

The Ten Commandments – Part 2 (Ex. 20:12-17)

A Small Group Outline

This could take 2 sessions depending on the discussions

1. Praise (Purpose: To worship God)

- What are you thankful for this week? (let the group's secretary write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)
- Song Service
 - Sing a few songs of praise to God



2. Pray (Purpose: To carry each others' burdens and to seek the Lord)

- What challenges did you have this week? (write these down in an A4 hardcover or some notebook)
- Go into a season of prayer

3. Review (Purpose: To learn accountability)

- Tell us how it went with what you promised to do in last week's meeting? (e.g. Who did you share your faith with this past week? Who did you minister to? How did actioning your I WILL STATEMENT go?)
- Where people have failed to fulfil what they said they would, do not be harsh with them but gently encourage them to try again in the coming week. Give them more support by phoning or joining them in the week.

4. Give (Purpose: To be good stewards of our monies)

- This is the time to return tithes and offerings. If done electronically, kindly ensure that you get the bank account details of your local church from your treasurer. Don't forget to complete an envelope and to send the breakdown to him/her.

5. Discover (Purpose: To learn to listen to God, and be obedient to His Word)

- **Notes for the facilitator**
 - Read *Patriarchs & Prophets (PP)*, pp. 308-309
 - **Commandment 5:** "Parents are entitled to a degree of love and respect which is due to no other person. God Himself, who has placed upon them a responsibility for the souls committed to their charge, has ordained that **during the earlier years of life, parents shall stand in the place of God to their children. And he who rejects the rightful authority of his parents is rejecting the authority of God.** The fifth commandment requires children not only to yield respect, submission, and obedience to their parents, but also to give them love and tenderness, to lighten their cares, to guard their reputation, and to succor and comfort them in old age. It also enjoins respect for ministers and rulers and for all others to whom God has delegated authority" (PP 308).
 - "This [5th commandment], says the apostle, '**is the first commandment with promise.**' Ephesians 6:2. To Israel, expecting soon to enter Canaan, it was a pledge to the obedient, of long life in that good land; but it has a wider meaning, including all the Israel of God, and promising eternal life upon the earth when it shall be freed from the curse of sin" (PP 308).
 - "**Another purpose of this commandment is to engender respect for all rightful authority.** Such respect begins with the attitude of children toward their parents. **In the mind of the child this becomes the basis for respect and obedience owed to those who are legitimately placed in authority over him throughout life, particularly in the church and in the state** (Rom. 13:1-7; Heb. 13:17; 1 Peter 2:13-18). There is included in the spirit of this commandment the thought that those in authority in the home and outside of it should so conduct

themselves that they are ever worthy of the respect and obedience of those under them (Eph. 6:4, 9; Col. 3:21; 4:1)” – *SDA Bible Commentary*

- **Commandment 6: “All acts of injustice that tend to shorten life;** the spirit of hatred and revenge, or the indulgence of any passion that leads to injurious acts toward others, or causes us even to wish them harm (for “whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer”); a selfish neglect of caring for the needy or suffering; all self-indulgence or unnecessary deprivation or excessive labor that tends to injure health—all these are, to a greater or less degree, violations of the sixth commandment” (PP 308).
 - “Not only does this commandment forbid violence to the body, but, what is of far greater consequence, injury to the soul. **We break it when we lead others into sin by our example and action, and thus contribute to the destruction of their souls.** Those who corrupt the innocent and seduce the virtuous ‘kill’ in a far worse sense than the cutthroat and the bandit, in that they do more than to kill the body (Matt. 10:28)” – *SDA Bible Commentary*
- **Commandment 7: “This commandment forbids not only acts of impurity, but sensual thoughts and desires, or any practice that tends to excite them.** Purity is demanded not only in the outward life but in the secret intents and emotions of the heart. Christ, who taught the far-reaching obligation of the law of God, declared the evil thought or look to be as truly sin as is the unlawful deed” (PP 308)
 - “This prohibition covers not only adultery but fornication and impurity of any and every kind in act, word, and thought (Matt. 5:27, 28)... Marriage makes the husband and wife “one flesh” (Gen. 2:24). **To be untrue to this sacred union or to lead another to do so is to despise that which is sacred and to commit a crime as well”** – *SDA Bible Commentary*
- **Commandment 8: “Both public and private sins are included in this prohibition. The eighth commandment condemns manstealing and slave dealing, and forbids wars of conquest. It condemns theft and robbery. It demands strict integrity in the minutest details of the affairs of life.** It forbids overreaching in trade, and requires the payment of just debts or wages. It declares that every attempt to advantage oneself by the ignorance, weakness, or misfortune of another is registered as fraud in the books of heaven”.
 - Withholding tithes and offering is regarded by God as robbery – see Mal. 3:8-10
 - The following is taken from the *SDA Bible Commentary*:
 - ⇒ **“Adulteration, the concealment of defects, misrepresentation of quality,** and the employment of **false weights** or measures are all the acts of a thief as much as pocket picking or shoplifting.
 - ⇒ Employees steal when they take a “commission” unknown to their superiors, or **appropriate that which has not been expressly agreed upon, or neglect to do whatever work they contracted to do, or perform it in a slovenly manner, or damage the owner’s property through carelessness or diminish it by waste.**
 - ⇒ Employers steal when they **withhold from their employees the benefits they promised, or allow their wages to fall into arrears, or force them to work overtime without proper remuneration,** or deprive them of any other consideration they have a reasonable right to expect. They steal who **conceal goods from a customs inspector** or misrepresent them in any way, or who make out **false or misleading tax returns,** or who cheat tradesmen by **incurring debts that they can never repay,** or who in view of impending bankruptcy turn over their property to a friend, with the understanding that it is later to be restored, or who have recourse to any so-called tricks of trade.

