Rom. 12:17-21). We are encouraged to leave it up to the Law Courts of the land to bring about **"justice!"** Please notice that at the end of the above admonition, the text goes immediately into pointing out that Christians are to be subject to governing authorities. In other words, this is their job—to arrest, try, and punish the wrong doer. If we are a part of the governing authorities, we need to be sure that we are acting justly—according to the Laws of the land.

Concluding Thoughts

Murderers will have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death (Rev. 21:8). To be a murderer is to be identified with the devil (Jn. 8:44). Cain is identified as a "murderer" (1 Jn. 3:12). The reason given for his murdering his brother was—**"his works were evil and his brother's righteous."** God states that we are not to murder—not to take an innocent life unjustifiably! Such persons have the curse of God pronounced upon their soul!

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ 1. The words "kill" and "murder" have the same connotation or meaning.
- ___ 2. I believe that all killing is wrong!
- ___ 3. God has made no provisions in the New Testament to punish the murderer.
- ___ 4. There is no difference in "accidental killing" and "intentional killing."
- ___ 5. The words "assassinate," "slaughter," and "massacre" denote intentional killing.
- ___ 6. Under the Old Testament, a person could not rightfully be put to death unless there were at least two or more witnesses.
- ___ 7. The Law of Moses contained both "religious or spiritual" instructions as well as "civil" instructions.
- ___ 8. The New Testament has no "civil" instructions for us to follow.
- ___ 9. There is no such distinction in the Scriptures concerning justifiable and unjustifiable killing.
- ___ 10. There is a justifiable differences between "taking vengeance" and "seeing that justice is done."

Lesson Eight

"You shall not Commit Adultery"

"And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery." (Matt. 19:9)

While the Law of God is designed for the good of mankind; it is also an expression of the very nature of God! The Law demands "holy" living or it challenges man to be like God! The Ten Commandments are God's basis for man to live a holy life.

The first four commands are dealing with man's relationship to God. The last six are dealing with man's relationship to one another. And yet....how we treat these commands will determine our relationship to God.

1. The 5th command (honor parents) will help to keep the family operating correctly.
2. The 6th command (no murder) shows the sanctity of life.
3. The 7th command (no adultery) shows the sanctity of marriage and the home.

What is Adultery?

There are two terms that are closely tied together—Fornication and Adultery. People tend to use these terms as though they were the same. But on the whole, they are separate concepts.

Fornication—Translated in recent versions as sexual immorality. This term would include all kinds of indecent sexual activity among humans or animals. This is a generic term. ***"Marriage is honorable among all, and the bed undefiled; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge."*** (Heb. 13:4).

Adultery—This is a more specific term and is clearly defined by Jesus in Matt. 19:9. ***"Whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced commits adultery."***

This forbiddance of Adultery is meant to protect the family or the sanctity of the Home. When a person breaks their marriage vows, it is like committing murder of the family (home). The family is the ultimate social unit. Adultery destroys the home as God designed it. The purity of the home is gone and it becomes a center of corruption of God's plan for man.

Spiritual Adultery (as used in the Old Testament) is where God's people (who are married to Him) put Him away and become married to Idols. This was a constant problem with Israel.

Jer. 3:6-10

Ezek. 23:36-39

The New Testament is also strong in its condemnation of Adultery (physical and spiritual).

1 Cor. 6:9-10

Jas. 4:4

What Causes Adultery?

Divorce of a faithful mate and remarriage is caused by several factors. The following thoughts are given to illustrate why such occurs:

1. **A low view of womanhood.** She was given by God to compliment man—to complete him. God never intended for her to be used, abused, and discarded. (1 Pet. 3:7). If the view of the woman is held high, it will be ennobling. But if held low, it becomes degrading. (Eph. 5:25, 28).
2. **A low view of manhood.** The role of the man places him in a leadership position. He can either fulfill his role well or degrade it. The woman can help the man's view of himself that will be elevating to him or the opposite. (Eph. 5:23-24, 33).
3. **Disillusioned.** Marriage is not what they thought it would be. Discouragement with the marriage partner. They may have married too quickly without fully evaluating their compatibility. The real problem may be that they are not working at the job of making their marriage work.
4. **Not taking their vows seriously.** To take our marriage vows lightly is asking for problems in our marital relationship. Marriage does not automatically keep things great.....it has to be worked at by both parties. This is the reason why God's admonitions must be taken seriously.
5. **Ignoring the God who made us.** If one does not take their vows seriously, then it is obvious that they are not taking God's Will seriously. So they wind up ignoring what God says to do what they want to. (Matt. 7:21; Heb. 5:8-9).

