

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

BORN TO GROW

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

STUDY 1

The Born to Grow series of leaflets is designed to give you a good basic understanding of what it is to be a Christian and how to live a powerful and effective Christian Life.

It consists of six sets:

Foundations	6 leaflets
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THE REASON FOR THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The commandments are a summary of God's standards of right and wrong for mankind. They are the only true foundation for effective living. They are full of wisdom and are a prescription for man in keeping his relationships with God and his fellow man in harmony and order. They are also the standards by which every human being will be assessed at the final judgement.

Relationships

Relationship is the key value in the whole theme of the commandments.

God is not looking for isolated perfection. Neither is he looking for heroic effort in our lives. God is looking for perfection in relationships, not perfection in performance. This is because God wants us to be fulfilled in life through relationships, both with Himself and with one another.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the first four commandments deal with relationships between ourselves and God, and the next six deal with our relationships with one another.

Hearts of Understanding

As powerful as the commandments might be, they are of little value if they are not approached with a softness of heart and a willingness to obey. The first people who were given the commandments failed to approach them (and the rest of God's Word) in this way.

Hebrews 3:7-10

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says

*"Today, if you will hear His voice,
8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,
In the day of trial in the wilderness,
9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,
And saw My works forty years.
10 Therefore I was angry with that generation,
And said,
'They always go astray in their heart,
And they have not known My ways.'*

The nation of Israel to whom the law was given were a people devoid of spiritual understanding.

Deuteronomy 32:28

"For they are a nation void of counsel, Nor is there any understanding in them.

They had been in bondage in Egypt for over 400 years and had lost any understanding of the nature of God. There had been no progressive revelation through any prophets throughout all that time. Their tendency, therefore, was to take the law and apply it to themselves as a set of rules and regulations of 'thou shalt nots' in such a way that their relationship was with the letter of the law, rather than the person behind the law, who was their Father God.

This approach always results in stress and breakdown. The commandments are not designed to be obeyed as precepts for isolated individuals. They are only effective in the context of love for God and for our fellow man.

The New Covenant

Hebrews 8:10

10 "For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD:

*I will put My laws in their mind
and write them on their hearts;
and I will be their God,
and they shall be My people.*

The importance of love and relationship is why the New Covenant had a promise that the law would be written in our hearts by the Holy Spirit. The New Covenant is the way that we are all called to relate to God today. The Holy Spirit is God Himself, a person of the Trinity, who can indwell us and make alive the spirit of the law. He establishes within us the life and standards of God's wisdom for our relationships, on an empowering basis of love and grace, instead of legalism

A Pathway

Psalms 119:105

*Your word is a lamp to my feet
And a light to my path.*

The law is also a pathway, that is, a guide. It contains a sequence of steps leading us to maturity in our relationships. Each commandment provides a challenge of faith for which the believer is prepared by the previous one. Growth, then, is step by step

SUMMARY OF THE LAW

Commandments 1-4

Because obedience and faith must be founded upon a relationship with God, the first four commandments are concerned with spiritual development. That is, with God-man relationships.

1st Commandment Love for God

Exodus 20:3

You shall have no other gods before Me.

A god is a source of life. God alone, therefore, must be the initiator, means and end purpose of all we do.

Romans 11:36

For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.

2nd Commandment Belonging to God

Exodus 20:4-6

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 nor 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 generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

Idols give nothing and take everything. People build idols, often in the form of self-images, to bolster their weak faith, and become blind, deaf and hard of heart. Idolatry is the will of the flesh.

Psalms 115:4-8

Their idols are silver and gold, The work of men's hands. 5 They have mouths, but they do not speak; Eyes they have, but they do not see; 6 They have ears, but they do not hear; Noses they have, but they do not smell; 7 They have hands, but they do not handle; Feet they have, but they do not walk; Nor do they mutter through their throat. 8 Those who make them are like them; So is everyone who trusts in them.

3rd Commandment Faith in God's Name

Exodus 20:7

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.

Only those who see little significance in the Lord's name will use that name carelessly; e.g. praying 'in the name of Jesus' is a serious responsibility.

**4th Commandment
Waiting on God
The Rest of Faith**

Exodus 20:8-11

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

*Six days you shall labour and do all your work,
but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God.*

*In it you shall do no work:
you, nor your son,
nor your daughter,
nor your male servant,
nor your female servant,
nor your cattle,
nor your stranger who is within your gates.*

*For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth,
the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.*

Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

The principle of rest is the standard for our abiding trust in God. (John 15:7, Hebrews 4:1-13). This puts an end to striving and dead works, which are fruitless. This commandment also relates to the importance of gathering weekly for a time of corporate worship.

Commandments 5 - 9

The next five commandments establish principles that bring people into self discipline and enable growth at a natural level. These allow free person to person relationships.

Note the priorities: first we relate to God, then we learn to relate to man. Only in the presence of God can the human life be truly successful.

5th Commandment Development of Character Through Healthy Relationship With Authority

Exodus 20:12

*Honour your father and your mother,
that your days may be long upon the land
which the LORD your God is giving you.*

The parental authority of the family is God's chosen means for developing each individual life in its true form. This is the foundation of natural life and the basis of all authority. (Ephesians 6:1-3).

6th Commandment Emotional Control Care for Life and the Well Being Of Others

Exodus 20:13

You shall not murder.

The law speaks of co-living. For this to become a reality there must be a care for the lives of others. (Matthew 5:21-22).

7th Commandment Purity and Commitment in Relationships

Exodus 20:14

You shall not commit adultery.

This commandment deals with all the areas of sexual sin. However, adultery is not only a matter of sexual lust, but also of betrayal and escapism. It reveals shallowness and hardness of heart. (Proverbs 7:7)

**8th Commandment
Productivity and Self Denial
Giving and Not Taking**

Exodus 20:15

You shall not steal.

The thief is one to whom the rights of others are unimportant. Such people are self indulgent and emotionally barren. (Ephesians 4:28).

**9th Commandment
Humility and Self Control
Truthfulness**

Exodus 20:16

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

Promotion comes from God. To promote self or demote others by earing tales is to serve self. The human heart can be corrupted by ambition.

**10th Commandment
Contentment In God's Provision**

The final commandment provides opportunity for a progressive and deepening experience of soul conversion.

Exodus 20:17

You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbour's."

Covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5) that is, it is the desire to be complete in oneself. God wants us not to be independent from one another but to have consideration for others and rejoice with them in he blessings they have received.

A victorious experience of growth in this commandment leads us round the full cycle to a deepening challenge in the first commandment again!

NO OTHER GODS

BORN TO GROW THE TEN COMMANDMENTS STUDY 2

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THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

Exodus 20:3

You shall have no other gods before Me.

The first commandment deals directly with putting God first. This is for several reasons. Firstly God is our creator. He quite properly owns us. Secondly, through the work of Jesus, He has redeemed us. He has purchased us back from eternal death. Thirdly, the whole focus of His plan for us centres on His love for us and His desire for us to serve Him out of a heart of love and devotion. Fourthly, obedience and faith are founded upon a relationship with Him.

