

The Spirit of the Ten Commandments

Chapter 14

Audio Lesson: Old Testament Survey lesson fourteen



Objective: To understand the Ten Commandments.



God spoke all these words: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol . . .

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God . . .

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy . . .

Honor your father and your mother . . .

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

You shall not covet . . . anything that belongs to your neighbor.

—Exodus 20:1-4, 7-8, 12-17

The Ten Commandments were written on two tablets. Four of them govern our relationship with God, and six govern our relationships with people. As we obey all of the commandments, we must be careful to obey them in spirit as well as by the letter.



Further study: What is the purpose of the Law?

No one will be declared righteous in his sight by observing the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of sin.

Romans 3:20

I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet."

Romans 7:7

We maintain that a man is justified by faith apart from observing the law.

Romans 3:28

A man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified.

Galatians 2:16

Christ is the end of the law so that there may be righteousness for everyone who believes.

Romans 10:4

There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man, in order to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.

Romans 8:1-4

Choose one best answer unless instructed otherwise.

1. True or false? The Ten Commandments were one of Moses' best ideas.
2. True or false? The Ten Commandments are a summary of hundreds of other rules God gave His people.
3. Beside each commandment, write "God" for those that govern our relationship with God, and "people" for those that govern our relationship with people.
 - a. Have no other gods. _____
 - b. Do not commit adultery. _____
 - c. Remember the Sabbath. _____
 - d. Do not steal. _____
 - e. Do not covet. _____
 - f. Honor your father and mother. _____
 - g. Do not worship idols. _____
 - h. Do not murder. _____
 - i. Do not lie. _____
 - j. Do not take God's name in vain. _____

4. This time, put these commandments in the order in which they are given. Write the correct number to the right of each commandment.
- a. Have no other gods. ____
 - b. Do not commit adultery. ____
 - c. Remember the Sabbath. ____
 - d. Do not steal. ____
 - e. Do not covet. ____
 - f. Honor your father and mother. ____
 - g. Do not worship idols. ____
 - h. Do not murder. ____
 - i. Do not lie. ____
 - j. Do not take God's name in vain. ____
5. Which of the following is a good summary of the first four commandments?
- a. Acknowledge God.
 - b. Believe in God.
 - c. Put God first in your life.
 - d. Worship God however it feels best to you.
6. Why is it wrong to make an image of a god and worship it?
- a. God is Spirit and invisible, and we can only approach Him by faith.
 - b. God does not want people to see what He looks like.
 - c. God is afraid we will not make Him look attractive.
 - d. God is represented by all idols, and He does not want us just narrowing it down to one.
7. Which is the only commandment that also has a promise?
- a. Do not lie.
 - b. Honor your father and your mother.
 - c. Do not commit adultery.
 - d. Remember the Sabbath.
8. According to the teaching in the audio lesson that accompanies this chapter, which commandment can also be referred to as "children's rights"?
- a. Honor your father and your mother.
 - b. Do not steal.
 - c. Do not worship idols.
 - d. Do not commit adultery.
9. What is the spirit of "You shall not bear false witness" – the commandment not to lie?
- a. Learn how to give a false impression without actually speaking a lie.
 - b. Avoid telling really big lies.
 - c. Do not give any false impression, no matter how clever.
 - d. Tell at least part of the truth, even if it is out of context.

10. What do envy and covetousness reveal about us?
- a. God wants us to have more.
 - b. God wants us to be just like other people.
 - c. We are inferior to other people.
 - d. We are dissatisfied with God's will for our lives.

11. What is the purpose for the Law of God?
- a. God wants us to live perfect lives.
 - b. God wants us to feel bad when we can not obey His Law.
 - c. God wants to show us our sin and our need for a savior.
 - d. God is perfect but does not care if we break His Law.



Which commandment is the most difficult for you to obey completely, even in spirit? Why?



Praise God for His Word and His Law that protect and promote you. Ask God to help you obey His Law from your heart. Thank God for Jesus Christ who came to fulfill the Law and provide mercy and grace to all who will believe and follow Him.



Going Deeper

1. Explain the primary purpose of the law of God. _____

2. Demonstrate by illustration the difference between the letter and the spirit of the law. _____

3. Summarize below and commit to memorize the spirit of each of the Ten Commandments. _____

4. What is the spirit of the first four commandments that were on the first tablet? _____

5. What is the spirit of the six commandments on the second tablet? _____

6. How did Jesus summarize the spirit of the second tablet with His Golden Rule? (Matthew 7:12)

7. Do you live by the letter of the law or by the spirit of the law? How? Why? _____
