

# The Ten Commandments

## A Study Guide

2006

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# Introduction

## Why Study the Ten Commandments?

### I. The Law is Useful!

#### A. The Three Uses of the Law

- i. For all men: Reveals God's holiness & man's duty and sin – WLC 95
  - a) *Lev. 11:44-45: Be holy as I am holy.*
- ii. For the Unregenerate: "Drive them to Christ" - WLC 96
  - a) *Gal. 3:24: So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.*
- iii. For the Regenerate: "Rule of their obedience" - WLC 97
  - a) *Titus 2:11-14: 11 For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, 13 waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, 14 who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.*
  - b) *James 1:25: But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.*

#### B. Though not useful for us to earn our justification – Law & Gospel

- i. *Rom. 3:20-22: "20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight. 21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it- 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe."*

### II. The Law is a great blessing – Psalm 19

#### A. What words do you associate with the word "law?"

punishment	rules	disobedience
crime	higher authority	police
court	discipline	jail

#### B. David used very different words than these in Psalm 19!

- 7 *The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;*  
*The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;*
- 8 *The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart;*  
*The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;*
- 9 *The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;*  
*The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.*
- 10 *More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold;*  
*Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*
- 11 *Moreover by them Your servant is warned,*  
*And in keeping them there is great reward.*

## What Are the Ten Commandments?

### I. The Ten Commandments are the Covenant

#### A. They are the Mosaic Covenant

- i. **Deut. 4:13:** “So He declared to you **His covenant** which He commanded you to perform, **that is, the Ten Commandments**; and He wrote them on two tablets of stone.”
- ii. **Deut. 5:2-3, 5ff:** 2 The LORD our God made a **covenant** with us at Horeb. 3 The LORD did not make **this covenant** with our fathers, but with us, with all those of us alive here today. 5 ...He said, 6 'I am the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 7 'You shall have no other gods before Me....
- iii. **Deut. 9:9 :** When I went up to the mountain to receive the tablets of stone, **the tablets of the covenant** which the LORD had made with you....

#### B. They are the Covenant of Grace

- i. Because the covenant formula “I am the LORD your God” and “I will be your God, and You will be my people” used to introduce this covenant (Ex. 20:2) is applied equally to the New Covenant.
  - a) The formula in God’s name Yahweh: Ex. 3:6, 11 (who am I?), 14 (I AM WHO I AM)
  - b) The formula is applied equally to the OC & NC people of God, because those two peoples are one and the same: Ex. 19:5-6; Dt. 7:6-11 (1 Pet. 2:9-10); Ex. 20:2
  - c) Both forms of the formula are conjoined in scripture; they express the goal of the Exodus:
    - **Lev. 26:12-13:** 12 I will also walk among you and **be your God, and you shall be My people.** 13 **I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt so that you would not be their slaves, and I broke the bars of your yoke and made you walk erect.**
  - d) The Mosaic covenant is God’s remembering (and thus the extension of) His covenant with Abraham, which is broadly recognized to be the covenant of grace: Ex. 6:2-7
  - e) The formula is applied to the New Covenant in Ezek. 36:25-28 and:
    - **Jer. 31:33:** But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, "declares the LORD, I will put My law within them and on their heart I will write it; and **I will be their God, and they shall be My people.**
    - **2 Cor. 6:16:** Or what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For we are the temple of the living God; just as God said, "**I WILL DWELL IN THEM AND WALK AMONG THEM; AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD, AND THEY SHALL BE MY PEOPLE.**
    - **Rev. 21:3:** And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and **they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.**

#### C. They are *our* covenant! They follow the pattern of its structure, and define our obligations within it

### II. Place of the Commandments in History

#### A. Given by God

- i. Given to Moses and the people on Mt. Sinai in Horeb (Dt. 1:6; Ex. 20).

#### B. Taught by Moses

- i. Moses taught them to the people in Horeb, during their wandering in the desert (Dt. 4:5 —happened throughout the text of Numbers), and at the edge of the promised land in the body of Deuteronomy (6-26).

#### C. Written in Scripture

- i. They are the covenant God made in Horeb and reconfirmed in Moab. As such the 10

Commandments are the **central verbal expression of the covenant-relationship** established at the climax of God's deliverance of His people from Egypt, and reconfirmed in preparation for their entrance into the land He had promised. This is why they are placed at the climax of the story in Exodus, and made the principal structure of the torah-teaching of Deuteronomy (cf. Olson, 1994: 6-22). They draw together, then, the main themes of the Pentateuch, and lay the foundation for Israel's life in Canaan under Joshua, the judges, David, and the prophets. This covenant then formed the foundational structure of and pedagogy leading to (Gal. 3:24) the New Covenant under Christ.

### **III. Important Distinctions: The Moral Law is Summarized in, but more universal than, the Ten Commandments**

#### **A. This distinction in the Shorter Catechism:**

- i. *WSC 40: The rule which God **at first revealed** to man for his obedience was the moral law.*
- ii. *WSC 41: The moral law is **summarily comprehended** in the ten commandments.*

#### **B. In the Westminster Confession: One covenant of grace, the same in substance, in two dispensations**

- i. *7.5: This covenant was differently administered in the time of the law, and in the time of the gospel*
- ii. *7.8: There are not therefore **two** covenants of grace, differing in **substance**, but **one** and the **same**, under various **dispensations**.*
- iii. *19.5: The moral law doth forever bind all, as well justified persons as others, to the obedience thereof*
- iv. *19.7: Neither are the forementioned uses of the law contrary to the grace of the gospel, but do sweetly comply with it*

#### **C. Substance & Differentia in the Dispensations of the Moral Law**

- i. Moral & Symbolic: Augustine, Theonomy
- ii. Moral, Civil, Ceremonial: Thomas Aquinas, Melancthon, Calvin, WCF 19.3, 19.4
- iii. Constitution (universally applicable) & Case Law (situationally-applied)
- iv. Lex Talionis & Pedagogical Delegation of Divine Justice
  - a) The delegation (Ezekiel 23:24) is pedagogical (Ezek. 23:48-49)

#### **D. Differentia seen in the Ten Commandments**

- i. First Commandment: Context of Polytheism
- ii. Second Commandment: Context of Idolatry
- iii. Fourth Commandment: Servants, livestock, the exodus
- iv. Fifth Commandment: The land of Israel was their inheritance. It expressed the same providential care God shows us & them in giving us the present creation & future new creation.
- v. Tenth: Servants, ox, donkey

### **How Should We Interpret the Ten Commandments?**

#### **I. The Rules for Interpreting the Ten Commandments: WLC 99**

***Question:** What rules are to be observed for the right understanding of the Ten Commandments?*

***Answer:** For the right understanding of the ten commandments, these rules are to be observed:*

- 1. *That the law is perfect, and bindeth everyone to full conformity in the whole man unto the righteousness thereof, and unto entire obedience for ever; so as to require the utmost perfection of every*

duty, and to forbid the least degree of every sin.<sup>1</sup>

2. That it is spiritual, and so reacheth the understanding, will, affections, and all other powers of the soul; as well as words, works, and gestures.<sup>2</sup>

3. That one and the same thing, in divers respects, is required or forbidden in several commandments.<sup>3</sup>

4. That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden;<sup>4</sup> and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded;<sup>5</sup> so, where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included;<sup>6</sup> and, where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included.<sup>7</sup>

5. That what God forbids, is at no time to be done;<sup>8</sup> what he commands, is always our duty;<sup>9</sup> and yet every particular duty is not to be done at all times.<sup>10</sup>

6. That under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded; together with all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and provocations thereunto.<sup>11</sup>

7. That what is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places, to endeavour that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places.<sup>12</sup>

8. That in what is commanded to others, we are bound, according to our places and callings, to be helpful to them;<sup>13</sup> and to take heed of partaking with others in what is forbidden them.<sup>14</sup>

## II. The Two Tables of the Law

A. Jesus summarized the law in two halves:

i. **Matt. 22:35-40:** 35 And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" 37 And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and **first** commandment. 39 And a **second** is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. 40 On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

B. Hence WLC 98 explains, "The four first commandments [contain] our duty to God, and the other six our duty to man."

## III. The Issue & Application of Each Commandment

A. We need to understand each commandment's central concern—its nucleus—and its correct application

B. **Issue:** Henry Krabbendam summarizes the central concern of each commandment this way:

- i. 1: Love God for who he is.
- ii. 2: Love God for what he says.
- iii. 3: Love God for what he does.
- iv. 4: Love God on the day he has set apart.
- v. 5: Love our neighbor by honoring his authority.
- vi. 6: Love our neighbor by honoring his life.

1 Ps. 19:7; James 2:10; Matt. 5:21–22.

2 Rom. 7:14; Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37–39, 5:21–22, 27–28, 33–34, 37–39, 43–44.

3 Col. 3:5; Amos 8:5; Prov. 1:19; 1 Tim. 6:10.

4 Isa. 58:13; Deut. 6:13; Matt. 4:9–10; 15:4–6.

5 Matt. 5:21–25; Eph. 4:28.

6 Exod. 20:12; Prov. 30:17.

7 Jer. 18:7–8; Exod. 20:7; Ps. 15:1, 4–5; Ps. 24:4–5.

8 Job 13:7–8; Rom. 3:8; Job 36:21; Heb. 11:25.

9 Deut. 4:8–9.

10 Matt. 12:7.

11 Matt. 5:21–22, 27–28; 15:4–6; Heb. 10:24–25; 1 Thess. 5:22; Jude 23; Gal. 5:26; Col. 3:21.

12 Exod. 20:10; Lev. 19:17; Gen. 18:19; Josh. 24:15; Deut. 6:6–7.

13 2 Cor. 1:24.

14 1 Tim. 5:22; Eph. 5:11.

- vii.7: Love our neighbor by honoring his wife.
- viii.8: Love our neighbor by honoring his property.
- ix.9: Love our neighbor by honoring his reputation.
- x.10: Love God and the neighbor from the heart.

### **C.Application:**

#### **i. Deuteronomy's Commentary**

a) Along with a growing line of scholarship,<sup>15</sup> and the implication to this effect in Dt. 6:1-3, I believe we must take Dt. 6-26 to be a commentary on the Ten Commandments listed in Dt. 5, such that the order of the Decalogue forms the order of the sections in ch.'s 6-26, and those sections successively explain & apply each commandment.<sup>16</sup> I consider the divisions suggested by Jordan and Krabbendam to be correct, that ch.'s 6-11 treat the 1<sup>st</sup> commandment, 12-13 the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 14 the 3<sup>rd</sup>, 15-16:17 the 4<sup>th</sup>, 16:18-18 the 5<sup>th</sup>, 19-22:12 the 6<sup>th</sup>, 22:13-23:14 the 7<sup>th</sup>, 23:15-24:16 the 8<sup>th</sup>, 24:17-25 the 9<sup>th</sup>, and 26 the 10<sup>th</sup>.

ii. The rest of Scripture and its summary in the WSC & WLC will be brought in to understand each commandment's application.

<h2><b>The Preface to the Ten Commandments</b></h2>
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### **I. WLC 101 explains:**

#### **A.Preface**

*i. The preface to the Ten Commandments is contained in these words, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*

#### **B.God in Himself the source of all else**

*i. Wherein God manifesteth his sovereignty, as being JEHOVAH, the eternal, immutable, and almighty God; having his being in and of himself, and giving being to all his words and works:*

#### **C.Words: God reveals Himself in His covenant**

*i. and that he is a God in covenant, as with Israel of old, so with all his people;*

#### **D.Works: God saves His people & requires a response of obedience**

*i. who, as he brought them out of their bondage in Egypt, so he delivereth us from our spiritual thralldom;*

*ii. and that therefore we are bound to take him for our God alone, and to keep all his commandments.*

15 Cf. Schultz (1859: 13ff), Schulz (1966: 151-157), Kaufman (1978: 105-158), Braulik (1991), Kaiser (1983: 127-137), Jordan (1984: 199-206), Hill & Walton (1991: 144-149), Millar (1998: 104-108), and Krabbendam (1997: 49, 130-140). None of the others consulted see the case law of Deuteronomy to be structured this way.

16 Merrill (1994) considers this thesis throughout but can perceive only a loose dependence upon the order of the Decalogue.

# The 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment

## The text of the 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment

*Exodus 20:3 "You shall have no other gods before me."*

### I. Its Background

#### A. The Preface: Covenant & Redemption

- i. "Before me" in the commandment refers back to "I" in the preface
  - a) *I am the LORD...no other gods before me.*
- ii. So the 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment's requirement is based on the reality of God's covenant with us, and in His having already redeemed us. That is why we must keep His commandments!

### II. In Hebrew (reads right-to-left)

עַל-פְּנֵי

"al-panay"

"before my face"

אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים

"elohim acherim"

←

"other gods"

לֹא יִהְיֶה-לְךָ

"lo yihyeh-lecha"

← "there shall not be to you"

### III. Its Meaning

#### A. "Be to you," translated "You shall have"

- i. Not Ownership – we can't put God in our box! Nor could we do so with false "other gods"
- ii. But Orientation & Commitment – God is committed to be God to us
  - a) This is the thought & wording of the covenant formula throughout scripture: "I will be your God, and you will be my people."
    - The covenant formula reads literally in Hebrew: "I will **be to you** for a God, and you will **be to me** for a people." Cf. with the KJV's similar literal rendering.
  - b) As such it recalls God's name יהוה, Yahweh - "yihyeh" here is the same verb; God introduced His name Yahweh to Moses in Ex. 3 with a similar form, saying "ehyeh asher ehyeh." "I AM who I AM"
- iii. The implication is this – there is no other god who can make a covenant commitment to be our god, as only Yahweh can, and therefore we must recognize Yahweh "to be the only true God, and *our* God." WSC 46
  - a) *Is. 45:21-22: 21 And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me. 22 Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other.*
  - b) *Matt. 4:10: Then Jesus said to him, "Be gone, Satan! For it is written, ' You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve.'"*
- iv. This implies a covenant between God & His people, whose central components are God's foundational absolute commitment to us, and His requirement of our reciprocal absolute commitment to Him
  - a) God's commitment is expressed in His promises – "I will be your God"

- b) God's requirement is expressed in His laws - "You shall be my people"
- B. "Other gods"
- i. This implies the *reality* of other gods, but not their *divinity*
  - ii. Kinds of "other gods" in scripture:
    - a) Spirits – angels or demons
      - **Col. 2:18:** *Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of **angels***
      - **Deut. 32:17:** *They sacrificed to **demons that were no gods**, to gods they had never known, to new gods that had come recently, whom your fathers had never dreaded.*
    - b) Imagined deities
      - **2 Chron. 32:19:** *And they spoke of the God of Jerusalem as they spoke of **the gods** of the peoples of the earth, which **are the work of men's hands**.*
      - **Ps. 96:3-5:** *3 Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! 4 For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; he is to be feared above all gods. 5 For **all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens.***
    - c) Creatures
      - **Rom. 1:22-23, 25:** *22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for **images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles**. 25 ...they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and **worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator**, who is blessed forever! Amen.*
- C. "Before my face," translated "before me"
- i. Presence not Priority: It does not mean "don't worship other gods *more than* you worship me; don't give them a higher priority than me," but rather, it means "don't worship other gods in my presence, before my face, where I can see."
  - ii. God can see all things, so worshiping other gods provokes God to anger
    - a) **Ps. 44:20-21:** *20 If we had forgotten the name of our God or spread out our hands to a foreign god, 21 would not God discover this? For **he knows the secrets of the heart**.*
    - b) **Deut. 32:16 :** *They **stirred him to jealousy** with strange gods; with abominations they **provoked him to anger**.*

<h2 style="margin: 0;">The Issue of the 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment</h2>
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### IV. Its Requirement

#### A. Love God for who He ***IS***

- i. **WSC 46:** *The first commandment requireth us to know and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God; and to worship and glorify him accordingly.*
- ii. **WSC 47:** *The first commandment forbiddeth the denying, or not worshiping and glorifying the true God as God, and our God; and the giving of that worship and glory to any other, which is due to him alone.*

#### B. Love God *in accord with* who He is

- i. Because God's wholehearted commitment to us - "All of You is more than enough for all of me,"
- ii. We should give our wholehearted commitment to Him - "All of me for all of You"
- iii. *Our whole being* needs to be brought into accord with *God's whole being*
  - a) **Matt. 5:48:** *Be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*

## The Biblical Commentary on the 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment

### V. In Deuteronomy

#### A. The Introduction: 6:1-25

- i. Ch.'s 6-26 are "the commandment, statutes, rules" (& testimonies 4:44) 1-3
- ii. The 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment & its implications introduced 4-9
  - a) The 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment paraphrased: "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*" 4-5
  - b) The statutes & rules must be applied to the heart and life 6-9
- iii. Alert to the threefold danger that will lead people away from God: riches of the land 10-12, gods of the land 13-19, self-righteousness rather than the obedience of faith 20-25

#### B. The Threefold Danger of Apostasy: 7:1-10:11

- i. Gods of Canaanites 7:1-26
  - a) Command: destroy Canaanites, mixed marriages, graven images 1-5
  - b) Remember: Not false gods but only the true God chose & will bless Israel 6-16
  - c) Command: Do not fear, but utterly destroy the Canaanites 17-26
- ii. Riches of the land 8:1-20
  - a) Remember: God provided in the desert 1-4
  - b) Remember: Canaan is rich in water, soil, minerals 5-10
  - c) Remember: Future wealth is a gift from God; forget this and perish! 11-20
- iii. Self-righteousness 9:1-10:11
  - a) Canaan given not because of Israel's righteousness, but Canaanites' unrighteousness 1-5
  - b) Israel is not righteous in heart, but stubborn, rebellious 6-10:11

#### C. The Threefold Encouragement: 10:12-11:32

- i. The commandment's positive requirement 10:12-11:7
  - a) Fear the Lord, love Him, serve Him, keep His commandments 12-13; 20-22; 11:1
  - b) Because God "*set his heart in love on*" them, they must "*Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.*" 14-16
  - c) Love their neighbor 17-19
  - d) Fear God's discipline 11:2-7
- ii. Prospect of a rich land to be entered by obedience 11:8-17
- iii. Obedience must be applied throughout all of life, and will bring blessing. Disobedience will bring a curse. 11:18-32

### VI. In the History of Redemption

#### A. The Old Covenant Problem

- i. Rebellious, evil heart – Dt. 9:6-10:11; Gen. 6:5 "*every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*"
- ii. Need & responsibility: A circumcised heart – Dt. 10:10-16; Ezek. 18:31 "*Make yourselves a new heart*"

#### B. The New Covenant Promise

- i. God will give a new heart – Ezek. 11:19; 36:26

#### C. The New Covenant Fulfillment

- i. God regenerates our hearts by the word & Spirit, so we are “born again,” a “new creation,” a “new man” – John 3:3, 7; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 6:15; Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10; Tit. 3:5; James 1:18; 1 Pet. 1:3, 23
- ii. In the final resurrection God will remove our “old man,” the “flesh,” and give us new bodies as well

<b>The Application of the 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment</b>
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### **VII. Duties Required – WLC 104**

- A. Thinking, meditating, remembering, highly esteeming, honoring, adoring, choosing, loving, desiring, fearing of him
- B. Believing him
- C. Trusting, hoping, delighting, rejoicing in him
- D. Being zealous for him
- E. Calling upon him, giving all praise and thanks, and yielding all obedience and submission to him with the whole man
- F. Being careful in all things to please him, and sorrowful when in anything he is offended
- G. And walking humbly with him.