The only justified reason for divorce of a mate is because of unfaithfulness. And even this needs to be worked at to overcome the distrust that has been created (if at all possible). God does not want a divorce, but he will allow it where the two cannot work out their problem.

Questions that Challenge!

1. **Why does God hate Divorce? (Mal. 2:16)**
2. **Does one commit adultery or fornication by having sex with a married person?**
3. **Why is God so strict on Marriage, Divorce, and Remarriage?**
4. **Can a person be forgiven of fornication? If so, how?**
5. **Can a person be forgiven of adultery? If so, how?**

Concluding Thoughts

It should be obvious to the believer that God wants marriage to be entered into with great seriousness. He wants it to be a blessing and not a curse for mankind. He has given not only the basic teachings on such, but He has given much teaching on how to get along with our fellow human beings. There is no justifiable reason why marriage should not be a blessing to all in the family if we will follow His instructions.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ 1. God's Law is basically a reflection of Himself.
- ___ 2. An adulterous marriage undermines the sanctity of the home and family.
- ___ 3. Adultery and Fornication can be used inter-changeable.
- ___ 4. Adultery is like committing murder of the family.
- ___ 5. Israel and Judah both committed "spiritual" adultery.
- ___ 6. Adulterers cannot inherit the kingdom of God.
- ___ 7. A low view towards women or men can lead to an adulterous relationship.
- ___ 8. Adultery is committed by people who do not respect God's universal Law on marriage.
- ___ 9. There is only one justifiable reason for divorce.
- ___ 10. Divorce, in all cases, is a sign of failure on the part of both.

Lesson Nine

"You Shall not Steal"

"Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need." (Eph. 4:28).

The 6th Command emphasized the sanctity of Life and the 7th Command emphasized the sanctity of the Family; and the 8th Command emphasizes the sanctity of Property or Possessions. What a man has is his own because he has made it his own. No man has a right to take it from him—this is his God-given right! Taking another man's property against his will is not only condemned by God, but in reality by all! Even the thief does not want what he has to be stolen!

Even though there are passages that indicate that ALL belongs to God (Ps. 50:10-11); yet, what I possess is mine—not someone else's. The concept of stewardship is stressed in the New Testament (1 Cor. 4:2); and yet, what we possess is to be used by me wisely because I will give an accounting. It is not someone else's—rather, it is mine to use and should not be taken from me!

What is Stealing?

"Any act by which we fraudulently obtain the property of another" is one persons' way of defining stealing. "Taking what belongs to another without their consent" is another' view of stealing. All that we possess is ours—but with the understanding that we will give an accounting of how we use what is ours. In the same way, those who steal what I possess will give an accounting of what he has taken wrongfully.

Various Ways of Stealing

There are many ways that a person can steal from another person. The following will give a listing that will help to illustrate:

1. To take advantage of the ignorance of others to get gain.
2. Borrowing, but with no intent to repay or to return.
3. Unpaid bills when due (defraud).
4. Depreciating the value of other's property in order to get it cheaper.
5. To conceal the defects of an object to sale.
6. Misrepresentation of the quality of an object to sale.
7. False weights and measures.
8. Neglect to do work or to do it in a slovenly manner....to fail to give a day's work for a day's pay.
9. Careless use of another's property that results in damage.
10. Not to pay full wages promised to employee.
11. Require overtime work with no pay.
12. Deprive the worker of rest periods that are proper.

- 13. False return of taxes.
- 14. Incurring debt that one cannot pay.

Everyone steals! Do you agree? The exception to this statement would be those people who possess a spirit of honesty and who love justice, equity, and fairness. Also, it will be those who **"Do unto others what they would want done to them."** Most people do not steal directly, but most do steal indirectly. God's people need to be honest, beyond reproach, blameless, and bend over backwards to do what is right in God's eyes.