RELEASE FROM BONDAGE

Exodus 20:2

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

This verse in Scripture is stated together with the command to put God first in our lives.

In this we see the principle, revealed by God Himself, that he understands, that we can only obey him insofar as we are released from bondage. He knew that the nation of Israel was not able to obey Him because of their struggles to cope with life as they found it. They were focussed on survival in this world rather than on the eternal victory that could have been theirs.

We also see in this Scripture the revelation of Himself as Lord and Saviour. God knew that Israel could not help itself or ever attain to His standards. He therefore set about working on their hearts and life circumstances to give them the ability to obey.

**GOD NOT ONLY REQUIRES OBEDIENCE,
HE ALSO PROVIDES THE LIBERTY TO OBEY!**

THE EXAMPLE OF ISRAEL

The principle that release from bondage is necessary before there can be obedience, is best illustrated when we consider the fact that God delivered Israel from bondage in Egypt before He gave them the commandments.

God's Compassion For Israel

Exodus 3:7

And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows."

Exodus 6:6-9

Therefore say to the children of Israel:

***I am the LORD;
I will bring you out
from under the burdens of the Egyptians,
I will rescue you from their bondage,
and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm
and with great judgments.
7 I will take you as My people,
and I will be your God.***

Then you shall know that I am the LORD your God who brings you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. 8 'And I will bring you into the land which I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; and I will give it to you as a heritage: I am the LORD.'"

*9 So Moses spoke thus to the children of Israel; but they did not heed Moses, because of **anguish of spirit and cruel bondage**.*

God's loving response to Israel's condition was one of compassion and mercy. He set about revealing and proving Himself to be a God of promise and purpose for their lives. Israel, like us, could not respond to these promises because of their "anguish of spirit and cruel bondage".

Israel had been in Egypt for more than four hundred years, much of this time under the yoke of cruel slavery and without any progressive revelation of God. As a result of this they had become a self-centred, defensive and suspicious people. They knew little of the principles of right and wrong.

They did not understand or seek after true spiritual foundations for their lives. They sought only for short term gratification of their lusts and desires. That is, for their perceived needs. They had no hope or vision for long term fulfilment. They were devoid of any sense of purpose, dignity or identity as God's people.

***GOD'S MOST FORMIDABLE TASK
WAS TO CONVINCe THEM
OF HIS LOVE FOR THEM
(LET ALONE TRANSFORM THEM!)***

GOD'S COVENANT WITH ISRAEL

The seven "I wills" (quoted above) are the promises of the covenant God made with Israel concerning their deliverance and fulfilment. It was after their deliverance from Egypt that the commandments, necessary for Israel's fulfilment, were revealed.

For this promised fulfilment to take place, Israel had to be made mature in the knowledge of God. Being made mature in the knowledge of God takes place through a process of growth in which the mind and heart are transformed (Romans 12:2, Hebrews 8:10). The commandments showed Israel the need for this change of mind and heart by revealing the sin in their lives.

The effect of the first commandment, therefore, was to reveal to Israel that they could not put God first. God knew that this was so and knew it was because of their bondage of heart. This is why the promise of deliverance is tied to this commandment.

Bondage And The Believer

Colossians 1:12-13

...giving thanks to the Father who has qualified us to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in the light. 13 He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,

As with Israel, so God has provided for Christians today a supernatural deliverance from bondage so that we can obey this commandment and put God first in our lives.

THE NEW COVENANT

Unlike Israel (who did not have the example of Israel, 1 Corinthians 10:11) the Church has both the precedent of Israel from which to learn and the power of Jesus from which to live.

The way in which this power is made available to us is through the new covenant.

Hebrews 8:10

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD:

*I will put My laws in their mind
and write them on their hearts;
and I will be their God,
and they shall be My people.*

Through this covenant relationship God has purposed to work in us a release from bondage of mind and heart. In doing this, He is setting us free to obey the first commandment and put Him first in our lives.

The Principles of the Commandment

1 Corinthians 8:6

*Yet for us there is one God,
the Father,
from whom are all things and for whom we exist,
and one Lord, Jesus Christ,
through whom are all things and through whom we exist.*

This Scripture provides a very real and practical means by which we might be able to exercise obedience to this commandment. It points to four principles related to putting God first. These are acknowledging His Fatherhood over our lives, accepting and submitting to His purpose for us, worshipping and acknowledging Jesus as our Lord and identifying with Him as He works in us.

The Fatherhood of God

As our Father, God is the source of our life. He is also therefore the provider for, protector of and the source of love and acceptance in our lives. Obedience to the first commandment means looking to Him, and Him alone for all of these things. This results in our finding a true sense of identity and belonging. (Ephesians 1:3-6). In this, all things are seen as being from God. (Romans 11:36).

Our Purpose in God

Our lives only have meaning as we relate to our Father God's intentions for our lives (Ephesians 1:3-6). This causes us to acknowledge His wisdom for our live decisions. (Proverbs 2:1-9).

Obedience in this means submitting to Gods absolute authority over our lives and putting God's call and purposes first in our lives. It also means seeking God for the ways in which this call and purpose will be outworked. Then all things are unto the Glory of God (Romans 11:36). Jesus related to our Father God in this way.

John 5:19-20

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. 20 "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel.

The Lordship of Jesus

For Christians (unlike Israel) to whom the divinity of Christ is revealed, this commandment bears reference to Jesus. Obedience in this means that we acknowledge that the Father has given to Jesus, and to Jesus alone, supreme authority and that we submit to him in his Lordship. Jesus is the Lord of Lords.

Obedience to this commandment requires, therefore, that the claims of every other religion and philosophy must be subordinated to Jesus. Jesus is not just a Christ. He is the only Christ. He has no equal. He is not just a great man on the path of human development. He is not just a great prophet amongst other great prophets. He is not a manifestation or avatar amongst others of some divine being or principle. Jesus must be worshipped as the only begotten and divine son of the only God. He must be acknowledged as the one who is now Lord over all Creation and Saviour to those who call on him by name.

Philippians 2:10-11

... that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Identification with Jesus

Jesus, the Son of God, is also our brother. Through the gift of life He has given us we can obey our Father and share in the inheritance. Obedience means that we identify in every way with Jesus' death, burial and resurrection. In this we are acknowledging our utter dependence upon His life within us to perfectly please our Father.

Colossians 3:1-4

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. 3 For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ who is our life appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

NO FALSE IMAGES

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STUDY 3

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RULE

Exodus 20:4-6

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 nor 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 generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

This commandment forbids the worshipping of images. The worshipping of images is called idolatry.

Some have taken this commandment to mean that it is a sin for artists to make statues or paintings that visually represent anything in creation. Such an interpretation would also forbid photography, motion pictures and television. All such interpretations have missed the point.

The issue is not the creating of images for the purpose of communication or for the appreciation of beauty, it is the creating of images for the purpose of worship. Worship is the ascribing of worth or importance to something That is it is an act or attitude that gives worthship or importance to things or concepts

Idolatry, then, is the creating of images that have not come from God and are given life directing importance. Such image making is totally forbidden by this commandment.