### **VIII. Sins Forbidden – WLC 105**

- A. Atheism
- B. Idolatry
- C. The not having and avouching him for God, and our God
- D. The omission or neglect of anything due to him, required in this commandment
- E. Ignorance, forgetfulness, misapprehensions, false opinions, unworthy and wicked thoughts of him
- F. Bold and curious searching into his secrets
- G. All profaneness, hatred of God
- H. Self-love, self-seeking, and all other inordinate and immoderate setting of our mind, will, or affections upon other things, and taking them off from him in whole or in part
- I. Vain credulity, unbelief, heresy, misbelief, distrust, despair, incorrigibility, and insensibility under judgments, hardness of heart, pride, presumption, carnal security, tempting of God
- J. Using unlawful means, and trusting in lawful means
- K. Carnal delights and joys
- L. Corrupt, blind, and indiscreet zeal
- M. Lukewarmness, and deadness in the things of God
- N. Estranging ourselves, and apostatizing from God
- O. Praying, or giving any religious worship, to saints, angels, or any other creatures
- P. All compacts and consulting with the devil, and hearkening to his suggestions

- Q. Making men the lords of our faith and conscience
- R. Slighting and despising God and his commands
- S. Resisting and grieving of his Spirit, discontent and impatience at his dispensations, charging him foolishly for the evils he inflicts on us
- T. And ascribing the praise of any good we either are, have, or can do, to fortune, idols, ourselves, or any other creature.

## Conclusion

**IX. In the end, to keep this commandment is to keep the whole law, and to break this commandment is to break the whole law!**

**X. Hence it is quite appropriate Deuteronomy calls this “The Commandment!”**

## Excursus on the death penalty

**XI. Death Penalty for worshiping other gods – God’s right of vengeance was temporarily delegated to a human court**

**A. Noahic covenant – universal for all men**

- i. In the Noahic covenant God limited human courts to meting out no greater punishment than that which fits the crime. God made this covenant with *all* mankind, so this limitation applies to *all* human courts.

a) *Gen. 9:5-6: 5 And for your lifeblood I will require a reckoning: from every beast I will require it and from man. From his fellow man I will require a reckoning for the life of man. 6 Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man in his own image.*

**B. Mosaic covenant – includes elements particular to the uniquely theocratic nation of Israel**

- i. The Noahic limitation on human courts is expressed in the “an eye for an eye” principle called the *Lex Talionis*

a) *Ex. 21:23-25: 23 But if there is harm, then you shall pay life for life, 24 eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, 25 burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe.*

b) *Lev. 24:16-22: 16 Whoever blasphemes the name of the LORD shall surely be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him. The sojourner as well as the native, when he blasphemes the Name, shall be put to death. 17 "Whoever takes a human life shall surely be put to death. 18 Whoever takes an animal's life shall make it good, life for life. 19 If anyone injures his neighbor, as he has done it shall be done to him, 20 fracture for fracture, eye for eye, tooth for tooth; whatever injury he has given a person shall be given to him. 21 Whoever kills an animal shall make it good, and whoever kills a person shall be put to death. 22 You shall have the same rule for the sojourner and for the native, for I am the LORD your God."*

- ii. The sin is against God when someone worships other gods

a) *Deut. 17:2-3: 2 "If there is found among you, within any of your towns that the LORD your God is giving you, a man or woman who does what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, in **transgressing his covenant**, 3 and has gone and served other gods and worshiped them, or the sun or the moon or any of the host of heaven, which I have forbidden,*

- iii. Yet in the Mosaic covenant, the sin’s investigation & punishment were delegated to a *human* court

a) *Deut. 17:4-6: 4 and it is told you and you hear of it, then you shall inquire diligently, and if it is true and certain that such an abomination has been done in Israel, 5 then you shall bring out to*

*your gates that man or woman who has done this evil thing, and you shall stone that man or woman to death with stones. 6 On the evidence of **two witnesses or of three witnesses** the one who is to die shall be put to death; a person shall not be put to death on the evidence of one witness.*

iv. This taught the heinousness - "the evil" - of the offense against God

a) **Deut. 17:7:** *7 The hand of the witnesses shall be first against him to put him to death, and afterward the hand of all the people. So you shall purge **the evil** from your midst.*

C. The Lex Talionis limitation still applies in the NT. Personal retaliation is forbidden; only the civil courts may execute the death penalty. But the NT does not give human courts the right to execute the death penalty for offenses against *God*; rather, it reserves that punishment to be executed by the hand of God alone.

i. **Rom. 12:19 :** *Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord."*

ii. **Hebrews 10:26-31:** *26 For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, 27 but a **fearful expectation of judgment**, and a **fury of fire** that will consume the adversaries. 28 Anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of **two or three witnesses**. 29 How much worse punishment, do you think, will be deserved by the one who has spurned the Son of God, and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has outraged the Spirit of grace? 30 For we know him who said, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge his people." 31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.*

D. Christ does not abrogate the principle of justice, but more fully expresses the limitation of our desire for personal retaliation

i. **Matt. 5:38-41:** *38 "You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I say to you, Do not resist the one who is evil. But if anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. 40 And if anyone would sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. 41 And if anyone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles.*

# The 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment

## Distinctions between the Commandments

### I. Differing Theological Traditions (agreements shaded)

<u>Verses</u>		<u>Commandments</u>				
Ex. 20	Deut. 5	Roman Catholic (Deut.)	Lutheran (Exodus)	Orthodox Jews	Greek Orthodox	Reformed
2	6	1	Preface	1	Preface	Preface
3	7	1	1	2	1	1
4-6	8-10	1	1	2	2	2
		2	2	3	3	3
		3	3	4	4	4
		4	4	5	5	5
		5	5	6	6	6
		6	6	7	7	7
		7	7	8	8	8
		8	8	9	9	9
		17a	21a	9	9	10
17b	21b	10	10	10	10	10

A. Disputed boundaries are between the Reformed Preface, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>

Commandments, and within the Reformed 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment.

B. The Catholic division does not *deny* a distinction between the Reformed 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>

Commandments, but the Reformed division *maintains* the distinction better, and so is less susceptible to the errors of worshiping images.

C. Why the Reformed distinction?

i. The commandment is not about worshiping *other gods*, but about worshiping the true God by means of *images* of Him

a) **Ex. 32:4-5:** Golden calf is identified as Yahweh or an image of Him

b) **1 Kings 12:28:** Sin of Jeroboam was to make 2 golden calves, use same phrases as Ex. 32:4 to say “Here are your gods...which brought you up from the land of Egypt!” This divided Israel from Judah!

c) **Deuteronomy 12:3-4:** 3 You shall tear down their altars and dash in pieces their pillars and burn their Asherim with fire. You shall chop down the carved **images** of their gods and destroy their

name out of that place. 4 *You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way.*

## The text of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment

### II. Its Outline

#### Command

- 4 *"You shall not **make** for yourself  
a **carved image**,  
or any **likeness** of anything  
that is in **heaven** above,  
or that is in the **earth** beneath,  
or that is in the **water** under the earth.*
- 5 *You shall not **bow** down to them or **serve** them,*

#### Reason

- for I the LORD your God am a jealous God,  
**visiting** the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those  
who **hate** me,  
6 but **showing steadfast love** to thousands of those who **love** me and **keep my commandments.**"*

— *Exodus 20:4-6*

### III. Its Meaning

A. Command: You shall not "make," you shall not "bow," you shall not "serve"

i. Is this *one*, *two*, or *three* commands?

- a) If it's *three* discrete commands, this would prohibit all images of God and Christ, including mental images. Incidentally, this would also prohibit all graphic, or at least graven, art!
- b) If it's *one* threefold command, the "making" is specifically "making-in-order-to-worship."
- c) WLC 109 says the commandment forbids "the making any representation of God," and does not *explicitly* specify whether that making aims at the goal of worship. Johannes Vos takes this to prohibit making any image of God absolutely. However, WLC 109 places this statement in the middle of prohibitions of all false ways of worship, and thereby specifies that the making is making-in-order-to-worship.

ii. It is *one* threefold command.

- a) The *making* is for the purpose of *bowing* in worship, and both making and bowing find their outflow in *servicing*.
- b) The *making* brings the idol into being as an entity, the *bowing* shows respect for the object's specific religious meaning; the *servicing* is the living out of that religious meaning in the whole scope of one's ethical life.

iii. "You shall not *make*"

- a) The prohibition of *making* is highlighted by the way the description of the image ("anything that is in the heaven above...") separates it from *bowing* and *servicing*. Not only the idol's use, but the act of its construction, and its resulting design, is prohibited. Its intended use is woven into its design, and tempts us toward using it in false worship.

iv. "a carved image...any likeness"

- a) What is it?
  - Any non-linguistic representation of God intended to convey meaning about Him which is

- intended to immediately lead to worshipping Him
- b) What are the images of? “Heaven,” “earth,” “water” = anything in the whole creation!
  - These are the realms of creation in Gen. 1:26-30
  - Dt. 4:15-18
    - No images of *birds, animals, fish*. = all *creatures* within all realms of creation
    - No worship of sun, moon, stars even *without* doing so by means of an image = anything you “see” in creation
- v. “Bow...or serve”
  - a) “Bow” - expressing worshipful respect for God’s majesty, authority, etc., which is expressed through the image
  - b) “Serve” - worshipful acts of living out one’s respect for the image’s religious meaning

**B.Reason**

- i. Foundation: God’s justice and mercy (cf. Ex. 34:6-7)
- ii. Twofold structure, contrasting the two modes of God’s revelation: Word & Deed

<i>Man’s emotion &amp; motive</i> →	<i>Man’s action</i> →	<i>God’s response</i>	<i>Focus</i>
“hate”	[“Make,” “bow,” “serve” idols]	“visiting the iniquity”	Deed-revelation
“love”	“keep my commandments”	“showing steadfast love”	Word-revelation

- iii. Summarized:
  - a) If you hate God, you will make, bow to, and serve idols, and God will visit your iniquity upon you.
  - b) If you love God, you will keep His commandments, and God will show steadfast love to you.
- iv. Significant order: begins with “make a carved image,” ends with “keep my commandments.” Expresses an exclusive contrast between idol-worship and commandment-keeping—they are at utter odds!
  - a) If you make idols, you do not keep God’s commandments.
  - b) If you keep God’s commandments, you do not make idols.
- v. Why? Because idol-worship and commandment keeping each seek to use their respective mode of revelation to provide the controlling interpretation of the other. Will God’s deeds interpret His words, or His words interpret His deeds?

**The Issue of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment**

**IV.Revelation in Its Two Modes: Word & Deed**

**A.Idol-worship focuses on *deed-revelation***

- i. “Heaven,” “earth,” “water” recall God’s deeds of creation in Gen. 1 – throughout God “created” (v. 1, 21, 27) and “made” (7, 16, 25, 26, 31) all things by creative fiats
- ii. Dt. 4:32 lists God’s acts of *creation* and *redemption* as the two greatest summaries of His deeds - “*For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether such a great thing as this has ever happened or was ever heard of.*”

- iii. An “image” is revelatory – it’s an image *of* something & conveys its meaning
  - a) In Gen. 1, “heaven,” “earth,” “water” manifest God’s creative activity and goodness (4, 12, 17, 21, 25, 31) to all observers (cf. v. 31, “Behold! It was very good.”)
  - b) Images of these realms inhabitants then seek to manifest something about God.

#### B. Commandment-keeping focuses on *word-revelation*

- i. “Commandments” is plural. Idol-worship is opposed to the general character of keeping *any* and *all* of God’s commandments, which are given in words.
- ii. “*My* commandments” reveal the speaker – God
- iii. Revelation in *promises*: Commandments bind us because they rest on God’s prior commitments expressed in promises – summarized in the Preface in “I am the LORD your God,” and woven throughout the whole of God’s word
- iv. Revelation in *laws*: *all* of God’s “commandments” throughout scripture are in view

### V. Correct Order of Interpretive Priority: Words interpret Deeds

#### A. Scriptural harmony when God’s words control the interpretation of His deeds

- i. Gen. 1: Creation by fiat – “Let there be...and there was...” God’s words commanded into being what His deeds brought into being.
- ii. God’s words truly and adequately *describe* His deeds; His deeds truly and adequately *manifest* that which His words describe.

#### B. Scriptural disharmony when we use God’s deeds to control the interpretation of His words

- i. We fail to hear God’s message & recognize its truth about the world around us
- ii. We construct our own interpretation of God & the world around us.
  - a) By whose commandments are idols made? Not God’s.
  - b) Man makes his own commandments, then follows them, when he creates an image to worship God. Man’s false replica of God’s word-revelation leads to man’s false replica of God’s deed-revelation.
- iii. God’s deed-revelation manifests what His word-revelation says, not what man’s false interpretations say; God’s deeds even refute man’s false interpretations.
  - a) *Is. 29:13-14: 13 And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men, 14 therefore, behold, I will again do wonderful things with this people, with wonder upon wonder; and the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden."*
- iv. Further, man’s false interpretations & their resulting sinful deeds lead to God’s judgment: “*visiting the iniquity upon...*”

### VI. The Heart of the Issue

A. Idol-worship gives deed-revelation the controlling say. Commandment-keeping gives word-revelation the controlling say.

B. Man does not tell God what God’s deeds or words mean! Only God has that prerogative.

C. No matter how “good for food” the forbidden fruit looks, no matter how much it is a “delight to the eyes,” no matter how much someone other than God has told you it is “desired to make one wise,” if God has told you, “You shall not eat,” you shall not eat. No selfish rationalizations, no sneaky re-interpretations of the meaning of

God's deeds, can trump the interpretive priority of God's words.

