

## Monday Week 16 **The Ten Commandments**

Q61 What were the first two commandments?

- A 1. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.  
2. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.

Bible Reading: (Ex. 20:1-6)

A dry oak log will take longer to burn than a dry pine log. That is because oak wood is more dense than pine wood. A piece of eucalyptus will burn really fast because it has oil stored in its wood. Most wood, if it's dry, will make a nice fire. Do you think a piece of wood can talk? That's silly, isn't it? Wood can't talk. But some people take a piece of wood and burn it in a fire, but take another piece off the same log and carve it into a god. They put it on a shelf and pray to it. But it doesn't answer. It's just a piece of wood.

There is only one God. He is real and He has spoken. He has told us not to have any other gods or to make any gods. He doesn't want us to worship a piece of wood, or a piece of rock, even if it is carved into a shape like a god. God is the only one we should worship.

### Thinking Deeper

The Greek gods were mythological personalities who had characteristics much like people. They could be petty, competitive, vindictive, selfish.

The Hindus have many gods of various descriptions. These are said to exemplify the various aspects of the one god. They believe that god lives in every person and whatever that person believes about god can be said to be a god. Hinduism thus has been described as the religion of 330 million gods. All together these manifestations show what god is. According to some views of Hinduism, ultimate reality is to achieve oneness with god, where individual personalities will be lost.

Animism is a general belief in the spirit world, where there are spirits behind realities. Some forms of Animism produce worship of the spirits of departed ancestors. Malignant spirits of the dead can take up residence in wild animals and stalk or kill former enemies.

Contrast these gods with the revelation of God in the Bible. There is little in common. God has declared that He is the only God. "Is there a God beside me? yea, *there is* no God; I know not *any*. They that make a graven image *are* all of them vanity" (Isa. 44:8b). It is an empty thing to follow any other god than the God of the Bible, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

Tuesday Week 16 **The Ten Commandments**

Q62 What are the third and fourth commandments?

- A 3. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.
- 4. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Bible Reading: (Ex. 20:7-11)

A little boy walked on the street with a college student. The student was saying some words that the little boy didn't understand. He had never heard his parents use those words. When the boy repeated the words, the college student laughed. The boy thought it was funny, too. He said the words again, louder. The college student laughed and said the words again, too. Just then the boy heard his mother call his name. She was not happy. She told him the words were bad words. She wanted him to remember not to say bad words. She put some soap in his mouth. It tasted horrible. "Don't say those words again!" she warned. That was the last time the boy ever said those words. He learned that bad words should not be repeated.

God told His people not to say anything that would be disrespectful to God. Don't misuse the name of God, or Jesus. Never say anything bad about the Holy Spirit. God is too holy to have His name used in a wrong way. And God's day is too holy to be used just for pleasure and work. God's name and God's day are to be kept holy.

Thinking Deeper

Why do Christians worship on Sunday, and not on Saturday, which was the traditional Jewish Sabbath? There is a scriptural reason, and there is the example set by the early church.

The Bible designates Sunday as "The Lord's Day." John wrote that he "was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day" (Rev. 1:10), the day of celebration of the Resurrection of Christ. When Paul the Apostle gave instructions for taking the offering, he said that it should be reserved to be collected on the first day of the week (1 Cor. 16:2). This time of meeting became so regular and so expected of the early Christians that Ignatius noted in 110 A.D. that believers in Jesus were "no longer observing the Sabbath, but fashioning their lives after the Lord's Day." Justin Martyr in the same century said "Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly." Among other early Christians who recognized the change to Sunday worship were Ignatius, Bardaisan, Cyprian, Eusebius and Clement.

Early church history reveals that the practice of the primitive Christians was the practice of Sunday worship. One day in seven is to be reserved for the worship of God and the fellowship of the believers. That is the New Testament and early church fulfillment of the commandment to keep the Sabbath holy.

Q63 What are commandments five, six and seven?

- A 5. Honor thy father and thy mother.
- 6. Thou shalt not kill.
- 7. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Bible Reading: (Ex. 20:12-14)

Billy and Joey were brothers. A neighbor boy named Sean invited them over to his house. They were going to play Legos. But when they got there, Sean turned on the TV. “Joey,” whispered Billy. “We’re not supposed to watch that. Mom doesn’t want us to watch things like that. Those people are doing bad things.”

“I don’t care,” said Joey. “I’m going to watch it.” Billy decided to go home. When he got up to leave, Joey grabbed him. “Don’t go. You’ll ruin everything if you go home. Just stay here.” When Billy tried to pull away, Joey pushed him down. Billy started to cry.

“What’s wrong with you guys?” asked Sean. Joey forgot that Sean was there. He suddenly realized he was acting mean.

“I think we better go home,” said Joey. He felt really bad in his heart. He had been selfish and disobedient and mean.