Pagan religions personified their wrong concepts and made statues. Such idols were easy to recognise. Today, idolatry is more subtle but equally prevalent. Any statue, picture, or other form of image is merely an outward representation of a concept first formed in the mind. Such images become idols when they are bowed down to and served. That is to say idolatry is sin in the mind and heart.

reason

Scripture shows that idolaters damage the generations that follow them and derive their identity (their sense of who they are) from their idols.

Psalm 135:15-18

*The idols of the nations are silver and gold,
The work of men's hands.*

*16 They have mouths, but they do not speak;
Eyes they have, but they do not see;*

*17 They have ears, but they do not hear;
Nor is there any breath in their mouths.*

*18 Those who make them are like them;
So is everyone who trusts in them.*

Idolaters seek to live out their lives in the strength of their idols. They have lives limited by their own concepts, projections and imaginations. They have replaced the reality of God as the source of their life and identity with images derived from their own ideas.

The reason this commandment is needed as a rule in our lives is to check this seeking of identity from a source other than our Father God. Our Father God is the only source of

life and love meaning for us. It is only when we relate to Him in this way, that we find ourselves as real people. If we relate to anything else as a substitute (which is disobedience to the first commandment) it will only result in us becoming unstable in our lives, unreal in our thinking and insecure in our personalities.

Romans 1:20-25

For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, 21 because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

22 Professing to be wise, they became fools, 23 and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man; and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.

24 Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness, in the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their bodies among themselves, 25 who exchanged the truth of God for the lie, and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

REACTION

The human reaction to the loss of identity through having rejected or lost the reality of God's Fatherhood compels man to restore an identity for himself. This always works through image building (idolatry). This always fails. It is the source of much insecurity. Many problems related to self esteem arise from trying to build our own images rather than to yield and to allow God to lovingly teach us who we are in Him.

Idolatry takes many forms; however, most forms can be found with one or more of the following six categories:

- Cult Idolatry
- Ideological Idolatry
- Religious Idolatry
- Hero Worship
- Self Image Building.

Cult Idolatry

This includes the worship of personified false gods such as Astarte (Judges 2:13), Baal (Judges 2:13), Dagon (Judges 16:23), Molech (Leviticus 18:21) and so on. Most pagan societies have (or had) many such gods, usually represented in some form of statue or picture.

This also includes occultism and Satan worship in which supernatural power is ascribed to incantations, talismans (magic charms and images) and secret rituals.

Ideological Idolatry

This form of idolatry has as its image or idol an idea or “ism” that promises fulfilment to its followers. These include the following: Communism, Nationalism, Patriotism, Denominationalism, Liberalism, Feminism, Capitalism, Environmentalism and so on. Some of these are generally regarded as being respectable and may even be important and of genuine value even before God. We should note that not all adherents to these ideologies are idolaters, they become idolaters when they look to these ideas for their sense of worth, their life fulfilment and for their identity.

Religious Idolatry

This is limiting God to our own concept of Him, and then worshipping these concepts. Israel did these in the worshipping of the golden calf (Exodus 32 cf. Deuteronomy 4:12), when they sought to enshrining their pitifully inadequate understanding of the Gods who had led them from Egypt. The calf worship was smashed by God because He has not prepared to be limited and misunderstood in this way.

In this, Israel showed their impatience in not waiting for God to progressively reveal Himself to them. Peter also fell in this by enshrining the Jewish religious tradition thus resisting God’s vision for the Gentiles. (Acts 10:9-16). Christians religious tradition often fails in the same way.

Hero Worship

In this form of idolatry, self identity is sought through identifying with the achievements, charisma and status of others such as sports champions, entertainers (rock idols), politicians and religious leaders.

Self-Image Building

This is the most widespread form of idolatry. In fact all the other forms of idolatry can be seen to be expressions of this basic problem. Self image building usually involves self rejection followed by self projection.

Self Rejection

Since all self-image building is establishing a false sense of identity it must involve rejection of our true selves. Self rejection often begins as a result of a parental lack in providing the attention and love so needed by their children¹. This is then usually reinforced and magnified by pressures such as those from peer groups etc. This causes feelings of inadequacy and inferiority and fears of disapproval and criticism. This self rejection does not always appear as inferiority but is almost as often seen in a false self assertiveness and superiority. This shows that even pride is a result of self rejection!

Self Projection

Self projection is the act of compensation for self rejection. Just as a film projector projects an image that covers a screen so we project from within ourselves an image that covers the self we have rejected. The nature of the image we project depends upon our life experience and our temperament. What has happened to us (our life experience) shapes what we want out of life, our temperament (whether it be of a negative or positive disposition) shapes the way we go about getting it. This projection of the image that would seem to fulfil our wants becomes a lifetime preoccupation. This distracts us and cuts us off from the true fulfilment of knowing who we are in God.

RESULT

The result therefore is a lifetime of insecurity as it becomes devoted to maintaining images that are shaky because they are founded in unreality.

Doubt must haunt any such image because it is but a shadow. To overcome this doubt, attempts must be made to substantiate the images. These attempts can only fail and so lead to disappointment. As hope dwindles disappointment becomes disillusionment and despair eventually overcomes.

REMEDY

There are three aspects of the remedy, rod revelation and release. The rod refers to the hand of God upon us in discipline. The revelation is that aspect of the truth which is in Christ that can set us free in each particular situation. The release is the living freedom that is experienced as the soul is set free to obey.

¹ Note here the statement made by the Lord qualifying this commandment. It seems likely that it is through this abuse of the family structure that God has ordained, that He “*visits the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation*”, and conversely shows mercy to those who honour Him.

ROD

God mercifully destroys any image that distracts us from knowing Him or our true selves. This often produces pain and insecurity in our lives. Sometimes it is God who is opposing us. In this sense God will oppose any false image we try to build. This means that sometimes the answer to our problems about self esteem and insecurity lie in giving up our ideas and efforts rather than in trying harder.

Isaiah 2:17-21

The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, And the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; The LORD alone will be exalted in that day, 18 But the idols He shall utterly abolish. 19 They shall go into the holes of the rocks, And into the caves of the earth, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily. 20 In that day a man will cast away his idols of silver And his idols of gold, Which they made, each for himself to worship, To the moles and bats, 21 To go into the clefts of the rocks, And into the crags of the rugged rocks, From the terror of the LORD And the glory of His majesty, When He arises to shake the earth mightily.

Revelation

What we must see to be free of the sin of idolatry in all its forms is the utter futility of trying to find security in our own identity. This is because our lives are hid with Christ in God.

Colossians 3:1-2

If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. 2 Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

RELEASE

As we open our hearts to this revelation and let all idols perish in its life we become released into a place of secure self acceptance.

Self acceptance is the outworking of our faith in the grace of God through Jesus. In this we become able to rest in the fact that we are called and chosen by God without doing anything to deserve it. We no longer have an image to maintain. We are inescapably who we are, the handiwork of God, made in His image and likeness and brought into a place of blessed assurance of His love and interest in us.