Stealing from God

It is bad enough to steal from our fellowman; but to steal from God what is rightfully His is a terrible thing. The Prophet Malachi accuses Judah of doing just that—robbing God! Read the following verses and see how this was done:

Malachi 1:6-8

Malachi 3:8-10

They were stealing from God because they were not giving what God required of them. Do we also steal from God—in the service due Him?
---in our devotion to Him?
---in our obedience to Him?
---in what we should be giving to Him?

Compensation

Under the Law of Moses a person who steals or destroys another person's property is to not only return or replace what was stolen, but in some instances they were to restore it 2, 3, or 4-fold.

Exodus 22:1-4

Exodus 22:9

Prov. 6:30

This was God's way of emphasizing strict honesty. In some instances, the penalty for "stealing a man" (Kidnapping) was death.

Exo. 21:16

Deut. 24:7

Achan is an example of stealing and the punishment inflicted not only on him, but his whole family and possessions (Joshua 7:16-26).

Concluding Thoughts

Strict honesty is not a "common virtue" of mankind as might be supposed. This is clearly seen when strict examinations are done in the lives of people. How far would I bear up under a strict examination? It is interesting to note what the "wise man" says in Prov. 30:7-9 about the dangers of being rich or poor.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ 1. I believe in the sanctity of property and show it by how I strive to be honest in all of my dealings with others.
- ___ 2. If it is true that all belongs to God; then, to steal something is to steal from God.
- ___ 3. Stewards are required to give an accounting of how they use the possessions that have been entrusted to them.
- ___ 4. To borrow something and not return it is not considered stealing.
- ___ 5. Careless use of another's property that causes damage is not the same as stealing.
- ___ 6. Everyone steals.
- ___ 7. To rob God is to steal what is His.
- ___ 8. The New Testament does not require that we return what we have stolen.
- ___ 9. Achan is an example of one who stole from God and paid the full price.
- ___ 10. I could pray the same prayer of the wise man—not to be rich or poor.

Lesson Ten

"You Shall not Bear False Witness"

"Therefore, putting away lying, 'Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,' for we are members of one another." (Eph. 4:25; Zech. 8:16)

The 8th Command guards the property of another which is outside of himself. But, the 9th Command is designed to guard the property inside of a person—his character. To steal possessions is not a small matter, but to steal a man's good name or defame his character is terrible. When we impute unworthy motives to others or state or imply that they are less honorable than we are—is to bear false witness! Such people do not care about truth, but their desire is to do harm or hurt to another—to blacken his or her character. In the main, we do such to people we do not know all that well as compared to those we do know. However, when we are in the habit of speak wrongfully of strangers, it may not be long before we do so to those we know.

One of the grave dangers in any society is when our judicial system punishes the wrong person because of false testimony. Our whole judicial system is at stake in this matter. That is the reason for taking oaths to tell the truth *"so help me God."* We even request that people put their hands on the Bible to try to impress upon them the importance of being a true witness rather than a false one. Truth and Trust are necessary to an orderly society; and, it is also very important for the home and the church. How can you trust someone who lies to you? How can you depend or put confidence in a person who does not respect truth? Christians, of all people, need to be people of truth.

Strong Emphasis upon Truth

The Scriptures have a strong emphasis upon truth, both in the Old Testament and the New Testament.

Josh. 24:14—Serve God in sincerity and truth.
Ps. 51:6—We should desire truth in the inward parts.
Prov. 23:23—We need to buy the truth and sell it not.
Jer. 9:5—We should speak the truth.

Jn. 4:24—We are to worship in spirit and in truth.
Jn. 18:37—We are to bear witness to the truth.
Rom. 2:8—We should obey truth.
1 Cor. 13:6—We should rejoice in truth.
2 Thess. 2:10—We should love the truth.

We must put away Lying (false witness)

To lie is to speak falsely, with the intent to deceive or to convey a false impression. Guess who the *"father of liars"* is—that's right—you guessed it—**SATAN!** (Jn. 8:44). God hates a

lying tongue (Prov. 6:16-17). And He clearly states that all liars will have their part in the lack of fire (Rev. 21:8).

Why do people bear False Witness?

People have reasons for what they do....men act out of motivation! However, they may not be able to state their reason for lying when faced with such, but deep down they do know. The following ideas are presented with the hope that it will help to broaden our understanding of what it means to lie.