## VII. Traditional explanation: Not the *object* of worship, but the *way* of worship

A. **WSC 50:** *The second commandment requireth the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath appointed in his word.*

B. **WSC 51:** *The second commandment forbiddeth the worshipping of God by images, or any other way not appointed in his word.*

C. Worship God in the way He commands

## VIII. More general issue: Love God for what He SAYS

## IX. Refinement of terms: Love God in accord with what He says

A. Our knowledge & interpretation needs to be brought into accord with *God's*

<h3>The Biblical Commentary on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment</h3>
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## X. In Deuteronomy 12:1-13:18

A. The Danger in the Canaanite sanctuary system 12:1-32

i. Destroy their places, altars, pillars, images: *"You shall not **worship** the LORD your God in that way."* 1-4

ii. Worship God in the place & with the offerings, tithes, & firstfruits He commands, not *"every man doing **whatever is right in his own eyes**,"* but *"do all that I **command** you"* 5-14

iii. Eat regular meals at home *"whatever your heart desires,"* but *"tithes,"* firstfruits, *"offerings,"* *"holy things,"* *"sacrifices"* *"take...to the place which the LORD chooses."* *"Be careful to obey all these words that I **command** you, that it may go well with you and with your children after you forever, when you do **what is good and right in the sight of the LORD** your God."* 15-28

iv. Don't say *"**How** did these nations **serve** their gods?- that I also may do the same.'* *You shall not worship the LORD your God in that way....* *"Everything that I command you, you shall be careful to do. You shall not add to it or take from it."* 29-32

B. The Danger in Israel Itself: Don't listen to those promoting other gods 13:1-18

i. False prophets – God is testing your *"love"* for Him 1-5

ii. Family members 6-11

iii. Cities 12-18

iv. Conclusion in 17-18: *"None of the devoted things shall stick to your hand, that the LORD may turn from the fierceness of his anger and show you **mercy** and have **compassion** on you and **multiply** you, as he swore to your fathers, if you **obey** the **voice** of the LORD your God, **keeping** all his **commandments** that I am commanding you today, and doing **what is right in the sight of the LORD** your God."*

## XI. In the History of Redemption

A. The Old Covenant Problem

i. Guilty record in God's eyes (Ex. 34:7), and evil thoughts in man's own (Gen. 6:5)

B. The New Covenant Promise

i. God will bring man's thought into accord with His own (Jer. 31:34a) by forgiving his *"iniquity"* (Jer. 31:34b; Ezek. 36:25), thereby giving him an innocent record in God's eyes

C. The New Covenant Fulfillment

i. God forgives our sins in our justification (Rom. 4:25; 5:16, 18; Gal. 2:21) by faith

- (Rom. 3:28, 5:1; Gal. 2:16) at conversion, and daily forgives our sins (1 John 1:9).
- ii. God renews our minds (Rom. 12:1-2) in the knowledge of Christ (2 Cor. 4:6; Eph. 1:17; Col. 2:2), especially of His righteousness received by faith (Rom. 3:21-22)
  - iii. God completes this process by making us “openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment” (WSC 38) and enabling us to know Him fully, even as we are fully known (1 Cor. 13:12)

<b>The Application of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment</b>
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## **XII. Class Member’s Questions & Issues**

### **XIII. Duties Required – WLC 108**

- A. the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in his word; particularly
  - i. prayer and thanksgiving in the name of Christ;
  - ii. the reading, preaching, and hearing of the word;
  - iii. the administration and receiving of the sacraments;
  - iv. church government and discipline;
  - v. the ministry and maintenance thereof;
  - vi. religious fasting;
  - vii. swearing by the name of God, and vowing unto him:
- B. as also the disapproving, detesting, opposing, all false worship;
- C. and, according to each one's place and calling, removing it, and all monuments of idolatry.

### **XIV. Sins Forbidden – WLC 109**

- A. The sins forbidden in the second commandment are,
  - i. all devising, counseling, commanding, using, and any wise approving, any religious worship not instituted by God himself;
  - ii. the making any representation of God, of all or of any of the three persons, either inwardly in our mind, or outwardly in any kind of image or likeness of any creature whatsoever;
  - iii. all worshiping of it, or God in it or by it; the making of any representation of feigned deities, and all worship of them, or service belonging to them;
  - iv. all superstitious devices, corrupting the worship of God, adding to it, or taking from it, whether invented and taken up of ourselves, or received by tradition from others, though under the title of antiquity, custom, devotion, good intent, or any other pretense whatsoever;
  - v. simony;
  - vi. sacrilege;
  - vii. all neglect, contempt, hindering, and opposing the worship and ordinances which God hath appointed.

### **XV. Reasons Annexed**

- A. The reasons annexed to the second commandment...are,
  - i. besides God's sovereignty over us, and propriety in us, his fervent zeal for his own

worship, and his revengeful indignation against all false worship, as being a spiritual whoredom;

- ii. accounting the breakers of this commandment such as hate him, and threatening to punish them unto divers generations;
- iii. and esteeming the observers of it such as love him and keep his commandments, and promising mercy to them unto many generations.

#### **XVI. Regulative Principle**

A. Elements of worship vs. circumstances of worship

#### **XVII. Pictures of Jesus**

A. Our congregation's view: Allowable as an aid to *teaching*, but not *worship*

B. In Sunday School?

- i. Yes.

C. In the film "*The Passion of the Christ*"?

- i. Yes, if the image doesn't take interpretive priority in your worship of God.
- ii. Otherwise, no!

D. Crucifixes with Christ's body?

E. Crosses without Christ's body?

## The 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment

*You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain,  
for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.  
Exodus 20:7*

### The Meaning of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment

#### I. Command: “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain”

##### A. The Name of Yahweh

i. God’s name “Yahweh” was not known/understood before Exodus 3

a) **Ex. 6:3:** *I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them.*

ii. God’s name “Yahweh” is introduced in Exodus 3 when God called Moses

a) God’s responses to Moses’ 4 objections indicate the meaning of “Yahweh”

<u>Moses</u>	<u>God</u>
3:11 “Who am I?” = <i>insignificance</i>	“I will be with you” = <i>presence</i>
3:13 “What is his name?” = <i>no fulfilled promises, reputation, renown</i>	“I AM WHO I AM...I promise...I will stretch out my hand and strike...I will give...favor” = <i>activity, reputation, redemption</i>
4:1 “They will not believe me” = <i>powerless</i>	“signs” = <i>power</i>
4:10 “I am not eloquent” = <i>cannot act</i>	“I will be with your mouth and teach you what to speak” = <i>enables to act</i>
4:13 “Send someone else” = <i>wrong person!</i>	“Aaron...I will be with your mouth” = <i>redeeming our person</i>

b) The name “Yahweh” speaks of both God’s transcendent *existence* outside of creation and His immanent *activity* in creation

- The meaning of God’s name is found first in its reference to **Himself**; and not to anything else. God is *a se* (independent), and self-authenticating: “*I AM WHO I AM*”
  - Note Ex. 3’s repeated use of the emphatic “I” (3:6, 11, 12, 19), “I AM / YHWH” (3:12, 14, 15, 16, 18), and first person verbs – *God* is the solution to Israel’s problems
- The meaning of God’s name was revealed in His **past acts of redemption**: “*the God of Abraham...Isaac...and Jacob*” = all of Genesis!
- The meaning of God’s name will be revealed in His **future acts of redemption**: lit. “*I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE*” = by extension, all of Exodus – Revelation!
  - **v. 17:** *I promise that I will bring you up out of the affliction of Egypt*
  - **vv. 19-22:** *19 The king of Egypt will not let you go unless compelled by a mighty hand. 20 So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt...I will give this people favor in the sight of the Egyptians*
  - **Ex. 6:7:** *I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians.*
  - **Ex. 7:5:** *The Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD, when I stretch out my hand*

against Egypt and bring out the people of Israel from among them. Cf. 7:5, 17; 8:22; 10:2; 14:4, 13, 18; 20:2!

- This indeed happened: Through the plagues & Exodus, God's name became known throughout the Ancient Near East. The Egyptians (Ex. 14:25) and even Rahab the Canaanite (Josh. 2:11) feared the LORD
  - **Ex. 14:25:** *The Egyptians said, "Let us flee from before Israel, for the LORD fights for them against the Egyptians."*
- God's name was the basis of His redeeming activity in the restoration & the New Covenant (Ezek. 6:13; 7:27; 11:10; 12:16; 36:22-23; 37:26-28), and God's redeeming activity and power is in view each time Christ applies the phrase "I am" to Himself (John 4:26; 6:35, 48; 8:12; 10:7, 9; 10:11; 11:25; 15:1, 5; 18:5)

c) God's name signifies His **powerfully active presence in redemption**; His **presence in redemptive activity**. Cf. Ex. 33:19; Is. 25:9; 41:4; 42:5-9; 45:5; Amos 4:13; 5:27.

## B. "Take...in vain"

i. NIV: "misuse"

ii. Literally, "take...for nothing"

iii. "Take" - receive, handle, use, act

a) We are responsible to receive, respond to, and cooperate with God's redeeming activity; to act in accord with His reputation for holiness.

- **Ezekiel 36:22-23:** *22 Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. 23 And I will vindicate the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them. And the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Lord GOD, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.*
- **Ezek. 37:28:** *Then the nations will know that I am the LORD who sanctifies Israel, when my sanctuary is in their midst forevermore.*

b) God's redemptive presence, power, and activity demands a corresponding holiness of life in us, as Lev. 19 demonstrates

- Main point: **Lev. 19:2-4:** *You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God am holy.*
- Seen in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment: **Lev. 19:12:** *You shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God: I am the LORD.*
- Conclusion: **Lev. 19:37:** *And you shall observe all my statutes and all my rules, and do them: I am the LORD.* Cf. Lev. 18:2-5; 20: 7-8, 26; 22:31-33

c) Throughout Lev. 17-26 God declares that we should be holy, because "*I am the LORD who sanctifies you.*"

d) God's activity demands that we keep and actually *do* each of the commandments, because as Lev. 19 repeats for nearly every commandment, "I am the LORD your God."

- 2<sup>nd</sup> C: vv. 4-8, 26-28, 31
- 3<sup>rd</sup> C: vv. 12
- 4<sup>th</sup> C: vv. 3, 30
- 5<sup>th</sup> C: vv. 3, 32
- 6<sup>th</sup> C: vv. 13-14, 17-18, 34
- 7<sup>th</sup> C: vv. 19-25, 29
- 8<sup>th</sup> C: vv. 9-11
- 9<sup>th</sup> C: vv. 11, 15-16, 18, 35-36

iv. "In vain"

a) Emptiness, nothingness, vanity

b) To take God's name "for nothing" is to consider Him, His activity, and His resulting reputation, to be nothing. To be empty. To be dead.

## II.Reason

A. "The LORD will not hold him guiltless"

- i. *Because* God is active, He *responds* to those who act as if He is not active.
- ii. The *holiness* of God's activity demands the *punishment* of man's unholy activity.
  - a) *Ezek. 7:27: The king mourns, the prince is wrapped in despair, and the hands of the people of the land are paralyzed by terror. According to their way I will do to them, and according to their judgments I will judge them, and they shall know that I am the LORD."*

### The Issue of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment

## III.The Two Ethical Dynamics of the Covenant: God's Sovereign Administration & Man's Responsible Reception

A. Because God is sovereignly active in redeeming us, we are responsible to receive & respond to His activity accordingly. "Be holy, for I am holy."

B. Maintain the right order of priority

- i. The right order: God's sovereignty is primary; man's responsibility is secondary.
- ii. We must keep God's sovereign administration of the covenant (His name--His reputation based on what He does) primary and man's responsible reception of/activity within the covenant ("take" His reputation seriously in all of life) secondary.
- iii. Just as was the case with the 1<sup>st</sup> Commandment's *commitments & requirements*, and the 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandment's *words & deeds*, to ever place the second thing first is to put the cart before the horse, and to pervert God's covenant with us.
  - a) 1<sup>st</sup> C: God's *commitments* are foundational for His *requirements*; else we fail to recognize Him as the true God, and our God, and seek to follow His law without depending first on His promise (equals antitheism, apostasy, unbelief, and legalism/works righteousness)
  - b) 2<sup>nd</sup> C: God's *words* interpret His *deeds*; else we imagine our own interpretation of His deeds, and fail to believe & obey His words (equals idolatry)
  - c) 3<sup>rd</sup> C: *God's activity* sustains, redeems, leads, and obligates *our own*; else we trust in and give honor to our own strength rather than in His alone (equals Pelagianism)

## IV.Put Simply

A. Krabbendam: Love God for what He ***DOES***

B. Revised: Love God *in accord with* what He does

## V.Refinement of terms:

A. *Our* ethical activity needs to be brought into accord with *God's*

### The Biblical Commentary on the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment

## VI.In Deuteronomy 14: God redeems you to life from death

A. In the past: Do not engage in hopeless pagan grieving rituals for the dead 1-2

B. In the present: Do not eat animals "vitality" associated with death 3-21

- i. Parted hoof / chew cud: Clean 4-6
- ii. Four-footed & don't part hoof: killers! Part hoof & don't chew cud: eat dead & disgusting things. All unclean. 7-8

- iii. Water animals with fins & scales: clean. No fins or scales: unpleasant, formless, loathsome: unclean. 9-10
- iv. Birds of prey: killers! Vultures: scavengers! Unclean. 11-18
- v. Insects that eat dead or live animals: unclean! 19
- vi. Clean birds: clean. 20
- vii. Animals that die naturally: unclean. 21a
- C. In the future: Do not ward off death via pagan rituals
  - i. Kid in its mother's milk: forcing life into death to secure life in future 21b
  - ii. Offer God tithes with rejoicing trusting He will provide in the future. Brings the LORD's blessing "*in all the work of your hands that you do.*" 22-29

## **VII. In the History of Redemption**

- A. The Old Covenant Problem
  - i. Man's unholy life
- B. The New Covenant Promise
  - i. God will bring man's activity into accord with His own by putting His Spirit in us and causing us to walk in His statutes (Ezek. 36:27)
- C. The New Covenant Fulfillment
  - i. God sanctified us historically in Christ's death (Heb. 10:10, 14), definitively at our conversion (1 Cor. 6:11), sanctifies us progressively in this life (Heb. 10:14), and will sanctify us completely in our final glorification (Zech. 14:20; 1 Thess. 3:13; Rev. 19:7-8; 21:2)

### **The Application of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Commandment**

## **VIII. Class Member's Questions & Issues**

### **IX. Duties Required – WLC 112**

- A. The third commandment requires,
  - i. That the name of God, his titles, attributes, ordinances, the word, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows, lots, his works, and whatsoever else there is whereby he makes himself known,
  - ii. be holily and reverently used in thought, meditation, word, and writing; by an holy profession, and answerable conversation,
  - iii. to the glory of God, and the good of ourselves, and others.

### **X. Sins Forbidden – WLC 113**

- A. The sins forbidden in the third commandment are,
  - i. the not using of God's name as is required;
  - ii. and the abuse of it in an ignorant, vain, irreverent, profane, superstitious, or wicked mentioning or otherwise using
  - iii. his titles, attributes, ordinances, or works,
    - a) by blasphemy, perjury;
    - b) all sinful cursings, oaths, vows, and lots;
    - c) violating of our oaths and vows, if lawful;
    - d) and fulfilling them, if of things unlawful;

- e) murmuring and quarreling at, curious prying into, and misapplying of God's decrees and providences;
- f) misinterpreting, misapplying, or any way perverting the word, or any part of it, to profane jests, curious or unprofitable questions, vain janglings, or the maintaining of false doctrines;
- g) abusing it, the creatures, or anything contained under the name of God, to charms, or sinful lusts and practices;
- h) the maligning, scorning, reviling, or any wise opposing of God's truth, grace, and ways;
- i) making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for sinister ends;
- j) being ashamed of it, or a shame to it, by unconformable, unwise, unfruitful, and offensive walking, or backsliding from it.

## **XI.Reasons Annexed**

- A.The reasons annexed to the third commandment...are,
- i. because he is the Lord and our God, therefore his name is not to be profaned, or any way abused by us;
  - ii.especially because he will be so far from acquitting and sparing the transgressors of this commandment, as that he will not suffer them to escape his righteous judgment, albeit many such escape the censures and punishments of men.

## **XII.Oaths**

- A.Forbidden? No; only abuses forbidden. Matt. 5:33-37; James 5:12
- B.Allowed. Gen. 24:304, 26:28; 31:44-53; 50:24; Ex. 22:11; Lev. 19:12; Deut. 6:13; Josh. 9:20; 23:7; 1 Sam. 14:24, 26; 19:6; 2 Chron. 15:12-15; Neh. 5:12-13; Ps. 89:35-36; Jer. 42:5; 2 Cor. 1:23; Heb. 6:16.
- C.Minced oaths employing words which sound like God's name or sound like words which describe His activity dishonor God

## **XIII.Worry**

- A. *Phil. 4:4-7: 4 Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. 5 Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; 6 do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. 7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*
- B.2 Cor. 3: We are living epistles of Christ by the Spirit's work in us
- C.2 Tim. 1:6-7: 6 For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands, 7 for God gave us a spirit not of fear but of power and love and self-control.
- D.Rom. 8:28: And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.
- E. Rom. 8:38-39: For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.
- F. Matt. 6:31-33: 31 Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' 32 For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all. 33 But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

# The 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment, Part 1: Reason & Passage Survey

*(Part 2 will cover the Application of the commandment)*

## The Issue of the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment

### I. Put Simply

A. Krabbendam: Love God on the **DAY** He has set apart

### II. More generally:

A. *Our* calendar needs to be brought into accord with *God's*

i. What are the most significant events on God's calendar?

## The Text of the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment Exodus 20:8-11; Deuteronomy 5:12-15

### I. Outline

#### Command

*8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

*[Deut. 5:12 Observe/keep/preserve the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you.]*

#### Means of keeping the command

*9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work,*

*10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates.*

*[Deut. 5:14 ...that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you.]*

#### Reason to keep the command

*11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.*

*[Deut. 5:15 You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.]*

### II. Differences between Exodus & Deuteronomy

A. Exodus: Right after exiting Egypt; looks back to creation week – “Remember...rested the seventh day”

B. Deuteronomy: Right before entering Canaan; looks back to God's act of redemption in Exodus & God's subsequent command at Sinai – “Observe...commanded...remember...Egypt...brought you out...commanded”

## The Reason for Keeping the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment

### III. Its reasoning proceeds from the reason to the command to the means

#### B. Central questions

- i. Perpetually binding? Creation ordinance or Exodus-ordinance?
- ii. Change & continuity from Saturday to Sunday legitimate? To what extent?