Ephesians 1:3-6

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, 6 to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He has made us accepted in the Beloved.

Honouring the Lord's Name

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Exodus 20:7

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.

This commandment deals with respect for the name of God. Great responsibility is required because great authority is vested in the Lord's name

The Principle of the Name

All power in heaven and on earth resides in the person of God. Another way of saying this is that this power resides in His name. Those who are called upon to exercise the name of God are therefore called upon to exercise this power.

There is nothing greater than the person of God Himself. There is, therefore, no authority above His name. Even goodness must bow to Him. God is not good because there are some abstract or universal principles of goodness by which He is to be assessed. If this were so then these principles would be above Him. Nothing is above God. Good, and for that matter evil, have no existence in themselves. Good and evil are nothing more than God's assessment of things. There are no ideals to which God ascribes neither is there anything to which He must give account. It is He that determines what will be the ideals and what must give account to Him.

He is totally and absolutely above everything. This is what is meant by the idea that God is sovereign. It is God that decides what is good. Good is what pleases God. Pleasing God is therefore exercising the highest goodness possible.

There is no "goodness" that can decide He is God. Nothing can judge or assess God. Only he is the judge. In fact even the very word "good" is an Old English accent on the word "God". Good means "of God"! Without realising it every time we use this word we are ascribing His name to something.

All power in heaven and earth therefore resides in Him personally and Him alone. Respect for His name is, therefore, respect for Him.

Abuse of the Name

There are three main ways that the name of the Lord may be abused. Two of these are blasphemy and carelessness in the testimony of the lives of those who are God's people. The third (and possibly the most common) breach relates to the way we seek to gain endorsement for our own reputation rather than to be content with who God has made us to be. In this we are seeking to be our own source of goodness, to build our own name rather than to be submitted to the name that is above all names.

REASON

The reason this commandment is needed as a rule in our lives is to cause us to create respect for the name of God. This respect helps create the atmosphere necessary for true faith in God to be nurtured. When this happens and God is properly enthroned in our hearts, true worship and adoration is released. God is then able to move amongst His people in the true exercise of His love might and power.

This commandment is also necessary to challenge His people to walk worthy of His name and to check any seeking of endorsement for our own name.

REACTION

People that have failed to honour God as God and given Him His rightful place in their lives are condemned to live in various forms of reaction. These reactions become the sin patterns for each commandment. When respect for the name of God is not present in a person's life at least three problems appear. These are blasphemy, disorderly living and the seeking of endorsement.

Blasphemy

Blasphemy is the vulgar or disrespectful use of the Lord's name. This is often motivated by anger or rebellion.

Disorderly Living

As Christians we bear His name. Therefore our behaviour and speech should honour Him who is our head. Many passages of scripture challenge us to walk worthy of His name. Disobedience in this aspect of the commandment therefore involves behaviour that brings reproach upon God or his people. Paul admonished the Roman Christians for this in Romans 2:23-24.

Romans 2:23-24

You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonour God through breaking the law? 24 For "the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you,"

Seeking Endorsement

Seeking of endorsement for our name is motivated by insecurity which is the end result of disobeying the second commandment in building images. This offends the principle of this commandment by seeking to abuse the principle of the name in our lives. This may be done by rejecting the rightful honour we should give the name of God, or it may involve seeking endorsement for our own name. This seeking of endorsement for our own name is really the seeking of endorsement for the self images we have been building. The self effort required in this is one of the great stress producers in our lives. This area of reaction takes at least two forms:

Presumption

The presumer is outwardly pious and delights in impressive testimonies. He claims faith and an effervescent hoe and is always seeking prominence. This futile posturing is seen by the Lord as vanity for the Lord desires obedience and not sacrifice. (Psalm 51:16-17, Isaiah 66:1-3).

An example of this is Saul who sought to use his name as King of Israel for his own glory. It was presumptuous rebellion that caused his downfall.

1 Samuel 15:22-23

Then Samuel said: "Has the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. 23 For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the LORD, He also has rejected you from being king."

Like Saul, the presumer is often self-deceived into believing he is obedient to God when his service is tainted with his own drive for honour. Also like Saul, when confronted with his sin, the presumer will often make a show of repentance which is false. Even this show of repentance is motivated by the desire for endorsement and honour. Saul revealed this when he said to Samuel.

1 Samuel 15:30

Then he said, "I have sinned; yet honour me now, please, before the elders of my people and before Israel, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD your God."

Politicking

The politicker seeks for power as the answer to his insecurity. He sees power as providing for him control over others that affect his life so that he feels secure that they will not interfere with his image. He will even use them to bolster his image.

The politicker takes to himself the credibility and influence of the name and uses it to manipulate others. He will, under this false covering, resort to bribery, flattery and opportunism. He will often side with brother against brother for advantage.

An example of this is David's son Absalom who used his father's name to politic for the throne of Israel.

2 Samuel 15:1-6

Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and spoke, saying, "Indeed we are your bone and your flesh. 2 "Also, in time past, when Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel out and brought them in; and the LORD said to you, 'You shall shepherd My people Israel, and be ruler over Israel.'" 3 Therefore all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD. And they anointed David king over Israel. 4 David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned thirty-three years over all Israel and Judah. 6 And the king and his men went to Jerusalem against the Jebusites, the inhabitants of the land, who spoke to David, saying, "You shall not come in here; but the blind and the lame will repel

you," thinking, "David cannot come in here."

The result of disobedience to this commandment is that our life resources and energies become directed towards securing endorsement of our name. The product of this is stress.

Again Saul is the example whose obsession with prominence produced such stress in his life that it drove him to insanity and eventual suicide.

1 Samuel 31:4

Then Saul said to his armorbearer, "Draw your sword, and thrust me through with it, lest these uncircumcised men come and thrust me through and abuse me." But his armorbearer would not, for he was greatly afraid. Therefore Saul took a sword and fell on it.

REMEDY

There are three aspects of the remedy. These are rod, revelation and release. The rod refers to the hand of God upon us in discipline. The revelation is that aspect of the truth which is in Christ that can set us free in each particular situation. The release is the living freedom that is experienced as the soul is set free to obey.

Rod

An example of the use of divine discipline where the principles of this commandment were transgressed is in the case of Saul at Gilgal. Here Saul was humiliated by having his endorsement withdrawn publicly. It may be then, that the hand of God will come upon all who transgress this commandment to bring about some loss of reputation or endorsement.

1 Samuel 15:24-28

Then Saul said to Samuel, "I have sinned, for I have transgressed the commandment of the LORD and your words, because I feared the people and obeyed their voice. 25 "Now therefore, please pardon my sin, and return with me, that I may worship the LORD." 26 But Samuel said to Saul, "I will not return with you, for you have rejected the word of the LORD, and the LORD has rejected you from being king over Israel." 27 And as Samuel turned around to go away, Saul seized the edge of his robe, and it tore. 28 So Samuel said to him, "The LORD has torn the kingdom of Israel from you today, and has given it to a neighbour of yours, who is better than you.

Revelation

To be free of the pressures that lead to sin against this commandment, we need to have a clear understanding of the greatness and awe of God. This will help prevent both blasphemy and reputation seeking.

