

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

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Instructions: The format of these mini studies is similar to that of the Bible On-Line Study Course. Look up and *read in your Bible* the scripture references given in answer to the questions. Comments following the questions further explain the scriptures just read. That's all there is to it! (These studies are based on the King James Version of the Bible, unless otherwise stated.)

During His ministry, Jesus Christ taught obedience to God as He preached the good news about the coming government of God on earth. "Repent ye, and believe the gospel," was the essence of His message (Mark 1:15).

Over and over again the Bible emphasizes repentance from *sin*. And sin is defined in the Bible as the breaking of God's great spiritual law (1 John 3:4).

As we already know from our study of the Scriptures with past mini studies, repentance is the first step toward salvation. We must repent of (turn from) breaking God's law as one of the conditions to receiving His forgiveness of our sins.

"Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man," is the inspired admonition of Solomon to all mankind (Eccl 12:13). Let's review several vital facts about the Ten Commandments and see how they form the basis of true Christianity.

1). Are all 10 of God's commandments conveniently listed for us in the Bible? Ex 20:1-17; Deut 5:6-21. How may we know that there are 10? Ex 34:28; Deut 4:13; 10:4.

2). Did the patriarch Abraham – the father of the faithful (Rom 4:16) – think it was important to keep God's commandments? Gen 26:5. What was the prophet David's attitude toward obeying God's Law? Carefully read and ponder the entirety of Psalm 119, noticing especially verses 97-100, 105.

Both Abraham and David were commandment keepers. They had great respect for God's law. That is one vital reason why they will hold very responsible positions in the future government of God on earth.

3). Did Christ Himself obey the Ten Commandments? John 15:10. Did He teach others to obey them? Matt 19:17-19.

These verses in Matthew 19 clearly show that Jesus specifically referred to the Ten Commandments. He knew that God's 10-point law would bring peace, fulfillment and joy to any individual or nation that would choose to obey it.

4). Does the Bible show that the very Church Jesus built would be teaching obedience to, and literally endeavoring to keep, the Ten Commandments and other instructions of Christ? Rev 12:17; 14:12 (Chapter 12 of Revelation personifies God's Church as a woman.)

The Church of God upholds the commandments of God. God's Church echoes the words of David and follows God's law as the Christian standard to live by. [Just a question: should we include the above statement about the WCG? It is defunct and we do not want to point people to GCI which is where a search would lead them.]

5). Is the law of God *holy, just and good*? Rom 7:12. Does peace of mind come from keeping the Ten Commandments? Ps 119:165.

The person who keeps God's law has a clear conscience. He is at peace with God, with himself and with his neighbor. He has "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" (Phil 4:7).

The law was given to make man happy and to lead him into the peaceful, full, abundant life – and above all to lead him into *eternal life*. But because of disobedience to our Creator's holy, righteous law, the world is filled with strife, poverty, ignorance and suffering today!

6). How did Jesus enlarge upon the keeping of the Ten Commandments? Matt 5:21-22, 27-28. Did John understand this principle? I John 3:15. Did Paul understand the spiritual aspects of God's law? Rom 7:14.

Contrary to the belief of so many today, Jesus did not come to do away with the Ten Commandments. Rather, He came to teach mankind how to live by the *spiritual intent* of the law.

In Old Testament times God required only a physical, mechanical and visible obedience from the "church." In other words, obedience only in the *letter*. This was because the Old Testament Church of God (Acts 7:38) – the nation of Israel – was not given the opportunity to receive the Holy Spirit to help them obey the *spiritual intent* of the Ten Commandments, as well as the letter of the law.

But in New Testament times God has made His Holy Spirit available to those whom He calls. And He desires that His Spirit-begotten children follow Him in the *spirit* – the "fullness" – of His law.

Hatred against another human being is the *spirit* of murder. Sexual lust is the *spirit* of adultery. Christ showed how God's commandments apply to our innermost thoughts and attitudes as well. Let's notice how the Bible shows this seemingly impossible task can be accomplished, albeit still imperfectly because of our humanity.

7). How did Jesus Christ of Nazareth sum up the great Ten Commandment law of God? Matt 22:35-40. In what one word is the very nature and character of God summarized? 1 John 4:16.

As the essence of God's spiritual character is *love*, the Ten Commandments are expressions of the character of God. Jesus showed that the Ten Commandments are in reality a guide to teach

us how to *love*. The first four commandments show us how to love God, while the last six of the Ten Commandments show us how to love our neighbor – all fellow human beings.

8). If we possess and exercise God's Spirit, will the love of God that it imparts enable us to "fulfill" – to *obey* – God's law? Rom 5:5; 13:10.

The divine love of God imparted to converted Christians by the Holy Spirit is expressed within the bounds of God's law – the Ten Commandments. Love is not left to interpretation by the individual Christian. Rather, he is guided in expressing God's love by the provisions of the Ten Commandments. Therefore, the love of God is manifested first of all in adoration and worship of God and literal obedience to Him, and then in outgoing concern, compassion, kindness and service toward fellow human beings.

The love of God enables us to fulfill the *spirit* of the law. It was the "tool" that Jesus Christ used to fulfill – to obey – the law Himself. As the apostle Paul explained: "He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled the law. The commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not kill, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,' and any other commandment, are summed up in this sentence, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law" (Rom 13:8-10, Revised Standard Version).

9). Could there be any truth whatsoever in the widespread belief that having love nullifies the need to literally keep God's law? 1 John 5:2-3; John 14:15; 15:9-10; 2 John 5-6.

The apostle John placed a great deal of emphasis upon love. But *never* did he or any other inspired writer of Scripture say that love put away, superseded or destroyed the law. John who was a close friend, disciple and apostle of Jesus Christ, made it plain that one who truly has the love of God will be *obeying* the commandments of God!

10). Is it possible to earn one's salvation through obedience to God? Rom 6:23. And yet, can anyone enter God's Kingdom – the very Family of God – as a lawbreaker? Matt 7:21; 19:17-19.

You cannot earn your salvation by keeping either the Ten Commandments or any other law of God. Eternal life is clearly a *gift* from God!

No man or woman could earn immortality in 10,000 lifetimes of keeping the Ten Commandments! But neither can you enter into eternal life as a lawbreaker (1 John 3:4; Rom 6:23). Obedience to the Ten Commandments helps one to *grow* more like God who is love, until finally born into His spiritual Family at the resurrection. And no rebel will ever be permitted to enter that divine Kingdom!

Jesus Christ plainly and emphatically stated that as Christians we are to endeavor to keep the Ten Commandments with our whole beings and with His spiritual help through the Holy Spirit, trusting in Him to mercifully apply His sacrifice in our behalf when and where we fall short, and as we repent (1 John 1:7-9).

The time is coming soon when the whole world will understand and appreciate what an incredible *blessing* the law of God really is! Isa 2:2-3.