1. To look good to other people (Acts 5:1-4).
2. Pride (Dan. 4:30-32).
3. Because of fear of harm or hurt (Matt. 26:73-74).
4. Because of habit (Tit. 1:12).
5. Because they do not love the truth and have pleasure in unrighteous things (2 Thess. 2:10-12).
6. Because they have itching ears (2 Tim. 4:1-4).
7. etc.

Lying can become an easy thing to do, and such can become an habitual thing. Lying can also be very harmful to the ones that we bear false testimony about. It can lead to physical harm or even death of the wrong person (1 Kgs. 21:7-10). It can eventually lead to our eternal condemnation (2 Thess. 2:11-12).

It is also important that we do not deceive ourselves about our lying and our efforts to justify our actions. But two of the most deceptive ways of lying are as follows:

1. To speak true words, but create a false impression by the tone of our words, or how it is said, or our body language.
2. To use silence when we should speak up. We sit in silence and do not say anything favorable. We use silence to confirm our untruth.

Concluding Thoughts

The character of another should be uppermost in our minds before we speak or act. We can injure a man's good name by thoughtless speech or cowardly silence. The Christian is not only concerned about speaking the truth, but doing so in love (Eph. 4:15). We should want to help people, not harm them. We should want truth, love truth, and obey truth; and, we should want others to have the same as us.

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ 1. The Ephesian letter (4:25) quotes the Old Testament passage in Zech. 8:16).
- ___ 2. The 9th Command is designed to guard the character of a person.
- ___ 3. When we impute unworthy motives to others, we become a false witness.
- ___ 4. People are encouraged to take oaths in our courts that they will tell only the truth.
- ___ 5. A person can speak true words but do so in such a way to mislead people.
- ___ 6. In Acts 5:1-5, two people lied to God so they would not have to give up some money.
- ___ 7. Lying and bearing false witness are the same thing.
- ___ 8. People lie to please people with itching ears.
- ___ 9. Lying can become a terrible habit in our lives.
- ___ 10. People can be condemned for believing a lie.

Lesson Eleven

"You shall not Covet"

"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry." (Col. 3:5)

It is interesting to notice how these 10 Commands blend together with one another. The 2nd Command forbids "idolatry" and the 10th Command forbids "covetousness" which is idolatry! While the 6th, 7th, 8th, and 9th Commands have just a simple statement; the 19th Command goes into detail to spell it out what it has reference to: **"You shall not covet your neighbor's house, wife, servants, animals, or anything that belongs to your neighbor!"** Why such an emphasis upon this Command? I believe that our study will help to show the "why" of such.

Mankind has a basic choice of two centers—**God or Self!** A baby grows up and has the center of attention—he or she thinks they are the "center of the universe." Their every need is taken care of. The job of parents is to help them get out of this "self-centeredness" and become a person that is centered upon the right thing—**God!** This isn't easy to do and it becomes obvious that a lot of parents fail either partially or greatly to change a child's image of themselves. When they fail, the child will become selfish, covetous, and wanting his way all the time. But.....to some degree—all of us struggle with self! We are restrained at times by penalties. And hopefully, we are restrained by our Love for God or our fellow-man.

Covetousness Defined

The following phrases are designed to help defined what is meant by this term:

1. *"A Craving after"*
2. *"To desire earnestly"*
3. *"To set the heart or mind on anything"*
4. *"To desire something that belongs to another"*
5. *"Selfish greed that leads one to want what someone else has"*

Greed can become a consuming desire that will cause us to strive to get things at others' expense. Col. 3:5 states that Covetousness is idolatry. It is bowing down and worshipping money or things or even people. It is putting these things before God. Covetousness in our hearts can lead to other sins:

1. False teaches will exploit the unsuspecting (2 Pet. 2:3).
2. It leads to loving money and all the evils this can cause (1 Tim. 3:3; 6:9-10).
3. Such are not promised long life (Prov. 28:16).
4. Will rob a person of his house and even his inheritance (Micah 2:2).
5. Such people cannot enter the kingdom of heaven (1 Cor. 6:10).