Deuteronomy 32:3-4

For I proclaim the name of the LORD: Ascribe greatness to our God. 4 He is the Rock, His work is perfect; For all His ways are justice, A God of truth and without injustice; Righteous and upright is He.

With respect to the issue of seeking endorsement we must also see that it is futile to attempt to increase our stature by securing for ourselves a reputation. Jesus said:

Matthew 6:27

Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

Release

As we open our hearts to honouring and revering the name of God we come to know what it is to experience the pure joy that can only come from the adoration of God. Through this we grow and learn to count our own reputation as of no significance. We enter with Jesus into being able to cast our own reputation aside. This frees us from all ungodly ambition and enters us in to one of the most free life experiences it is possible to know.

Philippians 2:5-9

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

Faith and The Lord's Day

BORN TO GROW

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

STUDY 5

BORN TO GROW

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

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RULE

Exodus 20:8

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

This commandment points to two things. Firstly, it deals with God's command that His people gather for regular times of worship. Secondly it deals with God's requirement that we learn to rest in His provision, that is to live by faith. Scripture reveals that present-day obedience to this commandment is not found in the ritual observance of the seventh day. The ritual observance of the seventh day was the Old Testament way that God sought to reveal these principles to His people.

Regular Worship

Colossians 2:16-17

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ.

This Scripture shows why the Saturday Sabbath no longer applies. It was a shadow. We can now have the reality. The reality is available to all who will, in submission to God, exercise the principles of obedient worship and faith in their lives. Even though the ritual observance of the Sabbath no longer applies, regular weekly worship is still required. This is why Christians, right from the very earliest days, worshipped on the first day of the week. That is, they worshipped on Sundays. This is sometimes called "the Lord's day" in the Scriptures. Sunday worship is also a memorial of the resurrection of Jesus, who rose again on the first day of the week. In this sense Sunday worship has replaced the Old Testament Sabbath.

Revelation 1:10

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, and I heard behind me a loud voice, as of a trumpet,

Obedience to this commandment, therefore, requires a commitment to weekly worship. People who say, things like "I can be a Christian without going to church" or who find reasons and excuses to absent themselves from worship are in violation of this commandment.

Hebrews 10:24-25

And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, 25 not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.

The Life of Faith

Obedience to this commandment also requires an entering into the life of faith. It was for this that the Old Testament Sabbath was established as a means of instruction. In this sense, it commands a life commitment that every day seeks to be at rest in faith in the completed work of Christ. It is this lifestyle of faith that is to replace a ritualised weekly rest. It is important to note that this weekly ritual failed to result in the true rest it pointed to. This rest is only possible through faith in Christ. It seems then that the Saturday Sabbath has been done away with to ensure that nobody ever thinks again that the observance of a day can bring the peace and rest that can only come through the everyday life of faith. This rest of faith that the ritual Sabbath could not bring was spoken of in Hebrews 4.

Hebrews 4:9-11

There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. 11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

This principle of the rest of faith is so important that the Scriptures contain special instructions about rejecting the teaching of those that still seek to apply the Old Testament type of Sabbath (See Col 2:16-17 quoted above).

REASON

The reason this commandment is needed as a rule in our lives is to bring us into a place of worship and faith before God. It aims to release us from self effort in achieving results that only God can attain. Self effort in this way can only operate out of motivations of fear, reward or approval. It seeks either intentionally or unintentionally to selfishly share God's glory. God will never allow His glory to be shared. Rather than to work for our own glory or security, we are to cease from our labours and to come and worship His glory.

Isaiah 48:11

*For My own sake, for My own sake,
I will do it;
For how should My name be profaned?
And I will not give My glory to another.*

REACTION

People that have failed to honour God as God and given Him His rightful place in their lives are condemned to live in various forms of reaction. These reactions become the sin patterns for each commandment. When obedience to the principles this commandment of weekly worship and daily faith, that fulfil the Sabbath, are not present, four problems appear. These are neglect of worship followed by hypocrisy, worldliness and legalism.

How the first of these problems, the neglect of worship, violates this commandment is not difficult to understand. It relates to the plain meaning of the commandment. The following three issues relate to the principle of the rest in faith that is the focus of the deeper meaning of this commandment. That is, they are a result of trying to live a life that depends on its own efforts and fails to be at rest in faith. This follows as a result of disobedience to the previous commandment in which dishonour for the name of God leads people to seeking to build their own name.

As a result of trying to increase stature by securing a reputation, the drive to achieve results for self takes over, this is self dependence. Self dependence defies the principle of dependence on God which is the faith rest challenge of this commandment. The self dependent may achieve results, even impressive results. God, however will not be in them, nor will He be impressed. Such works are dead works. Such “spirituality” is carnality. It is this carnality that expresses itself in hypocrisy, worldliness and legalism.

Neglect of Worship

Attendance at and involvement in regular worship is not an option. It is a command of God. It is not something we go to because we “Get something out of it”. It is an act of obedience to a loving Creator who has commanded it. Any motivation less than sacrificial obedience is not up to the standard commanded.

Often attendance at worship services can be exhilarating and powerful. At other times it can be a time of endurance. Life circumstances and emotions change. Sometimes worship services are well executed with beautiful music, vibrant singing and the powerful release of the gifts of the Spirit. Sometimes they are clumsy and awkward. Sometimes our emotions are on top of everything and we are full of energy. At other times we are unable to respond to the most beautiful worship or the most powerful preaching. At all times, however, we must be careful not to let the changing moods and challenges of life affect our response to a loving God who changes not and in whom there is no shadow of turning. At all times, therefore, our motivation must be to present ourselves to God in such a way as to be a sacrifice that is pleasing to Him and to be prepared to pay whatever price is necessary to be present and to achieve this (cf Rom 12:1-2).

Hypocrisy

This is the first of the life principles that may be seen to be in reaction to the principle of the rest of faith. Hypocrites are actors. To them it is more important that things appear to be right than it is that they actually are right. The seemingly great and often sacrificial efforts that come from this dependence on self effort are often to gain approval. Sometimes this is sought from others. Sometimes we seek it from ourselves. Sometimes we are aware we are doing it, at other times our motives may be hidden from our consciousness. The example of hypocrisy is found in the Pharisees and scribes. Jesus strongly challenged their spiritual abusiveness and pride (Matt 23:13-15).

Matthew 23:28

Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

Worldliness

Worldliness is the second of the life principles that violate the rest of faith. It is a result of trying to achieve with our own efforts what only God can achieve. Because this approach has disqualified itself of the help of heaven it depends on the strength of the world. As a result it becomes overcome by the world. Worldly philosophies and approaches to achieving success and results gain a foothold. In this we see people pleasing, competitiveness, immorality, authoritarianism, and so on.