“Billy, I’m sorry for being mean. Please forgive me,” said Joey, as they walked home.

When the boys got home, Joey confessed to his mother what he had done. She told him he needed to ask God to forgive him, too, because he had broken God’s commandments. Joey knew she was right.

When we are mean, or selfish, or disobedient, we must confess that to God because we are breaking His commandments. “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 John 1:9).

Thinking Deeper

When a stone drops into water, it begins a ripple effect that continues long after the stone has sunk to the bottom. The same is true of sin. First there is the initial “splash” where the immediate surrounding feels the shock. Then the shock wave begins to move outward. Parents can be dishonored by the sins of their children, compounding the sin by also violating the fifth commandment. A father told his son, “I’m giving you something much more valuable than thousands of dollars. I’m giving you a good name. That name carries a reputation that has been built over many years. Keep it.” When someone sins, he dishonors the reputation of his parents. Vidkun Quisling’s name had no particular connotation in Norway until he collaborated with the Nazis. Now the name Quisling is on the same level as the name Benedict Arnold. Both Vidkun’s and Benedict’s parents’ names have been dishonored.

God’s commandments have been given to show us what the boundaries are to right living. Going outside of the boundaries brings a lot of trouble to a lot of people. God gave his commandments because He has our best interest at heart. “O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!” (Deut. 5:29)

Thursday Week 16 **The Ten Commandments**

Q64 What are the last three commandments?

A 8. Thou shalt not steal.

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

10. Thou shalt not covet.

Bible Reading: (Ex. 20:15-17)

“Don’t steal anything, no matter how small,” said the father. “Don’t even steal a paper clip. You’ll just have to take it back.” His little girl listened carefully. She knew that it wasn’t worth stealing. She was careful not to take things that were not hers. Stealing is taking things that do not belong to you. God told us not to steal. The father helped his little girl understand how important it is to keep God’s commandments.

Bearing false witness is saying things about someone else that are not true. God says we should never do that.

God also says that we should not desire to have what someone else has. That is coveting. If another person has something nice, don’t wish you had it. Be thankful for what you have and respect what belongs to others.

God’s laws help us get along with other people.

Thinking Deeper

A certain priest was looking back over the years he had heard people in the confessional. He recollected that the confessors bared their souls over breaking almost all of the commandments. He noted with some wonder that the exception was the tenth commandment. Seldom, if ever, had he heard someone confessing to breaking the commandment on coveting. Why do people find it so difficult to admit to coveting?

You can covet someone’s house without stealing it. You can covet someone’s wife without committing the act of adultery. You can covet someone’s position without actually tearing their character apart by falsehood. But covetousness can lead to all of those sins. That’s why it is wrong to covet. It is difficult to know when you are coveting. Covetousness is a sin of the heart. It resides inside of your thought life and can take hold of your motives. The first commandment establishes God’s position as authority. The tenth commandment is a check on the inner self to see if we’ve really given God the authority. Are we bringing our thoughts into the obedience of Christ? Are we letting Him direct our steps by his commandments? “Make me to go in the path of thy commandments; for therein do I delight” (Ps. 119:35).

## Friday Week 16    **The Ten Commandments**

Review the week's questions

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A little boy was banging a spoon against the leg of a table. His mother told him to stop. He kept banging the spoon. His mother made sure he heard what she said. "Young man, if you bang that spoon on the table leg one more time, I'm going to open the window and throw you out!" The little boy's eyes grew big. He took the spoon and very carefully drew back and hit the table leg. His eyes never left his mother. He wanted to see what she would do. What she did was to walk right over to him, pick him up, carry him to the window, open it, and with a little push, threw him out. The little boy landed in a rather soft snowdrift that the mother knew was outside of the window. That boy learned a lesson. Don't disobey mother, or you'll get just what she said you would get.

God gave the Ten Commandments to keep us from doing wrong, and to show us where we have done wrong. It is important to keep his commandments. Jesus said, "If you love me, keep my commandments." We show our love to God by keeping His commandments.

### Thinking Deeper

Among present day atheists are those who argue that they can be just as moral as people who believe in God. The morals of any society are based on what are called the *mores* (pronounced *morays*) of the people. Mores are those actions that the society as a whole have deemed proper. How do the atheists decide what is moral and what is immoral? One wrote that when the majority of a society decides something is moral, that becomes the societal standard. The controlling force to cause people to conform to the morality is the policeman. So if you violate the morality, worry about the policeman. Actually, that can work for a time, like in communist Russia, Nazi Germany, and in Caligula's Rome, all societies with hatred toward God and His Commandments, and with love of the police force.

The Christian's belief in God gives him an inner sense of righteousness, which is a much more powerful incentive to do right than the outward fear of a statist policeman. "Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love *is* the fulfilling of the law" (Rom. 13:10b).

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