This term can be used in a good way as well as a bad way. In 1 Cor. 12:31, Christians are encouraged to "covet" or "earnestly desire" the best gifts. They should want these

"miraculous" gifts so that they can be useful in the spread of the Gospel and in the building up of the church. And, it should be pointed out that many of the commands and regulations found in the Bible are designed to counteract covetousness.

Examples of Covetous People

Joshua 7:16-26—Achan and his whole family and possessions were destroyed because of his covetousness.

1 Sam. 15:9-23—King Saul and those that were with him probably wanted the things they brought back for themselves, but when faced with their disobedience they stated that they brought them back to offer them as a sacrifice to God.

Matt. 26:14-16—Judas Iscariot betray Jesus for 30 pieces of silver.

Acts 5:1-5—Ananias & Sapphira were guilty of lying to God, but possibly also the sin of Covetousness. They lied to cover up the fact that they kept part of the money they had received from selling a possession.

Lk. 12:16-21—The Rich farmer showed his covetousness by keeping all of his gain for himself and was not rich towards God.

Lk. 16:14—The Pharisees were "lovers of money."

Covetousness can become so bad that the person is greedy "all day long!" (Prov. 21:26). The Apostle Peter describes False teachers as being: **"those who walk in the lust of uncleanness;" "presumptuous and self-willed;" "corrupt;" "eyes full of adultery;"** and they **"have a heart that is trained in covetous practices."** They are like Balaam who **"loved the wages of unrighteousness."** The Lord says that such people persecute the poor, plot their destruction, boast of their heart's desires and renounce the Lord (Ps. 10:2-4). See what the Lord says about these people:

- ◇ **Isa. 57:17** _____
- ◇ **Jer. 22:17** _____
- ◇ **Ezek. 33:31** _____

Challenging Questions

1. Have you ever heard of anyone confessing the sin of Covetousness?
2. Is it possible to be covetous and not know it?
3. What two things are tied together that shows covetousness (2 Tim. 3:2)?
4. How can I know if I am covetous?
5. Is there a difference between covetous and being frugal?

The Cure for Covetousness

The obvious cure of covetousness is to turn from the "**love of self**" and turn to "**love of God and others.**" The following Scriptures emphasize this:

Matt. 22:37-40 _____
Rom. 13:8-10 _____

Love has the power to **expell** selfishness. It can **purity** the heart, **guard** our thoughts, and **discipline** our desires. Love causes us to "**do unto others what we would have them do unto us.**" (Matt. 7:12).

Its cure is also found in the concept of contentment—to be content in whatever state that I am in.

Phil. 4:10-13 _____
1 Tim. 6:6-8 _____

Concluding Thoughts

Christians should avoid Covetousness, hate Covetousness, Beware of Covetousness, and do not let such be named among us (Eph. 5:3). We should incline our hearts to God's Word and not to covetousness (Ps. 119:36).

Questions for Discussion

True or False

- ___ 1. The 10th Command is again forbidding "idolatry."
- ___ 2. God or self are the two centers around which we function.
- ___ 3. A small child is both selfish and covetous.
- ___ 4. To desire something earnestly is covetousness.
- ___ 5. Greed and Covetousness are the same thing.
- ___ 6. A covetous person cannot enter the kingdom of Heaven.
- ___ 7. The Scriptures actually state that Judas was covetous.
- ___ 8. Balaam is an example of a covetous person.
- ___ 9. A person can literally not know that he is covetous.
- ___ 10. There is an easy cure for Covetousness.

Lesson Twelve

"Written on Tablets of Stone versus Written on Tablets of the Heart!"

"But if the ministry of death, written and engraved on stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the face of Moses because of the glory of his countenance, which glory was passing away, how will the ministry of the Spirit not be more glorious?" (2 Cor. 3:7-8).

To conclude our study on the Ten Commandments, it is important that we look at a passage of Scriptures (2 Cor. 3:1-18). A contrast is being drawn between two Covenants and the effect of each one on people. But the introduction in the first three verses are important to a proper understanding of the remainder of the chapter.

2 Corinthians 3:1-3

A common practice among men has been that of giving a letter of introduction or one of recommendation to other people. The Apostle certainly didn't need a letter of introduction or recommendation to them or from him. They knew him well. He had been in their midst teaching and preaching for some time—and many were converted to Christ through the message. So, their very existence as a Church is his letter of commendation to them or from him.