Many of these problems were seen in the Corinthian Church. (See 1 Corinthians)

This is why many of even those who have begun strongly with the Lord have fallen away. They have slipped into the worldliness born of self effort and have lost the overcoming power of faith.¹

John 5:4

*For whatever is born of God overcomes the world.
And this is the victory that has overcome the world;
our faith.*

Legalism

This is the third of the life principles that offends the life of faith. Legalism is the belief that rules, regulations and religious observances can produce righteousness. They cannot. Not even God's laws can do this. True righteousness can only come from faith that abides in Christ and is at peace in Him and knows the His grace. Legalism is often one of the first traps into which people fall when they begin to trust themselves instead of God. Many who come to Christ soon fall into this trap. Often out of a desire to please and do things right they become bound by rules and regulations and believe that they have to maintain some sort of external performance to be accepted by God. Doing this, they have failed to realise that it is only a life that is at rest in God that can grow into the daily practical living out of the goodness and the wholeness that comes from a God pleasing life.

Galatians 3:1-5

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? 2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? 4 Have you suffered so many things in vain; if indeed it was in vain? 5 Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?;

In this Paul is striking out at self dependence to gain righteousness. He points out that the legal self righteousness of the Galatians is no more than dead works.

He also speaks of this to the Colossians.

Colossians 2:16-22

So let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or sabbaths, 17 which are a shadow of things to come, but the substance is of Christ. 18 Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind, 19 and not holding fast to the Head, from whom all the body, nourished and knit together by joints and ligaments, grows with the increase that is from God. 20 Therefore, if you died with Christ from the basic principles of the world, why, as though living in the world, do you subject yourselves to regulations; 21 "Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle," 22 which all concern things which perish with the using; according to the commandments and doctrines of men?

RESULT

The result of disobedience to this commandment is that we become unable to depend upon, or trust anything other than self. This is the fullness of unbelief. Israel is our example and warning in this.

Hebrews 3:10-12

Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.'" 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God;

The lack of rest, through dependence upon self, is expressed in anxiety. Symptoms of this anxious and troubled state are restlessness, moodiness, depression, irritability, frustration and so on.

Consider the example of Martha.

Luke 10:40-41

But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." 41 And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things.

REMEDY

There are three aspects of the remedy. These are rod, revelation and release. The rod refers to the hand of God upon us in discipline. The revelation is that aspect of the truth which is in Christ that can set us free in each particular situation. The release is the living freedom that is experienced as the soul is set free to obey.

Rod

God's judgement upon any form of self dependence is to frustrate such effort by rendering it fruitless.

Those who neglect worship are given over to darkened and futile thinking. This results in their being further given over by a God to a life of sin. This then makes them subject to His wrath and eternal damnation (Rom 1:21). The hypocrite will experience the resistance of God. In Job 8:13 it says that "*the hypocrite's hope shall perish*. The worldly are overcome and taken captive by that which they sought to conquer. The legalistic come under the curse of the law (Galatians 3:10). This curse is found in Deuteronomy 28 where it is seen largely to be the rendering fruitless of all effort.

Disappointment in life is often therefore the result of God's hand upon us in judgement.

Revelation

What we must see to be free from all forms of self dependence is simply the revelation that without Jesus we can do nothing.

John 15:5

I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

This brings us into the worshipful and faith filled life that is the life goal of this commandment. Jesus is our example here.

John 5:19

Then Jesus answered and said to them, "Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner.

Release

The release is into a life of fellowship, authenticity, freedom and grace.

Respect for Authority

BORN TO GROW

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

STUDY 6

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RULE

Exodus 20:12

*Honour your father and your mother,
that your days may be long upon the land
which the LORD your God is giving you.*

The fifth commandment deals with respect for the structure of the family. Through that it deals with the general principle of respect for authority. This commandment, therefore, lays the foundation for family life, social order and the government of the church. It effects nearly every aspect of our lives. It provides foundations upon which we can develop an understanding of many aspects of our roles and responsibilities. It helps us understand our place as men and women and as members of our families, our churches and our communities.

The Principle of Authority

All authority ultimately comes from God. Ungodly authority will be judged by Him. Godly authority will be rewarded. Godly authority exercises Godly principles. God, the supreme source of all power and dominion, exercises His authority as a Father. That is, He exercises His authority as one who, out of the most gentle and compassionate love, provides direction that is designed to enhance the welfare, character and destiny of those subject to His care.

Romans 13:1-7

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. 2 Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. 3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. 4 For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. 5 Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. 6 For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. 7 Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.

All recognised authority must therefore receive its due honour whether we agree with it or not. Although obedience can be a matter of conscience, honour must always be given. A good example of this is found in the relationship between David and Saul. Although David could not obey Saul because of Saul's incompetence and abusiveness, he still held Saul in a place of due honour in his heart (1 Sam 24:9-12). Note how David addressed Saul as "my father", recognising the true parental nature of all authority. In giving this due honour, he trusted God to judge in the matter.

Therefore, for us to expect obedience from another, regardless of our position, we must be found competent in providing direction. This means that we must be responsibly proven trustworthy to each one in our care. This is so that they might be released into an obedience in their conscience to the highest power - that of God (Romans 13:1). It is only through being proven in this way that we can have the rule over another and therefore expect obedience.

It is important to note that the command of obedience given in Hebrews 13:17 is not one which requires blind subservience. The Greek word used here for obey refers to a willingness to be persuaded.

Hebrews 13:17

Obey those who rule over you, and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls, as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.

Parental Authority

Our parents are the principal focus of authority in our lives. The commandment directs us to them. Children must not only honour, but also obey their parents (Ephesians 6:1). Adults, whilst retaining the attitude of honour, must not be bound by their parents in their life decisions.

This honour is due to those who have fulfilled the roles of motherhood and fatherhood in our lives. It need not necessarily relate to biological parentage. If there has been a breakdown through death or family problems between biological parent and child, the child must not feel in bondage to the biological parent. They should be released into giving this honour to the one or many who have fulfilled this role in their lives.

Being released in a proven relationship to parental authority provides for us the heart capacity to receive

- **direction** - through which life is guided toward the fulfilment of its meaning and purpose;
- **correction** - through which life is kept on course and character is developed;
- **instruction** - through which the wisdom necessary for responsible living is given.

REASON

The reason this commandment is needed as a rule in our lives is to cause us to relate properly to authority. This sets us free from self dependence and the anxiety born of self effort. It allows us to receive covering and security in the care of others. It is through this care by others that we often find our first understand of our loving Father God.

REACTION

In the last study we saw that self effort ends in frustration. This frustration produces much anxiety, resulting in resistance to any outside influence or control. Self determination is the result of this resistance. The self determined person sees authority as a threat. His behaviour may fall into one or more of the following three categories, the escaper, the destroyer and the usurper.

The Escaper

Those who seek to escape authority fall into two categories, the rebel and the drop-out.

The Rebel

The rebel despises authority. In their attempt to be seen to be free from authority, they will usually seek ways to make an open show of despising authority. They will do this often through provocative behaviour such as offensive language, unconventional dress and appearance, abusing privilege (out of disrespect), and so on. The rebel will often associate himself with causes that seem anti-authority. However a true rebel will have no real heart allegiance to any cause because of the discipline and coming under of authority that would be necessary. The true rebel sees causes merely as outlets for further demonstrating their despising of authority

Rebels become used as pawns in the power games of those to whom the causes matter. The communist revolutionary, Lenin, saw people in three categories, friends, useful idiots and enemies. Rebels are those who become the useful idiots.