### IV. Reason: “The relationship within the rest”

#### A. God’s calendar sets our calendar – we cannot forget our anniversary!

#### iii. The 4 greatest events in history: creation, Exodus, resurrection, 2<sup>nd</sup> coming.

a) *Deuteronomy 4:32: For ask now of the days that are past, which were before you, since the day that God created man on the earth, and ask from one end of heaven to the other, whether such a great thing as this has ever happened or was ever heard of.*

<i>Event</i>	<i>Results in a change of day</i>
The covenant relationship...	For this reason...
1 begun on the 7 <sup>th</sup> day of <b>creation</b>	we celebrate the day that relationship <b>began</b> ,
2 was restored historically, nationally, & experientially in the <b>Exodus</b> ,	
3 and definitively, once-for-all in <b>Christ’s resurrection</b> ,	the day on which it was definitively <b>restored</b> in Christ’s resurrection,
4 and will be perfected at the <b>2<sup>nd</sup> coming</b> of Christ.	and we will celebrate the <b>endless</b> day after Christ returns.

C. God did not rest because He was *tired*, or in order to depart from creation, but in order to *enjoy* and be “refreshed” in His newly-made creation, in *covenant relationship* with it. This forms the pattern for man—man should enjoy and be “refreshed” in his covenant relationship with God on the Sabbath.

- i. *Gen. 1:31: And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.*
- ii. *Gen. 2:2-3: 2 And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. 3 So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.*
- iii. *Ex. 31:17: in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed.*
- iv. *Ex. 23:12: the seventh day you shall rest; that your ox and your donkey may have rest, and the son of your servant woman, and the alien, may be refreshed.*
- v. *Prov. 8:22-23: 22 "The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. 23 Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth.*
- vi. *Prov. 8:29-31: 29 when he marked out the foundations of the earth, 30 then I was beside him, like a master workman, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing before him always, 31 rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the children of man.*

## The Biblical Commentary on the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment

### V. Gen. 2:2-3 – origin must be traced back to creation

D. God made the seventh day...

- i. “Rested”: a day with a pattern to follow
- ii. “Blessed”: a day of spiritual fruitfulness & growth
- iii. “Set apart”: a day dedicated to fellowship with & service to Him

E. Ex. 20:11 underscores its Edenic institution

F. Mark 2:27-28 says “*the Sabbath was made for man;*” this refers to creation & man in general, not just Israelites

### III. Absence from creation to the wilderness journey

A. But obligation could still have remained – parallel in creation ordinance of monogamous marriage not observed by patriarchs in Genesis. Cf. Matt. 19:4-8

### IV. Mosaic legislation

A. Ex. 16:22-31 – the Sabbath was nothing new at this stage!

- i. v. 22 – “automatically” gathering extra on 6<sup>th</sup> day
- ii. vv. 28-29 – not a new law

B. Ex. 20:8-11

- i. “Remember” - points to creation ordinance
- ii. “Six days” uses a numeral, not an ordinal (ordinals are “first, second...sixth”). “Seventh” is an ordinal. Numerals are used to count; ordinals are used to order. So, the “seventh” day is not literally the “seventh” in the order of the week, but rather is only the 7<sup>th</sup> in the order of *counting*. The creation week, not the commandment, made the 7<sup>th</sup> day of the week the Sabbath. So the day was free to change to the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the week upon Christ’s resurrection.
- iii. The 4<sup>th</sup> commandment is the capstone of the first 3:
  - a) 1<sup>st</sup>: Love God for who He IS: rest before & delight in God
  - b) 2<sup>nd</sup>: Love God for what He SAYS: communicate with God in Word & prayer
  - c) 3<sup>rd</sup>: Love God for what He DOES: perform works of necessity & mercy

C. Mosaic case law

- i. Ex. 23:12 – Sabbath is for the refreshment of man
- ii. Ex. 31:12-17 – Sabbath a sign that God owns & sanctifies us. Is holy for us, requires solemn rest, holy to the Lord. Death penalty for breaking it! Don’t build tabernacle without resting to worship!
- iii. Ex. 35:1-3 – No fires on Sabbath = no work
- iv. Lev. 23-25 – Cycle of sabbaths patterned after weekly Sabbath: seven feasts: Passover, Pentecost, trumpets (seventh new moon feast), Day of Atonement, Tabernacles, sabbath (7<sup>th</sup>) year, year of Jubilee.
  - a) Rest remains central, but work only absolutely prohibited on Day of Atonement
  - b) Rest always involves joy & rejoicing in every area of life: forgiveness, freedom from debt, slavery, labor.
  - c) Rest remains *spiritual* (not merely humanitarian or agrarian) at its core; it is rest *in the LORD*

v.Num. 15:32-36 – gathering sticks constitutes rejection of covenant; death penalty

vi.Deut. 15:1-16:17

a) Resting one year out of seven expressed trust in God’s providence by... 15:1-18

- Forgiving debts 1-6
- Lending to the poor 7-11
- Setting slaves free 12-18

b) The Sabbath is about delighting in God as seen in... 15:19-16:17

- Giving the firstlings of the flock to the Lord & eating meat before Him, because of His absolute ownership 15:19-23
- The feast of Passover & Unleavened Bread, because sin is removed through blood 16:1-8
- The Feast of Pentecost because firstfruits symbolize holy devotion to God 16:9-12
- The Feast of Tabernacles because of God’s numerous blessings 16:13-15
- The freewill offerings at these feasts 16:16-17

## V. Historical Books

A.Neh. 10:31; 13:15-22 – no *buying* on Sabbath, “*the Sabbath*” distinct from “*the Sabbaths, the new moons, the appointed feasts.*” Levites worked on Sabbath – guarded gates!

## VI. Prophetical Books

A.Is. 1:13-14 – Hypocrisy, formalism, ritualism condemned

B.Is. 56:2-6 – Sabbath-keeping brings blessing, honor, God’s presence, joy, God’s acceptance

C.Is. 58:13-14: *13 If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; 14 then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.*

D.Is. 66:23 – NT & New Earth worship will be from Sabbath to Sabbath

E.Jer. 17:19-27 – Not keeping Sabbath brought punishment of Exile. Cf. 2 Chron. 36:20-21

F.Ezek. 20:12-24; 22:8, 26; 23:38; 36:25-27 – Polluting Sabbaths brings punishment; New Covenant blessings described in terms of obedience to Mosaic law

G.Ezek. 44:24; 45:17 – New Covenant worship will include rest that does not exclude a cycle of 7 days.

## VII. In the New Testament

A. Pharisees’ view of 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment

i. Sought to earn salvation thereby

ii. It was a legalistic burden. Matt. 12:1-8; Mark 2:23-28; Luke 6:1-11; John 5:1-15

iii. When Jesus rejected their legalistic resting in favor of a rest that involved delight, worship, & deeds of necessity & mercy, they sought the death penalty. Matt. 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-6; Luke 6:11; John 5:16-18

B. Jesus kept the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment

i. He rested, delighted in His Father, attended worship & read Scripture/taught on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16, 31, 44), and did works of fellowship & service (above; Luke 14:1-24).

ii. He kept the Sabbath by doing His Father’s work. John 5:36

iii. In His rest, He gave saving rest to others on the Sabbath. Luke 4:17-21

iv. He did not end the seven-day cycle! Matt. 24:20: *“Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.”* The cycle would continue until at least 70 AD. Cf. Acts 13:14, 27, 42, 44; 15:21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4

### C. After Christ's resurrection

- i. Normal practices of Sabbath observance began to take place on the first day of the week rather than the seventh.
  - a) In John 20:19-23 Christ leads the first church service. He meets with them again eight days later in 20:24-29. The Lord of the Sabbath had changed the day by rising from the dead and sanctifying a greater day. Just as He changed circumcision to baptism, and the Passover to the Lord's Supper, without explicitly stating the change was taking place, He made the change.
  - b) On the first day of Pentecost, the first day of the week, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the church.
  - c) Acts 20:7 – first day of week, worship service
  - d) 1 Cor. 16:2 – offerings collected on 1<sup>st</sup> day of week
  - e) Rev. 1:10 – John calls this day the “Day of the Lord.”

### D. Paul's epistles combat Judaizers' works righteousness & retention of OT

#### Sabbatical system

- i. Col. 2:16-17; Gal. 4:9-11
  - a) **Col. 2:16-17:** *16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*
  - b) “Sabbaths” is *plural*. This refers to the whole OT *sabbatical system*, including all of the feasts & holy days, and does not directly call the weekly Sabbath into question. (Lev. 23-25; 1 Chron. 23:31; Neh. 10:33; Ps. 81:3; Is. 1:13; Ezek. 45:17; 46:1-3; Amos 8:5) The sabbatical system was built to express the point of the weekly Sabbath, and as such is less central to, and less the substance of, the Old Covenant than was the weekly Sabbath. The parts of the system were shadows, symbols, meant to no longer be practiced when the substance came in Christ.
  - c) Col. 2:14 does not mean God's moral law does not bind us, but that we are no longer condemned by it. The “record of debt” has rightful authority; the authorities in v. 15 are shamed because they did not have rightful authority. So the authorities in v. 15 are not God's law! Are the items in v. 16 this rightful record or these spurious authorities? They are a combination of both! They are the good ceremonies of the law, used in an evil way.
  - d) Hand & fingers: The fingers of obedience to the law have no power or unity without the hand of love to move them. No Judaizing legalism! But to the same degree, the hand of love has no grip if not through the fingers of obedience. No antinomianism!
  - e) Note that Paul certainly honored the first day of the week (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2) and Pentecost (Acts 20:16).
- ii. Rom. 14:5-6
  - a) **Rom. 14:5-6:** *5 One person esteems one day as better than another, while another esteems all days alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind. 6 The one who observes the day, observes it in honor of the Lord. The one who eats, eats in honor of the Lord, since he gives thanks to God, while the one who abstains, abstains in honor of the Lord and gives thanks to God.*
  - b) A strong argument: V. 5 could seem to destroy the uniqueness of the one day out of seven.
  - c) Convincing counter-arguments:
    - It is difficult to see how a person observing the first day of the week as a memorial of

Christ's resurrection would be called "weak!"

- The weekly Sabbath is a creation ordinance, not part of the Levitical/Mosaic Sabbatical system of feasts & holy days
- The NT itself gives the first day of the week special importance, as seen above.

#### E. Hebrews 10:23-29

i. **Heb. 10:23-25:** *23 Let us hold fast the **confession** of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how to **stir up one another to love and good works**, 25 not neglecting to **meet together**, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another**, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

ii. Gathering to take part in the special acts of worship is still commanded.

iii. Breaking this command brings God's vengeance (vv. 26-31) akin to the death penalty in Ex. 31:13-15 for breaking the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment. Likely Heb. 25 is intentionally reiterating the obligation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment, with the significance, but not the practice, of its death penalty, in full view.

#### F. Hebrews 3:7-4:11

i. Because of Israel's rebellion, at the border of Canaan God said "*They shall not enter my rest.*" (3:11) Yet He allowed those who believed to enter later. (4:7) This was possible because He had been resting from His creative work from the foundation of the world in order to delight in covenant fellowship with man (4:3). This rest initially denied to Israel was not merely the political, civil, worldly rest from enemies in the land of Canaan which God gave the people through Joshua, but is a greater rest—a spiritual rest; the *covenant relationship* within the outward rest—else it would have been fully given under Joshua and not offered again later. (4:8) Because God is still resting in order to delight in covenant fellowship with man, "there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God" to enter into "today." What is required to enter this rest is to turn away from and rest from our works (4:10), not harden our hearts, but delight in God (3:8, 10; 4:7), and enter into covenant fellowship with Him (3:14) through faith (3:12, 19; 4:2-3) and obedience (3:12, 13, 15-18; 4:1, 6, 11).

### VIII. Conclusion

A. There is no reason to believe the Sabbath institution is anything but a creation ordinance.

B. There is every reason to believe the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment is still in force today, with the understanding that the seventh day of the week was replaced by the first day of the week following the resurrection of Christ.

C. Again, neither Judaistic legalism nor antinomianism will suffice! Observance of this day must be written on our hearts, and be the culmination of our cheerful and heartfelt obedience to the first three commandments.

i. Negatively, this means abstinence from normal, everyday work, in order to worship God.

ii. Positively, this means:

- a) worshipful fellowship with God (1<sup>st</sup> C!)
- b) intent listening to God in His word (2<sup>nd</sup> C!)
- c) and cheerful labor for God in works of necessity & mercy (3<sup>rd</sup> C!)

D. Calvin strikes this balance well

- i. No legalism: Genevan Catechism & Institutes 2.8.32-34 – ceremonial sabbath system has been abolished; Lord’s day observance must not be Judaism
- ii.No antinomianism: Sermon on Deut. 5 – “shop windows are shut on the Lord’s Day,” people “travel not after the common order and fashion of men,” and “If we employ the Lord’s Day to make good cheer, to sport ourselves, to go to the same games and pastimes, shall God in this be honored? Is this not the unhallowing of His name?”

<b>The Application of the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment</b>
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**IX.Command: “Keep the Sabbath day holy”**

**X.Means: “Rest in order to worship”**

**VI.Class Member’s Questions & Issues**

**VII.Duties Required – WLC 112**

**VIII.Sins Forbidden – WLC 113**

**IX.Reasons Annexed**

**X.Works of necessity and mercy**

**XI.What Activities Are Appropriate?**

A.“Worldly recreations?”

- i. Fellowship is commanded on the Lord’s Day, so games that promote fellowship are allowed
- ii.It must be *Christian* fellowship. Fellowship centering in God’s word, prayer, & praise is central; fellowship utilizing games is peripheral
- iii.Paul does not condemn sports, but treats them as a good profession or occupation
- iv.Sports: unorganized sports qualify as fellowship; organized sports qualify as weekday work

B.“Worldly employments?”

- i. Utilities, hospitals, gas stations

## The 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment, Part 2: Passage Survey & Application

### The Biblical Commentary on the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment

#### I. Mosaic legislation

##### A. Mosaic case law

- i. Lev. 23-25 – Cycle of sabbaths patterned after weekly Sabbath: seven feasts: Passover, Pentecost, trumpets (seventh new moon feast), Day of Atonement, Tabernacles, sabbath (7<sup>th</sup>) year, year of Jubilee.

#### II. Historical Books

- A. Neh. 10:31; 13:15-22 – no *buying* on Sabbath, “*the Sabbath*” distinct from “*the Sabbaths, the new moons, the appointed feasts.*” Levites worked on Sabbath – guarded gates!

#### III. Prophetical Books

- A. Is. 58:13-14: *13 If you turn back your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, or seeking your own pleasure, or talking idly; 14 then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride on the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.*

#### IV. In the New Testament

- A. Pharisees’ view of 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment: works-righteousness, legalistic burden

##### B. Jesus kept the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment

- i. He rested, delighted in His Father, attended worship & read Scripture/taught on the Sabbath (Luke 4:16, 31, 44), and did works of fellowship & service (above; Luke 14:1-24).
- ii. He did not end the seven-day cycle! Matt. 24:20: “*Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath.*” The cycle would continue until at least 70 AD. Cf. Acts 13:14, 27, 42, 44; 15:21; 16:13; 17:2; 18:4

##### C. After Christ’s resurrection

- i. Normal practices of Sabbath observance began to take place on the first day of the week rather than the seventh.

##### D. Paul’s epistles combat Judaizers’ works righteousness & retention of OT Sabbatical system

- i. Col. 2:16-17; Gal. 4:9-11

a) **Col. 2:16-17:** *16 Therefore let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths. 17 These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ.*

b) “Sabbaths” is *plural*. This refers to the whole OT *sabbatical system*, including all of the feasts & holy days, and does not directly call the weekly Sabbath into question. Col. 2:14 does not mean God’s moral law does not bind us, but that we are no longer condemned by it.

##### E. Hebrews 10:23-29

- i. **Heb. 10:23-25:** *23 Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, 25 not*

*neglecting to **meet together**, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another**, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.*

ii. Gathering to take part in the special acts of worship is still commanded.

#### F. Hebrews 3:7-4:11

- i. Because of Israel's rebellion, at the border of Canaan God said "*They shall not enter my rest.*" (3:11) Yet He allowed those who believed to enter later. (4:7) This was possible because He had been resting from His creative work from the foundation of the world in order to delight in covenant fellowship with man (4:3). This rest initially denied to Israel was not merely the political, civil, worldly rest from enemies in the land of Canaan which God gave the people through Joshua, but is a greater rest—a spiritual rest; the *covenant relationship* within the outward rest—else it would have been fully given under Joshua and not offered again later. (4:8) Because God is still resting in order to delight in covenant fellowship with man, "there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God" to enter into "today." What is required to enter this rest is to turn away from and rest from our works (4:10), not harden our hearts, but delight in God (3:8, 10; 4:7), and enter into covenant fellowship with Him (3:14) through faith (3:12, 19; 4:2-3) and obedience (3:12, 13, 15-18; 4:1, 6, 11).