- ⇒ **We may steal from others in more subtle ways**, robbing them of their faith in God through doubt and criticism, through the shattering effect of a bad example when otherwise trusted, by confusing and perplexing them by statements they are not prepared to understand, by pernicious, slanderous gossip that may deprive them of their good name and character. Whatever withholds from another that which is rightfully his, or appropriates to one's own use that which is another's—this is stealing. To accept credit for the labors or ideas of another, to use that which is his without his permission, or to take advantage of another in any way—this too is stealing”.
- **Commandment 9:** “False speaking in any matter, every attempt or purpose to deceive our neighbor, is here included. An intention to deceive is what constitutes falsehood. **By a glance of the eye, a motion of the hand, an expression of the countenance, a falsehood may be told as effectually as by words.** All intentional overstatement, every hint or insinuation calculated to convey an erroneous or exaggerated impression, **even the statement of facts in such a manner as to mislead, is falsehood.** This precept forbids every effort to **injure our neighbor's reputation by misrepresentation** or evil surmising, by **slander or tale bearing**. Even the intentional suppression of truth, by which injury may result to others, is a violation of the ninth commandment” (PP 309).
 - “This commandment may also be broken by those who remain silent when they hear an innocent man unjustly maligned. It can be broken by a shrug of the shoulder or by an arching of the eyebrows. Whoever tampers in any way with the exact truth, in order to gain personal advantage or for any other purpose, is guilty of bearing ‘false witness.’ The suppression of truth that might result in injury to oneself or others—this too is bearing ‘false witness.’” – *SDA Bible Commentary*
 - **Commandment 10:** “**The tenth commandment strikes at the very root of all sins, prohibiting the selfish desire, from which springs the sinful act.** He who in obedience to God's law refrains from indulging even a sinful desire for that which belongs to another will not be guilty of an act of wrong toward his fellow creatures” (PP 309)
 - “The tenth commandment strikes at the roots of the other nine.... **This prohibition is fundamental to human experience in that it penetrates to the motive behind the outward act.** It teaches us that God sees the heart (1 Sam. 16:7; 1 Kings 8:39; 1 Chron. 28:9; Heb. 4:13), and is concerned less with the outward act than with the thought from which the action springs.... The wrong thought entertained promotes a wrong desire, which in time gives birth to a wrong action (Prov. 4:23; James 1:13–15). **This basic commandment reveals the profound truth that we are not the helpless slaves of our natural desires and passions.** Within us is a force, the will, which, under the control of Christ, can submerge every unlawful desire and passion (Phil. 2:13). It sums up the Decalogue by affirming that man is essentially a free moral agent.” – *SDA Bible Commentary*
 - *Read Exodus. 20:12-17. Preferably let one person read it. Let everyone then put down their Bibles and get the group to reconstruct the passage in their own words. This teaches the group to be careful in quotation Scripture correctly and to use it as the basis of their discussions.*
 - **Discussion Questions** (use only a few). *The notes in italics after some of the questions below are for the facilitator, and not to be read out to the group.*
 - Why is the commandment to obey our parents so critical?
 - What are practical ways in which this commandment can be kept?
 - Why is killing so offensive to God, and to society?

- What are the wider aspects of this command that are also included here [see for instance Matt. 5:21-22]? Why is God concerned about our angry thoughts as well, and not just the outward behaviour? (*ask one question at a time*)
- Why is adultery so detestable to God?
- The command concerning adultery also includes lust [see Matt. 5:27-28]. In what ways does modern society fuel lustful behaviour?
- How is the sacredness of marriage downplayed, belittled or ignored today?
- What are some of the painful consequences of a marital break-up that God wants us to avoid?
- What are a few principles that couples could follow to ensure a lasting, happy marriage?
- Stealing deals with the protection of property? Why do you think God gave the 8th commandment?
- What are some of the many ways that the 8th commandment can be violated?
- Why is purity of speech so critical to God, and to the wellbeing of society?
- What are some of the ways the 9th commandment could be broken?
- What is coveting, and why do you think God prohibited it?
- It is said that the 'tenth commandment strikes at the root of the other nine commandments'. Do you agree with this statement? Why or why not?
- Try and rephrase commandments 6-10 in a positive way!
- How would you respond to the following statement: "Humans will never be perfect, so why bother to try and keep God's commandments perfectly?"
- Compare and contrast internal versus external obedience?
- What do the commandments tell us about God?
- What do they tell us about mankind?
- **Application Questions** (*select a few depending on your time. One has to be the I WILL STATEMENT*)
 - If your parent(s) are still alive, share one thing you can do to show love, support and care for them this week? If they are not, is there anyone else you could do it for?
 - What stood out for you in this lesson, that you would like to seriously address in your life?
 - It is clear that the commandments cannot be kept in human strength, but only through the indwelling of the Spirit. How would you like to deepen your walk with Jesus this week, so that He can write / continue to write His law in your heart?
 - I WILL STATEMENT: Formulate an I will statement in response to what you have discovered in the Word. Let the group's secretary also record these in an A4 notebook. Ensure that everyone gets a chance to give their I WILL STATEMENT. You have to be specific. E.g. "I will express my love and affection to my parents every week for this month, through an sms, a phone call, a small gift, or a visit. I am hoping to keep this up for the rest of my life as well."

6. Share (*Purpose: To be witnesses of our faith*)

- Do you have anyone you could share today's lesson with this week? *Be specific.*

7. Closing prayer

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