Many of the attitudes of the rebel in placing themselves outside authority become those of the scorner.

Proverbs 21:24

*A proud and haughty man;
"Scoffer" is his name;
He acts with arrogant pride.*

See also

Proverbs 1:22, 3:34, 9:7,8; 13:1, 14:6, 19:25; 19:29; 21:11,24; 22:10; 24:9.

The Drop-Out

The drop-out resents authority because of its challenge to his idleness. He seeks to escape authority that he might be left to this selfishness. The drop-out, like the rebel will often indulge in offensive behaviour (if it gratifies his lusts), unconventional dress and appearance (out of laziness), abusing privilege (out of inconsideration), and so on. The drop-out, unlike the rebel will never be found aligning himself with causes since all he wants is a totally self-determined and self centred life free of all outside involvement. In this he is like the lazy man.

Proverbs 26:16

*The lazy person is wiser in his own eyes
Than seven men who can answer sensibly.*

See also Proverbs 6:6; 10:26; 13:4; 20:4.

The Destroyer

The destroyer sees authority as a threat to their self-determination Their reaction is therefore to try to subvert it or discredit it.

The Subversive

The subversive treats authority as an obstacle to be overcome or avoided. They have no heart for order. Their only goal is to successfully put into effect their self determined goals and ideas. The subversive is effectively lawless doing whatever they feel is necessary at any given time. They have cast off restraint. They are like those spoken of by the prophet Hosea.

Hosea 4:1-3

Hear the word of the LORD, You children of Israel, For the LORD brings a charge against the inhabitants of the land:

*There is no truth or mercy
Or knowledge of God in the land.
2 By swearing and lying,
Killing and stealing and committing adultery,
They break all restraint,
With bloodshed upon bloodshed.
3 Therefore the land will mourn;
And everyone who dwells there will waste away
With the beasts of the field
And the birds of the air;
Even the fish of the sea will be taken away.*

The Seditious

The seditious seeks to discredit authority. Their weapons are criticism and divisiveness. The seditious person thrives on exposing the faults of those in authority. Ham is our example of this:

Genesis 9:22

And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brothers outside.

Paul warns us against the seditious in Romans.

Romans 16:17-18

Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offences, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. 18 For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple.

The seditious person is recognised by their fault finding (which they often claim is discernment), complaining, constant offendedness, gossip and continual criticism. They become what the Bible calls perverse, whisperers and talebearers.

Proverbs 16:28

*A perverse man sows strife,
And a whisperer separates the best of friends.*

See also Proverbs 18:8; 26:20-22.

The Usurper

The usurper seeks to take over and control authority to serve their own ends. That is they seek position in order to foster their own self-determination. Usurpers may be seen to fall into two categories.

The Tyrant

The one who is a tyrant is one who has a set office in authority, however his motive of self determination causes him to abuse his place of power and thus to usurp God's authority.

Our examples are most of the kings of Israel and Judah, especially Rehoboam.

1 Samuel 8:11

And he said, "This will be the behaviour of the king who will reign over you: He will take your sons and appoint them for his own chariots and to be his horsemen, and some will run before his chariots."

1 Samuel 8:18

And you will cry out in that day because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves, and the LORD will not hear you in that day."

The Position Seeker

The position seeker sees a secure place of self determination in having authority. The position seeker will seek to usurp authority for purely selfish motives and may even seem to have justification in a cause. The problem is that the position seeker (perhaps unwittingly) will use the seeming righteousness of the cause as a lever for his self exaltation.

An example of a position seeker is Adonijah who with seemingly just cause as he was older than Solomon, sought to elevate himself as King of Israel.

1 Kings 1:5-6

Then Adonijah the son of Haggith exalted himself, saying, "I will be king"; and he prepared for himself chariots and horsemen, and fifty men to run before him. 6 (And his father had not rebuked him at any time by saying, "Why have you done so?" He was also very good-looking. His mother had borne him after Absalom.)

RESULT

The result of disobedience to this commandment is that we become distrusting and suspicious and unable to relate to the authority that would provide nurture for us.

REMEDY

There are three aspects of the remedy. These are rod, revelation and release. The rod refers to the hand of God upon us in discipline. The revelation is that aspect of the truth which is in Christ that can set us free in each particular situation. The release is the living freedom that is experienced as the soul is set free to obey.

Rod

God's judgement upon all forms of self determination is inferiority and being cast down. A most extreme example of self determination and God's judgement upon it, is found in the story of King Nebuchadnezzar (Daniel 4:30-33). The judgement of Lucifer shows the same principle Isa 14:12-15). The judgement of God can be passed on from generation as with the effect on Canaan the son of Ham who uncovered his father's nakedness (Genesis 9:24-25).

Revelation

What we must see to be free from self determination is the importance of the place and influence of others in the plan of our lives, starting with our parents. Jesus is our example of this, where he is shown to have been subject (obedient) to his earthly parents even though they were unable to fully comprehend the purpose of his life.

Luke 2:49-51

And He said to them, "Why did you seek Me? Did you not know that I must be about My Father's business?" 50 But they did not understand the statement which He spoke to them. 51 Then He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was subject to them, but His mother kept all these things in her heart.

Even when he was of mature age Jesus is seen to have given honour to his mother by responding to her request at the wedding feast of Cana (John 2:1-11).

Release

The release is into trust. This allows a total appreciation and acceptance of the influence of others, starting with our parents in our lives. This sets us free from any lingering sense of inferiority or shame concerning our parentage, race, nationality or social standing.

In this we find ourselves free to walk in humility and submission one to another.

BORN TO GROW

THE TEN
COMMANDMENTS

LOVE, LIFE AND RELATIONSHIP

BTG507

RULE: THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

Exodus 20:13

You shall not murder.

This commandment continues the strong theme of the sacredness of human life. Murder was the first recorded sin after Adam and Eve were cast out from the garden of Eden (Genesis 4:1-8). Human life is so sacred that God Himself established the death penalty for murder in the days of Noah (Genesis 9:6).

Jesus enlarged on this commandment in the Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew (5-7). He pointed out that not only is life to be protected but that the love and relationship for which that life has been created must also be protected. He pointed out that unkindness in our dealings with one another breaches the principles of this commandment. That is, He pointed to the fact that unkindness kills and that we are held accountable by God for it.

Matthew 5:21-26

You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not murder, and whoever murders will be in danger of the judgment.'

22 But I say to you that whoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. And whoever says to his brother, 'Raca!' shall be in danger of the council. But whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.

2 Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, 24 leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift. 25

Agree with your adversary quickly, while you are on the way with him, lest your adversary deliver you to the judge, the judge hand you over to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.

26 Assuredly, I say to you, you will by no means get out of there till you have paid the last penny.

Jesus, in interpreting the spirit of this commandment, showed that it referred to two main thoughts which are malice and reconciliation.

Malice

Malice is having a destructive heart toward another.