#### V. Conclusion

- A. There is no reason to believe the Sabbath institution is anything but a creation ordinance.
- B. There is every reason to believe the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment is still in force today, with the understanding that the seventh day of the week was replaced by the first day of the week following the resurrection of Christ.
- C. Again, neither Judaistic legalism nor antinomianism will suffice! Observance of this day must be written on our hearts, and be the culmination of our cheerful and heartfelt obedience to the first three commandments.

<b>The Application of the 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment</b>
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#### VI. Command: "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy"

#### VII. Means: Rest in order to worship: "the seventh...you shall not do any work"

##### A. Work

- i. Encompasses all activities of the 6 days
- ii. Is productive & reigning - "*be fruitful, and multiply, fill the earth, and subdue it. Have dominion...*"
- iii. Is completely ceased on the 7<sup>th</sup> day

##### B. Worship

- i. Special, not general, acts of worship
- ii. Is implicitly what the whole 7<sup>th</sup> day is for, since it is not for work

##### C. The relation between 6-day work & 7<sup>th</sup> day worship: It's necessary to "rest in order to worship"

- i. Certainly integrated:
  - a) Worshipful work: Rom. 12:1 implies that our 6 day work must be full of worship; it must

be worship-ful.

b) Work-full worship

- Required:
  - Activity: “Keep” in the 4th commandment
  - Return whole of life to God: Our resting from labor in order in worship to return that labor and its fruits (note the offering) wholly and completely to God who gave it to us (Gen. 4:3-5; 22; Ex. 29:18; 31:17--God was refreshed in His creation, cf. Prov. 8:31; Ps. 103:1-5; 116; 2 Chron. 32:25; Rom. 11:36; 2 Cor. 8-9; 8:5; Phi. 4:18-20; Rev. 4:9-11)
- Permitted:
  - Works of necessity & mercy: Christ’s harvesting (Matt. 12:1-6 - necessity) and healing (Matt. 12:7-13 - mercy) on the Sabbath
  - Tiring effort: Paul’s 24 hours of no sleep on the Sabbath in Acts 20:7-11

ii. But also distinct:

- a) Work enables worship. This remains the goal of works of necessity & mercy. Ex. 16:23-30; Josh. 6:3-4, 2 Kings 11:5, 7, 9; 1 Chron. 9:25; 2 Chron. 23:4, 8; Neh. 4:9, 16; 7:3; 13:22; Matt. 12:1-13 and 1 Cor. 11:33-34.
- b) Work is presented in worship. See “work-full worship” above.
- c) Worship enables work. Is. 58:13-14 (with Ex. 31:14-15; Lev. 25; Is. 56:2; Jer. 17:24-27); Eph. 4:11-16.
- d) Worship is lived-out in work. Rom. 12:1’s “therefore.”
- e) Work glorifies God indirectly; worship glorifies God directly.

iii. So, you can’t work and worship at the same time. If the sabbath requirement is still binding today as argued above, we must rest the *whole* day in order to worship the *whole* day.

## VIII. Works of necessity and mercy

### A. Biblical data

i. OT examples:

- a) Army marched around Jericho 7 days – Josh. 6:15
- b) Levites worked to support worship – 1 Chron. 9:32
- c) David ate showbread – 1 Sam. 21:6
- d) Guards guarded the temple gates 7 days – 2 Kings 11:5, 7, 9

ii. Jesus’ example & teaching: harvesting & healing: Matthew 12:1-14; Mark 2:23-3:6; Luke 6:1-11; 13:10-17; 14:5; John 5:9-11; 7:22-24; 9:14-17

### B. Defined

- i. Works of necessity: tasks necessary to enable you or someone else to take part in public & private Sabbath worship
- ii. Works of mercy: tasks merciful toward someone in dire need such that it would make you a hypocrite to neglect helping the person on the Sabbath, because your neglect would be out of accord with the nature of the worship of that day; it is more in accord with worship to help the person than to let them suffer.
- iii. These works are worship-centered and worship-enabling

## IX. What Activities Are Appropriate?

### A. Public worship

- i. The word, prayer, and the sacraments

### B. Private worship

- i. Group & individual times in word, prayer, songs, edifying conversation

### C. Rest

- i. "Keep" implies activity is at the core. Sleeping *all day* is not an option.
- ii. "Rest" implies work would prevent worship; the sleep necessary to enable worship is allowed.
- iii. "Marathon" Sundays? No, if beyond a person's capacity ("rest!"). Yes, as God grants the ability ("keep!")

### D. "Worldly employments?"

- i. Allowable: Police, firefighters, utilities, hospitals, gas stations, milking, phone calls
- ii. Not allowable: vocational, public, educational works
- iii. Gray areas: Harvesting, public transportation, mail, 24/7 industries - steel, chemical, laboratories

### E. "Worldly recreations?"

- i. Not allowable: Sports, restaurants; profit, pleasure, prattle
- ii. Gray areas: Garden, pool, park, games, TV, radio
- iii. Sports:
  - a) Fellowship is commanded on the Lord's Day, so games that promote fellowship are allowed
  - b) It must be *Christian* fellowship. Fellowship centering in God's word, prayer, & praise is central; fellowship utilizing games is peripheral
  - c) Paul does not condemn sports, but treats them as a good profession or occupation
  - d) So, sports: unorganized sports qualify as fellowship; organized sports qualify as weekday work
  - e) Watching sports? If truly Christian fellowship, yes; if merely your own pleasure, no. Is. 58:13!

### F. Buying/dining out

- i. Deut. 5:14 - "*that your male servant...may rest*"
- ii. Neh. 10:31; 13:15-22 implies that not only selling, but buying, was wrong because opposed to keeping the Sabbath holy.

## X. Larger Catechism

### A. Duties Required – WLC 116

- i. The fourth commandment requireth of all men
  - a) the sanctifying or keeping holy to God such set times as he hath appointed in his word, expressly one whole day in seven;
  - b) which was the seventh from the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, and the first day of the week ever since, and so to continue to the end of the world;
  - c) which is the Christian sabbath, and in the New Testament called The Lord's Day.

### B. How sanctified? WLC 117

- i. The sabbath or Lord's day is to be sanctified by
  - a) an holy resting all the day, not only from such works as are at all times sinful, but even from such worldly employments and recreations as are on other days lawful;
  - b) and making it our delight to spend the whole time (except so much of it as is to be taken up in works of necessity and mercy) in the public and private exercises of God's worship;
  - c) and, to that end, we are to prepare our hearts, and with such foresight, diligence, and moderation, to dispose and seasonably dispatch our worldly business, that we may be the more free and fit for the duties of that day.

### C. Sins forbidden – WLC 119

- i. The sins forbidden in the fourth commandment are,
  - a) all omissions of the duties required, all careless, negligent, and unprofitable performing of them, and being weary of them;
  - b) all profaning the day by idleness, and doing that which is in itself sinful;
  - c) and by all needless works, words, and thoughts, about our worldly employments and recreations.

# The 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment

*“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.” Exodus 20:12*

## The Meaning of the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment

### I. The Issue: Authority Relationships

A. Stated: Love our neighbor by honoring his authority

### II. The order of the last 6 commandments

A. Why does this commandment take the lead? Because it is about leadership! A proper understanding of authority leads to obedience & blessing in all human relationships.

B. Some prioritization evident: Love our neighbor by honoring his...

- i. Authority 5<sup>th</sup> C
- ii. Life 6<sup>th</sup> C
- iii. Wife 7<sup>th</sup> C
- iv. Property 8<sup>th</sup> C
- v. Reputation 9<sup>th</sup> C

### III. Explanation

A. “Father and Mother” - Kinds of authority relationships

- i. **WLC 124:** By father and mother, in the fifth commandment, are meant, not only natural parents,
  - a) but all **superiors** in **age** and **gifts**;
  - b) and especially such as, by God's ordinance, are **over us in** place of **authority**, whether in family, church, or commonwealth.
- ii. From birth onward we are always either “in” or “under” authority!
- iii. The 5 authority relationships under God in Scripture cover all of life:

**GOD**

Institution:	Family		Church	Government	Business
Kind of authority:	1. Parental	2. Marital	3. Religious	4. Civil	5. Economic
“In” & “under” authority:	Parent   child	Husband   wife	Elder   member	Government   subject	Employer   employee
	Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20-21	Eph. 5:22-33; Col. 3:18-19; 1 Pet. 3:1-7	1 Pet. 5:1-5	Rom. 13:1-7; 1 Pet. 2:13-17	Eph. 6:5-9; Col. 3:22-4:1; 1 Pet. 2:18-25

- a) Parental authority is highlighted by the commandment because undeniably it applies to *all* at the *beginning* of their life
- b) Another institution: the school? Normally an extension of one of the other institutions in purpose & in practice. Consider similarly philanthropic organizations, clubs, nonprofits, etc.
- iv. Human authority structures are patterned after & rooted in God's authority structure
  - a) **Eph. 3:14-15:** *I bow my knees before the Father (pater), from whom every father-line (patria – translated "family") in heaven and on earth is named.*
  - b) **1 Cor. 11:3:** *The head of every man is Christ, the head of a wife is her husband, and the head of Christ is God.*
- v. Inequality in human authority structures is grounded on an essential equality between all people, just as the inequality in God's authority structure (the economic trinity) is grounded on the equality of the divine Persons (the ontological trinity)
  - a) **Gen. 1:27:** *God created man in his own image, in the **image of God** he created him; **male and female** he created them.*
  - b) Husbands and wives are *essentially equal* as humans made in the image of God. They are *functionally unequal* in their roles as spouses. Islam denies this, leading to the devaluation & abuse of women, Plato denied it, leading to male ("platonic") homosexuality.
  - c) This means we serve the other *firstly* because they are our equal, and *secondly* because of the authority relationship. The other deserves honor as an *equal* first, and as a *superior* or *inferior* second.

## B. "Honor" - the duty required

- i. Basic idea
  - a) Listen to instruction
  - b) Show deference in language & forms of address
    - Let parents speak first
    - Answer respectfully
    - Be quiet when parents are speaking to them
    - Say "thank you," use good manners & etiquette (2 Tim. 3:2)
  - c) Love parents
  - d) Be faithful to parents, providing finances & fellowship for them as necessary when they are old (Matt. 15:4-9; 1 Tim. 5:4; cf. 2 Cor. 12:14)
- ii. Background: Biblically, in relationships of equality love is expressed through *self-denial* on behalf of the other. The group denies itself for its members; each member denies him/herself for the group.
- iii. Biblically, in authority relationships love is expressed through *sacrifice & submission*
  - a) Those "in" authority must *sacrifice* for those "under" authority
  - b) Those "under" authority must *submit* to those "in" authority
- iv. **Question:** Are you *willing* to do this? Is this what you *want* to do?
- v. Sacrifice & Submission according to Scripture
  - a) Its Manner: In *love, holiness, cheerfulness, & benevolence*
    - **Eph. 5:28-29:** *In the same way husbands should **love** their wives **as their own bodies**. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but **nourishes** and **cherishes** it.*
    - **Eph. 5:26-27:** *that he might **sanctify** her...that she might be **holy**.*
    - **Eph. 5:22:** *Wives, submit to your own husbands, **as to the Lord**.*
    - **Col. 3:22:** *Slaves, obey...not by way of eye-service, as people-pleasers, but with **sincerity of***

*heart, fearing the Lord.*

- **Eph. 6:4:** *Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.*

b) Its Extent: within the respective institution, it is *total* and *unconditional!*

- **Eph. 5:25:** *Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her*
- **Eph. 5:24:** *wives should submit in everything to their husbands.*
- **Col. 3:20:** *Children, obey your parents in everything.*
- **Col. 3:22:** *Slaves, obey in everything those who are your earthly masters.*

c) Its Limits: The limits of the institution's authority

- The *civil* and not the *family* authorities had the right to execute capital punishment on a rebellious son in Deut. 21:18-21.
- If (and only if!) an authority asks you to disobey the Lord, you must obey God rather than man. This is not an attitude of rebellion, but a desire to submit to *both* God and man.
  - **Acts 4:18-19:** *So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, "Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge."*
  - **Acts 5:29:** *But Peter and the apostles answered, "We must obey God rather than men."*
  - **Eph. 6:1:** *Children, obey your parents in the Lord.*
- So, is "civil disobedience" ever allowed? Consider the following forms:
  - Killing an abortionist
  - Chaining oneself to abortion clinic doors
  - Picketing an abortion clinic *within* a 400-foot limit set by the courts
- We have no command to do these things in scripture!
- "Honor" vs. "obey": Children still in a household must "obey" their parents (Ephesians), but adults must "honor" and not "obey" their parents (5<sup>th</sup> Commandment). Adult children who have left and so are not dependent on their parents' household are not under their parents' authority, and are not obligated to come under the authority of someone else's household. These distinctions are evident in the following passages:
  - Leaving home in order to marry is not *identical* to marriage; it may be possible to leave
    - **Gen. 2:24:** *Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.*
  - Paul was single and had authority over his own household. Cf. 1 Cor. 7:8
  - Parental authority is intended to be temporary
    - **Prov. 22:6:** *Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.*

C. "That it may go well with you in the land" - the blessing promised

i. Loving other through sacrifice & submission leads to blessing!

ii. "The land" - its nature and scope

a) Canaan – special covenant blessing for OT Israel

b) Earth – general created context for covenant life. This remains true throughout the history of the covenant:

- Adam – Eden & earth ("fill the earth")
- Noah – whole earth
- Abraham, Moses & David – Canaan (but Abraham was a sojourner in the land!)
- Christ - "all the world" (Great Commission) & New Heavens & New Earth (Eph. 6:2-3)

c) All of life – the land is where all of life took place

## The Biblical Commentary on the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment

### IV. In Deuteronomy 16:18-18:22

- A. Judicial: Judges & their judgments 16:18-17:13
- i. Appointment, just judgments, blessings on them 16:18-20
  - ii. Guidelines for judgments regarding
    - a) Religious service of God 16:21-17:1
    - b) The sin of idolatry 17:2-7
    - c) Complex cases of homicide, civil controversies, bodily injury. Panel of priests, levites, judges renders verdict. 17:8-13
- B. Civil: Kings & their conduct 17:14-20
- i. Israel may desire, but only God may choose, a king 14-15
  - ii. King forbidden to amass horses, wives, gold 16-17
  - iii. Proper exercise of authority finds its
    - a) Basis in the fear of God
    - b) Bounds in the law of God
    - c) Blessings in obedience to God
- C. Religious: Priests & their sustenance 18:1-8
- i. Levites set apart for temple service, so He is their inheritance 1-2
  - ii. Priests ministering in/at sanctuary receive portions of sacrifices & firstfruits 3-5
  - iii. Migrant & resident Levites share alike in this provision 6-8
- D. Spokesmen: Prophets & the future 18:9-22
- i. Don't look to pagan revelations & magic to secure the future 9-14
  - ii. Rather, listen to the final Prophet, and to other prophets who speak God's word 15-22

## The Application of the 5<sup>th</sup> Commandment

### V. Larger Catechism

- A. Q & A 127. The honor which inferiors owe to their superiors is,
- i. all due reverence in heart, word, and behavior;
  - ii. prayer and thanksgiving for them;
  - iii. imitation of their virtues and graces;
  - iv. willing obedience to their lawful commands and counsels;
  - v. due submission to their corrections;
  - vi. fidelity to, defense, and maintenance of their persons and authority, according to their several ranks, and the nature of their places;
  - vii. bearing with their infirmities, and covering them in love, that so they may be an honor to them and to their government.
- B. Q & A 128. The sins of inferiors against their superiors are,
- i. all neglect of the duties required toward them;
  - ii. envying at, contempt of, and rebellion against their persons and places, in their lawful counsels, commands, and corrections;
  - iii. cursing, mocking, and all such refractory and scandalous carriage, as proves a shame

and dishonor to them and their government.

C.Q & A 129. It is required of superiors,

- i. according to that power they receive from God, and that relation wherein they stand,
  - a) to love, pray for, and bless their inferiors;
  - b) to instruct, counsel, and admonish them;
  - c) countenancing, commending, and rewarding such as do well;
  - d) and discountenancing, reproof, and chastising such as do ill;
  - e) protecting, and providing for them all things necessary for soul and body:
- ii. and by grave, wise, holy, and exemplary carriage, to procure glory to God, honor to themselves, and so to preserve that authority which God hath put upon them.

D.Q & A 130. The sins of superiors are,

- i. besides the neglect of the duties required of them,
- ii. an inordinate seeking of themselves, their own glory, ease, profit, or pleasure;
- iii. commanding things unlawful, or not in the power of inferiors to perform;
- iv. counseling, encouraging, or favoring them in that which is evil;
- v. dissuading, discouraging, or discountenancing them in that which is good;
- vi. correcting them unduly;
- vii. careless exposing, or leaving them to wrong, temptation, and danger;
- viii. provoking them to wrath;
- ix. or any way dishonoring themselves, or lessening their authority, by an unjust, indiscreet, rigorous, or remiss behavior.