Paul did not need to write a letter with pen and ink. His preaching by the Spirit of God is what brought the church into existence. He did not need to chisel his message on tables of stone like the Ten Commandments were; but they became his letter by hearing the message of hope in Christ directed by the Spirit of God to their hearts.

2 Corinthians 3:4-6

It was important that Paul show that it was not his message, but the message of God that they heard and to which they responded. It was God who called him and made him a minister of the New Covenant. He had formerly been a minister of the Old Covenant; but, now he is preaching hope through Christ. The "letter" is the Old Covenant (the Ten Commandments). It actually could not give life, but only death. The reason—no one was able to live up to its demands! It brought condemnation, not eternal life (Gal. 3:10-11). But the "Spirit" (New Covenant) could give life because it offered forgiveness through Christ.

2 Corinthians 3:7-11

It was not God's purpose to "put down" the Old Covenant! He gave it for a purpose and it fulfilled its purpose well. It prepared the way for a New and Better Covenant based on better promises (Heb. 8:6-7). And He points out that the Old had its glory, but the New has

a greater glory. If the Old had glory, but it was to pass away (Jer. 31:31-34), how much more glory does the New have that will remain.

2 Corinthians 3:12-18

Because the Christian has hope in Christ, he is given great boldness. But the glory that was shown in Moses face was to fade away and be replaced by a greater glory. A veil was placed over Moses face because of the brightness of his face. But the Apostle added a thought—**"so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away."** The reason for this concept is shown by the next verse. That same veil is blinding those who hold to the Old Testament. But those who open their hearts to the preaching of the Gospel have the veil removed or taken away. And such people are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, and it is being done by the Spirit of the Lord (through His message).

Some Observations

The Jewish people (the leaders in particular) sought life by their works and fell under its condemnation (Rom. 10:1-4). The Law, in and of itself, cannot provide for man's forgiveness. Unless they turn to Christ, there is no hope. And this could be said of the whole world. Christ is man's only hope (John 14:6).

While there are similarities in both the Old and New Testaments; there are also many differences. The Old is spoken of as the shadow of things to come—that is, it was preparing the way for the New Testament to be given with its life-giving power. (Col. 2:17).

The Old Covenant dealt with a lot of sinful activities while the New Covenant goes directly to the heart of the problem—the heart of man. The New points out that the spirit of hate underlies the sin of murder (Matt. 5:21-22; 1 Jn. 3:15). The New also points out that the spirit of purity assures a right marriage relationship (Matt. 5:27-28). The Old Covenant actually paved the way for the New Covenant (Gal. 3:23-25). And the New makes it very clear that the spirit of "LOVE" fulfills the Law (Rom. 13:8-10).

Concluding Thoughts

There are strong indications that all men from Adam & Eve down to the present time are under what could be called the "Generic Law of God!" The following thoughts would seem to clearly indicate such:

1. What Law was Cain under?
2. What Law was the world under in Noah's day when God destroyed the world with a flood?
3. What Law was Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob under?
4. What Law was the Israelite people under for some 430 years before the Law of Moses was given.
5. We know that Moses gave the Old Covenant to the Nation of Israel.

6. We also know that the gentile world was condemned for their sins and they did not have either covenants (Rom. 1:18-32). And it points out that they knew that they were doing wrong, but did it anyway.
7. The Apostle Paul also pointed out about the Gentiles that they did not have the Law of Moses, but they did the things in the Law by "nature." Such showed that the Law was written in their hearts and their conscience also bore witness to this fact (Rom. 2:14-15).
8. The Scripture clearly states that where there is no Law there is no transgression. So, if the Gentiles had transgressed, they had to be under some kind of Law (Rom. 4:15). We choose to call it the "Generic Law of God."
9. In Rom. 3:19, **"All the world may become guilty before God"** because they are under Law in some sense. This is what makes us sinners and in need of the grace of God.

There is strong indication that God has from the beginning and still does today hold man accountable for his actions. The reason God can do this is because of the way we are made. We generally know right from wrong. The general Laws of God are obvious to all persons who will take the time to think and evaluate. Our hearts approve us when we do well. It condemns us when we do wrong. We believe that these are universal obligations for all time.