E.Q & A 131. The duties of equals are,

- i. to regard the dignity and worth of each other, in giving honor to go one before another;
- ii. and to rejoice in each others' gifts and advancement, as their own.

F.Q & A 132. The sins of equals are,

- i. besides the neglect of the duties required, the undervaluing of the worth, envying the gifts, grieving at the advancement or prosperity one of another;
- ii. and usurping preeminence one over another.

# The 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment

*"You shall not murder." Exodus 20:13*

## The Meaning of the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment

### I. The Issue: Life

A. Stated: Love our neighbor by honoring his life

### II. Explanation

#### A. Act & Motivation

i. Focus: Not just killing, but *murder*

a) **Genesis 9:3-4** 3 Every moving thing that lives shall be food for you. And as I gave you the green plants, I give you everything. 4 But you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood.

b) Murder: Murray: "violent, malicious, willful assault upon the life of another"

ii. Motivation of the heart – anger, sinful and holy

a) **Matthew 5:22** But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, 'You fool!' will be liable to the hell of fire.

b) **Ephesians 4:26-27** 26 Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, 27 and give no opportunity to the devil.

c) **Psalms 139:21-24** 21 Do I not hate those who hate you, O LORD? And do I not loathe those who rise up against you? 22 I hate them with complete hatred; I count them my enemies. 23 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! 24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

#### B. Negative & Positive sides: Promotion of life

i. **Romans 12:17-21** 17 Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. 19 Beloved, never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay, says the Lord." 20 To the contrary, "if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head." 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

#### C. Unlawful Action & Reaction

i. **Proverbs 15:1** A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

ii. **1 Peter 3:9** Do not repay evil for evil or reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing.

#### D. Neighbor's Physical & Spiritual Welfare

i. **Proverbs 24:11** Rescue those who are being taken away to death; hold back those who are stumbling to the slaughter.

ii. **Ezekiel 33:7-9** 7 So you, son of man, I have made a watchman for the house of Israel. Whenever you hear a word from my mouth, you shall give them warning from me. 8 If I say to the wicked, O wicked one, you shall surely die, and you do not speak to warn the wicked to turn from his way, that wicked person shall die in his iniquity, but his blood I will require at your hand. 9 But if you warn the wicked to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, that person shall die in his iniquity, but you will have delivered your soul.

iii. **James 5:19-20** 19 My brothers, if anyone among you wanders from the truth and someone brings him back, 20 let him know that whoever brings back a sinner from his wandering will save his soul from death and will cover a multitude of sins.

## E. Obedience Necessary & Urgent

- i. **Matthew 5:25-26** 25 Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are going with him to court, lest your accuser hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you be put in prison. 26 Truly, I say to you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.
- ii. **Revelation 22:14-15** 14 Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. 15 Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

## The Biblical Commentary on the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment

### III. In Deuteronomy 19:1-22:12

#### A. Life and Survival of Innocents 19:1-21

- i. Cities of Refuge to protect innocent, but premeditated murder gets death penalty 1-13
- ii. Protect inheritances 14
- iii. False witnesses receive penalty they sought, even to death penalty 15-21

#### B. Conduct in War 20:1-20

- i. Stronger opponent: Trust God 1
- ii. Battle: Don't send men with new homes, vineyards, wives, or the fearful 2-9
- iii. Siege of a city: Offer terms of paying tribute before resorting to killing all males 10-15
- iv. Siege in Canaan: No pardon; kill all 16-18
- v. Siege: Don't cut down fruit trees; future life may not be jeopardized 19-20

#### C. Unsolved Murder: Elders of city bring sacrifice, plead innocent & plead for mercy 21:1-9

#### D. Survival and Life of Family Members; Future of Covenant People 21:10-23

- i. Divorced "warbrides" may not be sold, must be set free 10-14
- ii. Firstborn must receive privileges even if father dislikes mother 15-17
- iii. Stubborn & rebellious son must be brought to justice & put to death 18-21
- iv. Bury executed person's body before sundown to avoid defiling land 22-23

#### E. Survival and Life in General 22:1-12

- i. Return lost animals & property to owner, help brother's fallen animal 1-4
- ii. Rift between life and death symbolized: woman may not wear man's clothing 5
- iii. Respect life: Bird may not be taken with her eggs or young 6-7
- iv. Fence roof of house to prevent accidental death 8
- v. Don't plant two crops (harvests) in one year, lest you "kill" the ground 9
- vi. Don't put two different kinds of animals under one yoke, or use two types of material in one garment, because no compromise with Canaanite unholiness & death 10-11
- vii. Four fringes of dark blue color (God's royal majesty) because keeping commandments a matter of life and death 12

## The Application of the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment

### IV. Larger Catechism

A.135. The duties required in the sixth commandment are,

- i. all careful studies, and lawful endeavors, to preserve the life of ourselves and others
    - a) by resisting all thoughts and purposes, subduing all passions, and avoiding all occasions, temptations, and practices, which tend to the unjust taking away the life of any;
    - b) by just defense thereof against violence, patient bearing of the hand of God, quietness of mind, cheerfulness of spirit;
    - c) a sober use of meat, drink, physic, sleep, labor, and recreations;
    - d) by charitable thoughts, love, compassion, meekness, gentleness, kindness;
    - e) peaceable, mild and courteous speeches and behavior;
    - f) forbearance, readiness to be reconciled, patient bearing and forgiving of injuries, and requiting good for evil;
    - g) comforting and succoring the distressed, and protecting and defending the innocent.
- B.136. The sins forbidden in the sixth commandment are,
- i. all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in case of public justice, lawful war, or necessary defense;
  - ii. the neglecting or withdrawing the lawful and necessary means of preservation of life;
  - iii. sinful anger, hatred, envy, desire of revenge;
  - iv. all excessive passions, distracting cares;
  - v. immoderate use of meat, drink, labor, and recreations;
  - vi. provoking words, oppression, quarreling, striking, wounding, and whatsoever else tends to the destruction of the life of any.
- C. Issues
- i. Beginning & end of life
    - a) Principle: We may not curtail life, and ought not prolong death.
    - b) Birth Control & Abortion
    - c) Euthanasia / assisted suicide / “Pulling the plug”
      - Distinction: Terminating *life* vs. terminating *treatment*
  - ii. Suicide
  - iii. Self-defense
  - iv. War
    - a) Not forbidden if defensive (Deut. 20:1-20; Luke 3:14), but aggressive war is not justified
    - b) “Just war” must be waged:
      - by a legitimate government
      - for a legitimate cause
      - with a legitimate purpose
      - with consideration of benefits & costs
      - with means proportionate to the offense
      - recognizing the difference between civilians and soldiers
  - v. Capital punishment
  - vi. Negligent homicide
  - vii. Reckless endangerment
  - viii. Sports – boxing, auto racing, bungee jumping
  - ix. Drugs, alcohol, tobacco

## The 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment

*“You shall not commit adultery.” Exodus 20:14*

### The Meaning of the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment

#### I. The Issue: Marital purity

A. Stated: Love our neighbor by honoring his wife

#### II. Explanation

A. The 3 biblical areas of attraction before, unity in, and disunity in & after marriage:

Spirituality, Personality, Sexuality

- i. *Proverbs 31:30 Charm is deceitful, and beauty is vain, but a woman who fears the LORD is to be praised.*
- ii. Biblical priority between them: Spirituality comes first, personality second, sexuality third. Spirituality is the foundation or core for personality; sexuality is the crowning piece.
- iii. “Adultery” is sexual unfaithfulness that transgresses the boundaries of an existing marital union. For this reason, in the context of scripture, adultery is the “crowning piece” of all forms of sin which break marital union – it brings those other sins into view. This connection can be seen in Deuteronomy’s commentary on the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment.

### The Biblical Commentary on the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment

#### III. In Deuteronomy 22:13-23:14

A. Laws of Chastity in Human Relationships 22:13-30

- i. Cases of fornication before marriage 13-21
- ii. Cases of adultery, rape, incest 22-30

B. Laws of Membership in God’s Congregation 23:1-8

- i. Eunuchs & bastards may not enter 1-2
- ii. Ammonite & Moabite may not enter 3-6
- iii. Edomite & Egyptian may only enter in the third generation 7-8

C. Laws of Cleanness in an Army Camp 23:9-14

- i. Nocturnal emissions make a soldier unclean until next evening 9-11
- ii. Proper bathroom facilities must be provided outside the camp, b/c of God’s holiness 12-14

### The Application of the 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment

#### IV. Larger Catechism

- A. 138. The duties required in the seventh commandment are,
- i. chastity in body, mind, affections, words, and behaviour;

- a) **1 Thess. 4:4** that each one of you know how to **control his own body in holiness and honor**
- b) **Job 31:1** I have made a covenant with my **eyes**; how then could I **gaze** at a virgin?
- c) **1 Corinthians 7:34** The unmarried or betrothed woman is anxious about the things of the Lord, how to be **holy in body and spirit**. But the married woman is anxious about worldly things, how to please her husband.
- d) **Colossians 4:6** Let your **speech** always be **gracious, seasoned** with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person.
- ii. and the preservation of it in ourselves and others;
- a) **1 Corinthians 7:2** But because of the temptation to sexual immorality, each man should have his own wife and each woman her own husband.
- b) **1 Corinthians 7:35-36** I say this for your own benefit, not to lay any restraint upon you, but to promote good order and to secure your undivided devotion to the Lord. 36 If anyone thinks that he is **not behaving properly toward his betrothed**, if his passions are strong, and it has to be, let him do as he wishes: **let them marry**- it is no sin.
- iii. watchfulness over the eyes and all the senses;
- a) **Job 31:1** (above)
- iv. temperance (a), keeping of chaste company (b), modesty in apparel (c);
- a) **Acts 24:24** After some days Felix came with his wife Drusilla, who was Jewish, and he sent for Paul and heard him speak about faith in Christ Jesus. 25 And as he reasoned about righteousness and **self-control** and the coming judgment, Felix was alarmed and said, "Go away for the present. When I get an opportunity I will summon you."
- b) **Proverbs 2:16** So you will be delivered **from** the forbidden woman, **from** the adulteress with her smooth words, 17 who forsakes the **companion** of her youth and forgets the **covenant** of her God; 18 for her house sinks down to death, and her **paths** to the departed; 19 none who go **to her** come back, nor do they regain the **paths** of life. 20 So you will walk in the **way** of the good and keep to the **paths** of the righteous.
- c) **1 Timothy 2:9** likewise also that women should adorn themselves in **respectable apparel**, with **modesty and self-control**, not with **braided hair and gold or pearls or costly attire**, but with what is proper for women who profess **godliness**- with **good works**.
- v. marriage by those that have not the gift of continency;
- a) **1 Corinthians 7:2 (above), 9** But if they cannot exercise self-control, **they should marry**. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.
- vi. conjugal love, and cohabitation;
- a) **Proverbs 5:18-20** 18 Let your fountain be blessed, and rejoice in the wife of your youth, 19 a lovely deer, a graceful doe. Let her breasts fill you at all times with delight; **be intoxicated always in her love**. 20 Why should you be intoxicated, my son, with a forbidden woman and embrace the bosom of an adulteress?
- b) **1 Peter 3:7** Likewise, husbands, **live with your wives in an understanding way**, showing honor to the woman as the weaker vessel, since they are heirs with you of the grace of life, so that your prayers may not be hindered.
- vii. diligent labour in our callings;
- a) **Proverbs 31:11** The heart of her husband trusts in her, and he will have **no lack of gain**. 12 **She does him good**, and not harm, all the days of her life. 13 She **seeks** wool and flax, and **works** with willing hands. 14 She is like the ships of the merchant; she **brings** her **food** from afar. 15 She **ris**es while it is yet night and **provides food** for her household and portions for her maidens. 16 She **considers** a field and **buys** it; with the fruit of her hands she **plants** a vineyard. 17 She dresses herself with **strength** and makes her arms **strong**. 18 She perceives that her merchandise is profitable. Her **lamp** does not go out at night. 19 She puts her hands to the **distaff**, and her hands hold the **spindle**. 20 She opens her hand to the **poor** and reaches out her hands to the **needy**. 21 She is not afraid of snow for her household, for all her household are **clothed** in scarlet. 22 She **makes bed coverings** for herself; her clothing is fine linen and purple. 23 Her husband is known in the

gates when he sits among the elders of the land. 24 She **makes linen garments** and **sells** them; she **delivers** sashes to the merchant. 25 Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. 26 She **opens her mouth** with wisdom, and the **teaching** of kindness is on her tongue. 27 She **looks well** to the ways of her household and **does not eat the bread of idleness**. 28 Her children rise up and call her blessed; her husband also, and he praises her.

viii. shunning all occasions of uncleanness, and resisting temptations thereunto.

a) **Proverbs 5:8** Keep your way far from her, and do not go near the door of her house.

B.139. The sins forbidden in the seventh commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are

i. adultery (a), fornication (b), rape (c), incest (d), sodomy, and all unnatural lusts (e, f);

a) **Hebrews 13:4** Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the **sexually immoral** and **adulterous**.

b) **Galatians 5:19** Now the works of the flesh are evident: **sexual immorality**, impurity, sensuality

c) **2 Samuel 13:12, 14** 12 She answered him, “No, my brother, do not **violate** me, for such a thing is not done in Israel; do not do this outrageous thing.” 14 But he would not listen to her, and being stronger than she, he **violated** her and lay with her.

d) **1 Corinthians 5:1** It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for **a man has his father's wife**.

e) **Romans 1:24, 26-27** 24 Therefore God gave them up in the **lusts** of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves. 26 For this reason God gave them up to dishonorable passions. For their women exchanged **natural** relations for those that are **contrary to nature**; 27 and the men likewise gave up **natural** relations with women and were consumed with **passion for one another**, men committing shameless acts with men and receiving in themselves the due penalty for their error.

f) **Leviticus 20:15** If a **man** lies with an **animal**, he shall surely be put to death, and you shall kill the animal. 16 If a **woman** approaches any **animal** and lies with it, you shall kill the woman and the animal; they shall surely be put to death; their blood is upon them.

ii. all unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes, and affections;

a) **Matthew 5:28** But I say to you that everyone who **looks** at a woman with lustful intent has already committed adultery with her in his **heart**.

b) **Matthew 15:19** For out of the **heart** come **evil thoughts**, murder, **adultery**, **sexual immorality**, theft, false witness, slander.

c) **Colossians 3:5** Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: **sexual immorality**, **impurity**, **passion**, **evil desire**, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

iii. all corrupt or filthy communications, or listening thereunto;

a) **Ephesians 5:3** But sexual immorality and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is proper among saints. 4 Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.

b) **Proverbs 7:5** to keep you from the forbidden woman, from the adulteress with her **smooth words**.

c) **Proverbs 7:21-22** 21 With much **seductive speech** she persuades him; with her **smooth talk** she compels him. 22 All at once he follows her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a stag is caught fast.

iv. wanton looks, impudent or light behaviour, immodest apparel;

a) **Isaiah 3:16** The LORD said: Because the daughters of Zion are **haughty** and **walk with outstretched necks**, **glancing wantonly** with their eyes, **mincing** along as they go, **tinkling** with their feet.

b) **2 Peter 2:14** They have **eyes full of adultery**, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!

c) Flirting – some or all in view?

d) **Proverbs 7:10** And behold, the woman meets him, **dressed** as a prostitute, wily of heart. 11 She is

*loud and wayward; her feet do not stay at home; 12 now in the street, now in the market, and at every corner she lies in wait. 13 She seizes him and kisses him, and with bold face she says to him...*

v. prohibiting of lawful, and dispensing with unlawful marriages;

- a) *1 Timothy 4:3* who **forbid marriage** and require abstinence from foods that God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth.
- b) *Leviticus 18:1-21* (laws regarding who you can marry on your family tree)
- c) *Malachi 2:11* Judah has been faithless, and abomination has been committed in Israel and in Jerusalem. For Judah has profaned the sanctuary of the LORD, which he loves, and has **married the daughter of a foreign god**. 12 May the LORD cut off from the tents of Jacob, any descendant of the man who does this, who brings an offering to the LORD of hosts!

vi. allowing, tolerating, keeping of stews, and resorting to them;

- a) *1 Kings 15:12* He put away the **male cult prostitutes** out of the land and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.
- b) *2 Kings 23:7* And he broke down the houses of the **male cult prostitutes** who were in the house of the LORD, where the women wove hangings for the Asherah.
- c) *Deuteronomy 23:17* "None of the **daughters** of Israel shall be a **cult prostitute**, and none of the **sons** of Israel shall be a cult prostitute. 18 You shall not bring the fee of a prostitute or the wages of a dog into the house of the LORD your God in payment for any vow, for both of these are an abomination to the LORD your God.
- d) *Leviticus 19:29* Do not profane your daughter by making her a **prostitute**, lest the land fall into prostitution and the land become full of depravity.
- e) *Jeremiah 5:7* How can I pardon you? Your children have forsaken me and have sworn by those who are no gods. When I fed them to the full, they committed **adultery** and trooped to the houses of **whores**.
- f) *Proverbs 7:24* And now, O sons, listen to me, and be attentive to the words of my mouth. 25 Let not your heart turn aside to her ways; do not stray into her paths, 26 for many a victim has she laid low, and all her slain are a mighty throng. 27 Her house is the way to Sheol, going down to the chambers of death.

vii. entangling vows of single life, undue delay of marriage;

- a) *Matthew 19:10* The disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry." 11 But he said to them, "Not everyone can receive this saying, but only those to whom it is given."

viii. having more wives or husbands than one at the same time;

- a) *1 Corinthians 7:7* I wish that all were as I myself am. But each has his own gift from God, one of one kind and one of another. 8 To the unmarried and the widows I say that it is good for them to remain single as I am. 9 But if they cannot exercise self-control, they should marry. For it is better to marry than to be aflame with passion.
- b) *Genesis 38:26* Then Judah identified them and said, "She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah." And he did not know her again."
- c) *Malachi 2:14* But you say, "Why does he not?" Because the LORD was witness between you and the wife of your youth, to whom you have been faithless, though she is your companion and your wife by covenant. 15 Did he not make them one, with a portion of the Spirit in their union? And what was the one God seeking? Godly offspring. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and let none of you be faithless to the wife of your youth.
- d) *Matthew 19:5* and said, 'Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh'?

ix. unjust divorce, or desertion;

- a) *Malachi 2:16* "For the man who hates and divorces, says the LORD, the God of Israel, covers his garment with violence, says the LORD of hosts. So guard yourselves in your spirit, and do not be faithless."
- b) *Matthew 5:32* But I say to you that everyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of sexual

- immorality, makes her commit adultery. And whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.*
- c) **1 Corinthians 7:12** *To the rest I say (I, not the Lord) that if any brother has a wife who is an unbeliever, and she consents to live with him, he should not divorce her. 13 If any woman has a husband who is an unbeliever, and he consents to live with her, she should not divorce him.*
- d) **Ezekiel 16:49** *Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy.*
- x. idleness, gluttony, drunkenness, unchaste company, lascivious songs, books, pictures, dancings, stage plays;
- a) **Proverbs 23:30** *Those who tarry long over wine; those who go to try mixed wine. 31 Do not look at wine when it is red, when it sparkles in the cup and goes down smoothly. 32 In the end it bites like a serpent and stings like an adder. 33 Your eyes will see strange things, and your heart utter perverse things.*
- b) **Genesis 39:10** *And as she spoke to Joseph day after day, he would not listen to her, to lie beside her or to be with her.*
- c) **Ephesians 5:4** *Let there be no filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.*
- d) **Ezekiel 23:14** *But she carried her whoring further. She saw men portrayed on the wall, the images of the Chaldeans portrayed in vermilion, 15 wearing belts on their waists, with flowing turbans on their heads, all of them having the appearance of officers, a likeness of Babylonians whose native land was Chaldea. 16 When she saw them, she lusted after them and sent messengers to them in Chaldea.*
- e) **Isaiah 23:15** *In that day Tyre will be forgotten for seventy years, like the days of one king. At the end of seventy years, it will happen to Tyre as in the song of the prostitute: 16 "Take a harp; go about the city, O forgotten prostitute! Make sweet melody; sing many songs, that you may be remembered." 17 At the end of seventy years, the LORD will visit Tyre, and she will return to her wages and will prostitute herself with all the kingdoms of the world on the face of the earth.*
- f) **Romans 13:13** *Let us walk properly as in the daytime, not in orgies and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and sensuality, not in quarreling and jealousy.*
- g) TV – soap operas, talk shows, dramas, MTV
- h) Music
- xi. and all other provocations to, or acts of uncleanness, either in ourselves or others.
- a) **2 Kings 9:30** *When Jehu came to Jezreel, Jezebel heard of it. And she painted her eyes and adorned her head and looked out of the window.*

# The 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment

*"You shall not steal." Exodus 20:15*

## The Meaning of the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment

### I. The Issue: Property

A. Stated: Love our neighbor by honoring his property

### II. Explanation

A. What is the sin of stealing?

i. Taking what you do not own

B. The heart of the commandment

i. The ownership of God: God owns all things

a) *Psalm 24:1* The earth is the LORD's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.

b) *1 Chronicles 29:11-12* 11 Yours, O LORD, is the greatness and the power and the glory and the victory and the majesty, for **all that is in the heavens and in the earth is yours**. Yours is the kingdom, O LORD, and you are exalted as head above all. 12 Both riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might, and in your hand it is to make great and to give strength to all.

c) *1 Chronicles 29:14* But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able thus to offer willingly? For **all things come from you, and of your own** have we given you.

d) *1 Chronicles 29:16* O LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a house for your holy name **comes from your hand and is all your own**.

ii. The stewardship of man: God has entrusted some of His possessions to each man

a) Its nature & progress:

- *Genesis 1:28* Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and **subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth**.
- *Matthew 25:23* His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. **You have been faithful over a little; I will set you over much**. Enter into the joy of your master.'

b) Its twofold goal: toward God & man

- *1 Corinthians 10:31* So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, **do all to the glory of God**.
- *1 Peter 4:10* As each has received a gift, use it to **serve one another**, as good stewards of God's varied grace.
- *2 Corinthians 8:13-15* 13 I do not mean that others should be eased and you burdened, but that as a matter of fairness 14 **your abundance at the present time should supply their need, so that their abundance may supply your need, that there may be fairness**. 15 As it is written, "Whoever gathered much had nothing left over, and whoever gathered little had no lack."

C. The negative implications of the commandment

i. As with adultery, stealing is only the tip of the iceberg. Greed and anxiety lie underneath. Both greed and anxiety are *restless and insatiable*.

a) *Ecclesiastes 2:22-25* 22 What has a man from all the **toil and striving of heart** with which he toils beneath the sun? 23 For all his days are full of **sorrow**, and his work is a **vexation**. Even in the night **his heart does not rest**. This also is vanity. 24 There is nothing better for a person than that he should **eat and drink and find enjoyment in his toil**. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God,

25 for *apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment?*

b) **Ecclesiastes 5:10** *He who loves money will not be satisfied with money, nor he who loves wealth with his income; this also is vanity.*

c) **Matthew 6:31-33** 31 *Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'* 32 *For the Gentiles seek after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.* 33 *But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.*

## D. The positive implications of the commandment

### i. Labor

#### a) Scripture's focus on labor

- Its function: It does not *earn* food from God, but *gathers* food God provided. Deut. 8:17-18; "Give us this day our daily bread"
- Its time: "Six days you shall labor and do all your work"
- Its necessity: 2 Thess. 3:10-12 "If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat."
- Its contentment: Eccl. 2:24; 1 Cor. 7:24; Tit. 2:5
- Its cheerfulness: Col. 3:23
- Its God-centeredness: 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:22-23; Rom. 14:7-8

#### b) The purpose of labor

- Toward God
  - God's glory: (see above)
  - God's kingdom: 1 Chron. 29:9-17; Mal. 3:10; 2 Cor. 9:6-7
- Toward the neighbor
  - To give to the needy: Deut. 14:29
    - **Ephesians 4:28** *Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.*
  - To give to those inside and outside the household of faith
    - **Galatians 6:10** *So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.*
  - To care for one's family & relatives: 1 Tim. 5:4, 8
  - To be humble & generous when wealthy: 1 Tim. 6:17-18; 2 Cor. 8:14-15

### ii. Giving: Should Christians tithe today?

a) We may not use the OT tithing laws legalistically

b) An obligation exists: We *must* give. 2 Cor. 8-9

c) Basic ground rule: proportionate giving. Deut. 16:17; 2 Cor. 8:12

d) The amount: The practice of tithing began before Mosaic covenant (Gen. 14; Heb. 7:4).

This is a strong indication that 10% is the *starting point* for Christian giving. The OT's offerings at feasts, freewill offerings, sabbatical & jubilee years, and gleaning, went beyond this minimum of 10%, possibly up to 30%! How much does the NT indicate we should give? 10% is the norm.

- 10% Christ accepted the groundrule of a tenth: Matt. 23:23
- 10% + The Macedonians gave not only "according to their means" but also "beyond their means" (2 Cor. 8:3), though one must "not [give] according to what he does not have" (2 Cor. 8:12). They made a significant sacrifice.
- 50% + Zaccheus gave half his goods, plus fourfold of what he had stolen: Luke 19:8
- 100% The widow gave all she had in Mark 12:42-44
- 100% + To "take up your cross" is to "lose your life" and "the whole world" for Christ! Matt. 16:24-25
- Conclusion: The sky is the limit!

e) Attitude: cheerful, from the heart, not grudging. Deut. 26:14; 2 Cor. 9:7

## The Biblical Commentary on the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment

### III. In Deuteronomy 23:15-24:15

#### A. General Social and Economic Laws 23:15-25

- i. Do not return slaves escaped from foreigners. Show mercy! 15-16
- ii. Do not offer revenue from prostitution & homosexuality to God 17-18
- iii. Do not charge interest on loans to needy brothers (cf. Ex. 22:25; Lev. 25:35-38; Matt. 25:27 – interest in banking is allowed), but freely charge foreigners interest 19-20
- iv. Pay vows to God 21-23
- v. One may still one's hunger and thirst in the neighbor's field or vineyard, but not carry extra away 24-25

#### B. Special Social and Economic Laws 24:1-15

- i. A man may not make merchandise of his wife ('s person) – no remarriage to her after she has been married & divorced a second time 1-4
- ii. A government may not make merchandise of its public servants (' marriages) – a newly married man may stay out of war & public service one year 5
- iii. No millstones may be taken as pledge because someone's life depends on it 6
- iv. Kidnappers & sellers of humans must die 7
- v. Holiness is of more value than money: Follow the laws of leprosy for all regardless of social or economic status (cf. Lev. 14:21-32; Num. 12:10) 8-9
- vi. You may not force your way into a house to get a pledge, or keep a pledged cloak overnight when its owner needs it 10-13
- vii. Poor servants may not be oppressed, but must receive their wages daily 14-15

## The Application of the 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment

### IV. Larger Catechism

#### A. 141. The duties required in the eighth commandment are,

- i. truth, faithfulness, and justice in contracts and commerce between man and man;
- ii. rendering to every one his due;
- iii. restitution of goods unlawfully detained from the right owners thereof;
- iv. giving and lending freely, according to our abilities, and the necessities of others;
- v. moderation of our judgments, wills, and affections concerning worldly goods;
- vi. a provident care and study to get, keep, use, and dispose these things which are necessary and convenient for the sustentation of our nature, and suitable to our condition;
- vii. a lawful calling, and diligence in it;
- viii. frugality; avoiding unnecessary lawsuits, and suretyship, or other like engagements;
- ix. and an endeavor, by all just and lawful means, to procure, preserve, and further the wealth and outward estate of others, as well as our own.

#### B. 142. The sins forbidden in the eighth commandment, besides the neglect of the duties required, are,

- i. theft, robbery, man-stealing, and receiving anything that is stolen;

- ii. fraudulent dealing, false weights and measures, removing landmarks, injustice and unfaithfulness in contracts between man and man, or in matters of trust;
- iii. oppression, extortion, usury, bribery, vexatious lawsuits, unjust enclosures and depredation;
- iv. engrossing commodities to enhance the price;
- v. unlawful callings, and all other unjust or sinful ways of taking or withholding from our neighbor what belongs to him, or of enriching ourselves;
- vi. covetousness;
- vii. inordinate prizing and affecting worldly goods;
- viii. distrustful and distracting cares and studies in getting, keeping, and using them;
- ix. envying at the prosperity of others;
- x. as likewise idleness, prodigality, wasteful gaming;
- xi. and all other ways whereby we do unduly prejudice our own outward estate, and defrauding ourselves of the due use and comfort of that estate which God hath given us.

# The 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment

*"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor." Exodus 20:16*

## The Meaning of the 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment

### I. The Issue: Reputation

A. Stated: Love our neighbor by honoring his *reputation*

### II. Explanation

A. "Bear false witness" implies a *courtroom* setting with a judge, an accused, and you as the witness on the prosecution's side. It implies a concern for *justice*.

B. Elements of the OT concept of a courtroom:

- i. Judge: Elders in the gate (Ruth 4:1-2), professional judges (Deut. 16:18-20; 2 Chron. 19:5; Ezra 7:25). Judges may not accept bribes (Ex. 23:6-8; Lev. 19:15; 24:22; Deut. 1:12-18; 16:18-20). A special court may be called consisting of judges and priests (Deut. 17:8-11)
- ii. Testimony: One may not testify falsely for (Is. 5:23) or against (Prov. 25:18; 1 Kings 21:13; Prov. 19:5) one's neighbor. Perjury is forbidden as heinous (Lev. 19:12; Deut. 17:6-7; 19:16-21).
- iii. Procedure: An oath may be required (Ex. 22:10-11; Lev. 6:1-7). The testimony of more than one witness is required (Num. 35:30; Deut. 17:6; 19:5; Matt. 18:15-16; 2 Cor. 13:1; 1 Tim. 5:19; Heb. 10:28)

C. Central concern: Our neighbor's *reputation*

- i. Consider the different kinds of "courts" in which we ought not bear false witness:
  - a) God's court – Gen. 16:5; Num. 5:16-18; Judges 11:27; Acts 5:3
  - b) Civil courts
  - c) Church courts
  - d) Discipline cases in businesses, families, schools, other organizations
  - e) Court of human opinion
- ii. In each court, a person's reputation is always affected by the court's decision. A person is declared innocent or guilty.

D. "Neighbor"

- i. Who is my neighbor?
  - a) Your fellow Israelite
  - b) The Samaritan – Luke 10:37
  - c) "Everyone" - Gal. 6:10

E. Lying & Telling the Truth

- i. God is the truth, and therefore godliness requires truthfulness
  - a) **John 14:6** *I am the way, and the truth, and the life.*
  - b) **1 John 5:6** *the Spirit is the truth.*
- ii. Lying is forbidden; also slander and even idle words
  - a) **Proverbs 6:16-19** *16 There are six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him: 17 haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, 18 a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, 19 a false witness who breathes out lies, and one*

who sows discord among brothers.

- b) **Deuteronomy 22:18-19** 18 Then the elders of that city shall take the man and whip him, 19 and they shall fine him a hundred shekels of silver and give them to the father of the young woman, because he has **brought a bad name** upon a virgin of Israel.
- c) **Leviticus 19:16** **You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not stand up against the life of your neighbor: I am the LORD.**
- d) **Matthew 12:36-37** 36 I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every **careless word** they speak, 37 for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.
- e) **Ephesians 5:4** Let there be no **filthiness nor foolish talk nor crude joking**, which are out of place, but instead let there be thanksgiving.
- f) Kinds of lies
  - Malicious lie: harms neighbor: bad!
  - Jocular lie:
    - Joking without intent to deceive, deride, or malign; truth and falsehood are distinguishable: good!
    - Joking with intent to deceive, deride, or malign; truth and falsehood are indistinguishable: bad!
      - **Proverbs 26:18-19** Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows, and death 19 is the man who deceives his neighbor and says, "I am only joking!"
  - Lie of necessity: lying for my neighbor's benefit. Good or bad? See "exceptional circumstances" below.

iii. Speaking the truth is commanded, for the edification of the hearer

- a) **Ephesians 4:29** Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear.

iv. Exceptional circumstances: We are obligated to withhold the truth from unjust courts, when innocent lives are threatened, especially courts of an enemy in war. Telling an untruth with intent to deceive is sometimes necessary to do so. However, these circumstances are RARE!

- a) Midwives misled Pharaoh & were commended Ex. 1:15-21
- b) Rahab lied to hide Israel's spies & was commended Josh. 2:4-6; Heb. 11:31; James 2:25
- c) The Lord commanded Samuel to deceive Saul 1 Sam. 16:1-5
- d) Woman in Bahurim hid David's allies & lied to Absalom's servants 2 Sam. 17:19-20
- e) The Lord commended military deception against Ai and Philistines Josh. 8:1-26; 2 Sam. 5:22-25
- f) Elisha said to those seeking to capture him, "This is not the way, neither is this the city; follow me, and I will bring you to the man whom you seek." 2 Kings 6:19
- g) Athanasius' pursuers asked him, "Where is Athanasius?" He replied, "Athanasius is not far away; with a little effort you can find him!"
- h) The Mennonite Hans Busscher's pursuers asked him a similar question, so Hans *stood* up and asked the others in the cart if Hans Busscher was *sitting* among them. They answered truthfully, "No!"
- i) But this principle has also been abused. Emperor Sigismund of Bohemia promised John Hus (1370-1415) safe conduct, but he was captured & burned at the stake, because supposedly nobody needed to keep a promise to a heretic! Eccl. 5:5 says "It is better not to vow than to make a vow and not fulfill it." The Gibeonites deceived Joshua into making a treaty with them, and Joshua kept his oath, otherwise God would have punished Israel (Josh. 9:1-27; 2 Sam. 21:1-14).
- j) Lying to a terminally ill patient? Not good, because he should be allowed to prepare for

death.

k) Politeness: refined insincerity or a show of real respect?

### **The Biblical Commentary on the 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment**

#### **III. In Deuteronomy 24:16-25:19**

##### **A. Laws Showing the Merciful Character of God's Justice 24:16-25:6**

- i. Punish only the guilty, don't pervert justice for the weak; remember Egypt! 16-18
- ii. Strangers, widows, orphans have gleaning rights; remember Egypt! 19-22
- iii. Judges must acquit the righteous and condemn the wicked, and punish in proportion to the offense, not more 25:1-3
- iv. Show mercy to animals: don't muzzle ox while it treads the grain 4
- v. Show mercy to widows who have not yet had children: husband's brother must marry her 5-6

##### **B. Laws Showing the Strict Character of God's Justice 25:7-19**

- i. A brother-in-law who refuses his brother's widow should be publicly disgraced 7-10
- ii. A woman protecting her husband in a fight in a shameful manner should be punished 11-12
- iii. Don't use false, but fair, weights, when trading; dishonesty is an abomination 13-16
- iv. Utterly destroy Amalek, who sought to utterly destroy Israel 17-19

### **The Application of the 9<sup>th</sup> Commandment**

#### **IV. Larger Catechism**

##### **A. 144. The duties required in the ninth commandment are,**

- i. the preserving and promoting of truth between man and man, and the good name of our neighbor, as well as our own;
- ii. appearing and standing for the truth;
- iii. and from the heart, sincerely, freely, clearly, and fully, speaking the truth, and only the truth, in matters of judgment and justice, and in all other things whatsoever;
- iv. a charitable esteem of our neighbors;
- v. loving, desiring, and rejoicing in their good name;
- vi. sorrowing for and covering of their infirmities;
- vii. freely acknowledging of their gifts and graces, defending their innocency;
- viii. a ready receiving of a good report, and unwillingness to admit of an evil report, concerning them;
- ix. discouraging talebearers, flatterers, and slanderers;
- x. love and care of our own good name, and defending it when need requireth;
- xi. keeping of lawful promises; studying and practicing of whatsoever things are true, honest, lovely, and of good report.

##### **B. 145. The sins forbidden in the ninth commandment are,**

- i. all prejudicing the truth, and the good name of our neighbors, as well as our own, especially in public judicature;

- ii. giving false evidence, suborning false witnesses, wittingly appearing and pleading for an evil cause, outfacing and overbearing the truth;
- iii. passing unjust sentence, calling evil good, and good evil;
- iv. rewarding the wicked according to the work of the righteous, and the righteous according to the work of the wicked;
- v. forgery, concealing the truth, undue silence in a just cause, and holding our peace when iniquity calleth for either a reproof from ourselves, or complaint to others;
- vi. speaking the truth unseasonably, or maliciously to a wrong end, or perverting it to a wrong meaning, or in doubtful or equivocal expressions, to the prejudice of the truth or justice;
- vii. speaking untruth, lying, slandering, backbiting, detracting, talebearing, whispering, scoffing, reviling, rash, harsh, and partial censuring;
- viii. misconstructing intentions, words, and actions;
- ix. flattering, vainglorious boasting, thinking or speaking too highly or too meanly of ourselves or others;
- x. denying the gifts and graces of God;
- xi. aggravating smaller faults;
- xii. hiding, excusing, or extenuating of sins, when called to a free confession;
- xiii. unnecessary discovering of infirmities;
- xiv. raising false rumors, receiving and countenancing evil reports, and stopping our ears against just defense;
- xv. evil suspicion;
- xvi. envying or grieving at the deserved credit of any;
- xvii. endeavoring or desiring to impair it, rejoicing in their disgrace and infamy;
- xviii. scornful contempt, fond admiration;
- xix. breach of lawful promises;
- xx. neglecting such things as are of good report, and practicing, or not avoiding ourselves, or not hindering what we can in others, such things as procure an ill name.

## The 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment

*“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.”*

*Exodus 20:17*

### The Meaning of the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment

#### I. The Issue: The Heart

A. Stated: Love God and our neighbor *from the heart*

B. It is not *primarily* concerned with

i. The issues of the other commandments

a) 7<sup>th</sup> Commandment (adultery): “wife”

b) 8<sup>th</sup> Commandment (stealing): “house,” “servant,” “ox,” “donkey,” “anything”

ii. Outward actions – the verb “covet” is distinguished from the verb “take”

a) *Joshua 7:21* When I saw among the spoil a beautiful cloak from Shinar, and 200 shekels of silver, and a bar of gold weighing 50 shekels, then I **coveted** them and **took** them.

b) *Micah 2:2* They **covet** fields and **seize** them, and houses, and **take** them away.

c) *James 4:2* You desire and do not have, so you murder. You **covet** and cannot **obtain**, so you fight and quarrel.

#### II. Explanation

A. Envy vs. jealousy

i. In *jealousy* you wish to keep what is rightfully yours, or return it to its owner. This is good!

a) *Deuteronomy 5:9* You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for **I the LORD your God am a jealous God**, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me...

b) *2 Corinthians 11:2* **I feel a divine jealousy for you**, for I betrothed you to one husband, to present you as a pure virgin to Christ.

ii. In *envy* you wish to possess what belongs to another. This is always wrong.

a) *Proverbs 14:30* A tranquil heart gives life to the flesh, but **envy is rotteness to the bones**.

B. What is covetousness, or envy?

i. Enjoys other people’s sadness

a) *Psalms 22:7* All who see me **mock** me; they **make mouths** at me; they **wag their heads**.

ii. Is sad about other people’s happiness

a) *Genesis 4:4-6* 4 And the LORD had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very **angry**, and his **face fell**.

iii. Does not communicate or share that which is good

a) *Numbers 11:28-29* 28 And Joshua the son of Nun, the assistant of Moses from his youth, said, “My lord Moses, stop them.” 29 But Moses said to him, “Are you **jealous** for my sake? Would that all the LORD’s people were prophets, that the LORD would put his Spirit on them!”

iv. Endeavors to “outshine” someone else

a) *Philippians 1:15* Some indeed preach Christ from **envy** and **rivalry**, but others from good will.

v. Comes from the lusts of the flesh

a) *1 Corinthians 3:3* For you are still of the flesh. For while there is **jealousy** and strife among you, are you not of the **flesh** and behaving only in a human way?

vi. Chokes out the word

- a) **Mark 4:18-19** 18 And others are the ones sown among thorns. They are those who hear the word, 19 but the cares of the world and the **deceitfulness of riches** and the **desires for other things** enter in and **choke the word**, and it proves unfruitful.

vii. Is idolatry

- a) **Colossians 3:5** Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and **covetousness, which is idolatry**.  
b) **Matthew 6:24** No one can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. **You cannot serve God and money.**

viii. Leads to further sin

- a) **1 Timothy 6:6-10** 6 Now there is great gain in godliness with contentment, 7 for we brought nothing into the world, and we cannot take anything out of the world. 8 But if we have food and clothing, with these we will be **content**. 9 But **those who desire to be rich fall into temptation, into a snare, into many senseless and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.** 10 For **the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils**. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

ix. Destroys oneself & others

- a) **Ephesians 5:5** For you may be sure of this, that everyone who is sexually immoral or impure, or who is **covetous** (that is, an idolater), has **no inheritance** in the kingdom of Christ and God.  
b) **Hebrews 12:15** See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no **“root of bitterness”** springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled.

x. Results in the destruction of the church, to which God attaches the death penalty!

- a) **1 Corinthians 3:16-17** 16 Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? 17 **If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him.** For God's temple is holy, and you are that temple.

xi. True repentance will result in thanking God for other people's talents and praying for God to use them.

C. Two prongs of the commandment:

i. Love God sufficiently to be content with what God gives you

- a) **Luke 12:15** Take care, and be on your guard against all **covetousness**, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.  
b) **Hebrews 13:5** Keep your life free from **love of money**, and **be content with what you have**, for he has said, “I will never leave you nor forsake you.”

ii. Love your neighbor sufficiently to not covet what belongs to him

<b>The Biblical Commentary on the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment</b>
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**III. In Deuteronomy 26:1-19**

A. The First Fruits 1-11

- i. Rejoicing in God's redemption, providence, and worship by giving Him the firstfruits at Pentecost illustrates the absence of covetousness.

B. The Tithes 12-15

- i. The third year's tithe must be given with a vow that it is given in sincere obedience and with joy! Tithing in general evidences a lack of covetousness.

C. The Summons 16-19

- i. Moses summons God's people to live out their side of the covenant God made with them: to keep all His commandments with all their heart. This is the absolute opposite

of a life of covetousness.

a) **Deut. 26:16-19** *This day the LORD your God commands you to do these statutes and rules. You shall therefore be careful to do them with **all your heart** and with all your soul. 17 **You have declared today that the LORD is your God**, and that you will walk in his ways, and keep his statutes and his commandments and his rules, and will obey his voice. 18 And the LORD has declared today that you are a people for his treasured possession, as he has promised you, and that you are to keep **all his commandments**, 19 and that he will set you in praise and in fame and in honor high above all nations that he has made, and that you shall be a people holy to the LORD your God, as he promised.*

#### IV. Christ's teaching about the "radical" nature of the Ten Commandments

A. The 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment is "radical" in that it points not to *outward* actions, but to the "radix"—the "root"—to *inward* motives.

B. Christ applies the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment to the other commandments:

i. **Matthew 5:21-22** *You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not **murder**; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.'* 22 *But I say to you that everyone who is **angry** with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever **insults** his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, '**You fool!**' will be liable to the hell of fire.*

ii. **Matthew 5:27-28** *You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit **adultery**.'* But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with **lustful intent** has already committed adultery with her in his **heart**.

iii. **Matthew 5:33-37** 33 *Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not **swear falsely**, but shall perform to the Lord what you have sworn.'* 34 *But I say to you, Do not take an oath at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, 35 or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. 36 And do not take an oath by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. 37 Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil.*

C. What kinds of covetousness are at the root of the sins which break the other commandments?

- i. 1: Love God for who he is.
- ii. 2: Love God for what he says.
- iii. 3: Love God for what he does.
- iv. 4: Love God on the day he has set apart.
- v. 5: Love our neighbor by honoring his authority.
- vi. 6: Love our neighbor by honoring his life.
- vii. 7: Love our neighbor by honoring his wife.
- viii. 8: Love our neighbor by honoring his property.
- ix. 9: Love our neighbor by honoring his reputation.
- x. 10: Love God and the neighbor from the heart.

#### The Application of the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment

#### V. How to overcome covetousness, or envy

A. Express to God that you are content with His providence, in terms of possessions, circumstances, etc.

B. Request God to use you to the fullest, as He has created you.

C. Thank God for the bounty He has bestowed upon your neighbor in whatever way.

D. Request God to use your neighbor to the fullest, as He has created him or her.

## VI. Discussion topics

A. Is the civil law concerned with the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment?

- i. Example of the influence of the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment in law – “alienation of affection” suits against an adulterous lover by the wronged spouse are still allowed in Hawaii, Illinois, North Carolina, Mississippi, New Mexico, South Dakota, and Utah. The suit is brought because the lover “stole” not only the spouse’s outward physical acts, but the spouse’s *affection*.
- ii. Desire for land that does not belong to a country is often the aggressor’s motive in a war.
- iii. The “war against terrorism” fights not only an *overt*, but a *covert*, enemy. We are opposing not only the outward *acts* of war, but also the *planning, aiding, and abetting* of those acts.

B. Advertising - “More, more, more!” or “our daily bread?”

C. Gambling

## VII. Larger Catechism

A. 147. The duties required in the tenth commandment are,

- i. such a full contentment with our own condition,
- ii. and such a charitable frame of the whole soul toward our neighbor,
- iii. as that all our inward motions and affections touching him, tend unto, and further all that good which is his.

B. 148. The sins forbidden in the tenth commandment are,

- i. discontentment with our own estate;
- ii. envying and grieving at the good of our neighbor,
- iii. together with all inordinate motions and affections to anything that is his.

# How to Apply the 10 Commandments in Difficult Cases

## General Principles

### I. The Rules for Interpreting the 10 Commandments: WLC 99

**Question:** *What rules are to be observed for the right understanding of the Ten Commandments?*

**Answer:** *For the right understanding of the ten commandments, these rules are to be observed:*

1. *That the law is perfect, and bindeth everyone to full conformity in the whole man unto the righteousness thereof, and unto entire obedience for ever; so as to require the utmost perfection of every duty, and to forbid the least degree of every sin.*<sup>17</sup>

2. *That it is spiritual, and so reacheth the understanding, will, affections, and all other powers of the soul; as well as words, works, and gestures.*<sup>18</sup>

3. *That one and the same thing, in divers respects, is required or forbidden in several commandments.*<sup>19</sup>

4. *That as, where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden;<sup>20</sup> and, where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded;<sup>21</sup> so, where a promise is annexed, the contrary threatening is included;<sup>22</sup> and, where a threatening is annexed, the contrary promise is included.<sup>23</sup>*

5. *That what God forbids, is at no time to be done;<sup>24</sup> what he commands, is always our duty;<sup>25</sup> and yet every particular duty is not to be done at all times.<sup>26</sup>*

6. *That under one sin or duty, all of the same kind are forbidden or commanded; together with all the causes, means, occasions, and appearances thereof, and provocations thereunto.*<sup>27</sup>

7. *That what is forbidden or commanded to ourselves, we are bound, according to our places, to endeavour that it may be avoided or performed by others, according to the duty of their places.*<sup>28</sup>

8. *That in what is commanded to others, we are bound, according to our places and callings, to be helpful to them;<sup>29</sup> and to take heed of partaking with others in what is forbidden them.<sup>30</sup>*

### II. Resolving apparent conflicts between obligations

A. Groundrule: God's moral requirements do not conflict with one another. See Num. 23:19; Heb. 6:18; 11:19

B. Instructive deviations from this groundrule: each method is *partly right*, but ends in allowing God's requirements to be self-contradictory.<sup>31</sup>

i. **Consequentialism:** An act is good if it is intended to produce a greater balance of good over evil than any available alternative. Problem: What is the definition of the greatest good?

17 Ps. 19:7; James 2:10; Matt. 5:21–22.

18 Rom. 7:14; Deut. 6:5; Matt. 22:37–39, 5:21–22, 27–28, 33–34, 37–39, 43–44.

19 Col. 3:5; Amos 8:5; Prov. 1:19; 1 Tim. 6:10.

20 Isa. 58:13; Deut. 6:13; Matt. 4:9–10; 15:4–6.

21 Matt. 5:21–25; Eph. 4:28.

22 Exod. 20:12; Prov. 30:17.

23 Jer. 18:7–8; Exod. 20:7; Ps. 15:1, 4–5; Ps. 24:4–5.

24 Job 13:7–8; Rom. 3:8; Job 36:21; Heb. 11:25.

25 Deut. 4:8–9.

26 Matt. 12:7.

27 Matt. 5:21–22, 27–28; 15:4–6; Heb. 10:24–25; 1 Thess. 5:22; Jude 23; Gal. 5:26; Col. 3:21.

28 Exod. 20:10; Lev. 19:17; Gen. 18:19; Josh. 24:15; Deut. 6:6–7.

29 2 Cor. 1:24.

30 1 Tim. 5:22; Eph. 5:11.

31 Taken from David Clyde Jones, *Biblical Christian Ethics*, chapter 7.

- ii. Tragic Morality: Choose the lesser evil. Problem: God commands good, not evil actions. See Rom. 7:12, 16; 1 Cor. 10:13; 1 Tim. 1:8
- iii. Hierarchicalism: Choose the higher value. E.g., “*The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath.*” See 2 Chron. 30:18-20. Problem: What is the highest value?
- iv. Prima Facie Duties: Analyze the cases more carefully to recognize how the conflict of duties is only apparent; the situation demands an application of the commandments one might not initially expect from the wording of the commandments. Problem: This application is considered to be rightfully contrary to the general principle taught by the commandment.

### **III. The key issue of each commandment:**

- 1: Love God for who he is.
- 2: Love God for what he says.
- 3: Love God for what he does.
- 4: Love God on the day he has set apart.
- 5: Love our neighbor by honoring his authority.
- 6: Love our neighbor by honoring his life.
- 7: Love our neighbor by honoring his wife.
- 8: Love our neighbor by honoring his property.
- 9: Love our neighbor by honoring his reputation.
- 10: Love God and the neighbor from the heart.

## Case Studies

### **IV. How many days long should our work week be?**

- A. Monday-Friday = 5
- B. Europe = 4?
- C. 4<sup>th</sup> Commandment = 6?
- D. What other commandments' concerns are relevant? How? When does one concern take priority over another?

### **V. How do various commandments' concerns come into play when...**

- A. Marrying a spouse?
- B. Buying a house?
- C. Planning the route of your shopping trip?
- D. Deciding which shoe to put on first in the morning?

### **VI. Was Abraham right or wrong to say of Sarah to protect his life, "She is my sister"? See Gen. 12, 20, 26**

### **VII. Was Jephthah right to keep his vow? See Judges 11:31, 39. Yes? Num. 30:2; Deut. 23:21-23. No? Deut. 12:31; 18:10; Lev. 18:21; 20:2-5.**

### **VIII. Was Naaman right to bow down in the temple of Rimmon? See 2 Kings 5:18-19.**

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