Jesus outlined three main areas of malice. These are anger, insult and despising and are dealt with in verse 22 above.

Anger

Not all anger is forbidden by this commandment. Sometimes anger is justified.

Ephesians 4:26

*"Be angry, and do not sin":
do not let the sun go down on your wrath,*

It is never good to suppress anger. Neither is it good to unleash it. Anger must be acknowledged and dealt with. It must be faced squarely and resolved in a way that pleases God. Suppressed anger is the cause of many emotional, spiritual and relationship problems. This is because suppressed anger becomes bitterness. Bitterness is destructive. Bitterness defiles.

Hebrews 12:14-15

*Pursue peace with all people, and holiness, without which no one will see the Lord:
15 looking carefully lest anyone fall short of the grace of God; lest any root of
bitterness springing up cause trouble, and by this many become defiled;*

The anger forbidden by this commandment is destructive anger. It is anger that strikes out without thinking or control. It is often suppressed anger that has become bitterness and is spreading like a poison through the one holding it and damaging all who come in contact with it.

Insult

Raca was a term of insult. It was the equivalent of today saying “*you idiot!*” Many people have established an insulting and ungracious manner in their speech. Their words are often coarse, brutal, abrasive or cutting. They are often not aware of the great damage they are doing when they speak this way. Sadly, some are aware. Either way, they are greatly offending God when they speak in this way. All must come to see that unkind or insulting speech is pure and simple sin. Sin for which God will accept no excuses and for which he requires a reckoning.

Colossians 4:6

*Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how
you ought to answer each one.*

Despising

Despising a person is the act of treating someone like a fool. It is treating other people as being of lesser value than others. It is treating people as being inferior because of their sex, race, age, accomplishments, health or simply because they don't have the image we want to be associated with.

James 2:8-9

*If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your
neighbor as yourself," you do well; 9 but if you show partiality, you commit sin, and
are convicted by the law as transgressors.*

Reconciliation

The heart of a reconciler is constructive and inclusive toward others. The reconciler cares about personal relationship and devotes himself to establishing, restoring and

preserving friendships. Jesus pointed out that this constructive obedience must be worked out in two dimensions.

Within The Sphere Of Fellowship

Jesus' words in verse 23 and 24 above, show that doing whatever we can to be reconciled with our brethren must take priority over any spiritual service.

With Those With Whom We Have Come Into Conflict

Jesus' words in Verse 25 are clear. In seeking reconciliation we must seek to befriend any adversary. Later in this same chapter, Jesus enlarged even further on our responsibilities toward those who seek our harm.

Matthew 5:38-39

You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' 39 But I tell you not to resist an evil person. But whoever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other to him also.

Matthew 5:-43-44

You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' 44 But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,

In telling us to love our enemies, Jesus is not saying that we must not protect ourselves or those in our protection. He is pointing out that we must not return kind for kind; any response must be in the spirit of reconciliation as distinct from retaliation.

REASON

The reason this commandment is needed is to cause us to cease from being defensive which is the result of suspicion in our lives. It is also to cause us to unite with God in His care for life and relationships.

REACTION

People that have failed to honour God as God and given Him His rightful place in their lives are condemned to live in various forms of reaction. These reactions become the sin patterns for each commandment. In the last study, we saw that efforts of self-determination result in the person becoming distrustful and suspicious. Suspicion and distrust develops because other people always seem to interfere with the way that person has determined things should be. Still determined to have their own way, the suspicious and distrustful often then behave in a way that is destructive of relationships.

This behaviour takes at least three forms, withdrawal, resistance or aggression.

Withdrawal

When faced with situations in relationship that require a change of will, these people withdraw into themselves, thus ending and often destroying further relationship. These people are often sulky, sullen and incommunicative. They often justify their behaviour to themselves by believing that they are misunderstood. This can become a way of life

that in many cases prevents relationships developing.

People who withdraw in this way are often moody, difficult to communicate with and unwilling to listen to counsel. In many ways they become like Cain was before He killed His brother Abel.

Genesis 4:6

So the LORD said to Cain,

*"Why are you angry?
And why has your countenance fallen?"*

Resistance

Resistant people are difficult in relationships through their stubbornness and obstinacy. They will resist any pressure or circumstance that would challenge them to change their will. These people are usually defensive in not allowing others, even their close family, to come near them.

Psalm 32:9

Be not like the horse or mule, without understanding, which must be curbed with it and bridle, else it will not keep with you.

Aggression

The aggressive person is belligerent and quick tempered. This is often in the form of self righteous accusation. These people see any challenge in relationship as a personal threat and retaliate. These are the “hotheads”. They are dogmatic in their views, self opinionated and quick to judge. This sort of man is what the Bible calls a quick tempered. They are therefore disqualified from holding office in the Church (1 Timothy 3:2-3).

Titus 1:7

For a bishop must be blameless, as a steward of God, not self-willed, not quick-tempered, not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money,

An example of an aggressive person is Shimei:

2 Samuel 16:5-13

Now when King David came to Bahurim, there was a man from the family of the house of Saul, whose name was Shimei the son of Gera, coming from there. He came out, cursing continuously as he came. 6 And he threw stones at David and at all the servants of King David. And all the people and all the mighty men were on his right hand and on his left. 7 Also Shimei said thus when he cursed: "Come out! Come out! You bloodthirsty man, you rogue! 8 "The LORD has brought upon you all the blood of the house of Saul, in whose place you have reigned; and the LORD has delivered the kingdom into the hand of Absalom your son. So now you are caught in your own evil, because you are a bloodthirsty man!" 9 Then Abishai the son of Zeruiah said to the king, "Why should this dead dog curse my lord the king? Please, let me go over

and take off his head!" 10 But the king said, "What have I to do with you, you sons of Zeruiah? So let him curse, because the LORD has said to him, 'Curse David.' Who then shall say, 'Why have you done so?'" 11 And David said to Abishai and all his servants, "See how my son who came from my own body seeks my life. How much more now may this Benjamite? Let him alone, and let him curse; for so the LORD has ordered him. 12 "It may be that the LORD will look on my affliction, and that the LORD will repay me with good for his cursing this day." 13 And as David and his men went along the road, Shimei went along the hillside opposite him and cursed as he went, threw stones at him and kicked up dust.

David's reply is a perfect example of how to respond to aggressive threats (Proverbs 26:4)

RESULT

The result of disobedience to this commandment is that we become alienated in our hearts from others.

REMEDY

There are three aspects of the remedy. These are rod, revelation and release. The rod refers to the hand of God upon us in discipline. The revelation is that aspect of the truth which is in Christ that can set us free in each particular situation. The release is the living freedom that is experienced as the soul is set free to obey.

Rod

The judgment of God on those who would break this commandment is often loneliness and alienation. This is as the judgment on Cain, the first man to ever offend against this commandment in the Bible.

Genesis 4:8-13

Now Cain talked with Abel his brother; and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother and killed him. 9 Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is Abel your brother?" He said, "I do not know. Am I my brother's keeper?" 10 And He said, "What have you done? The voice of your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground. 11 "So now you are cursed from the earth, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand. 12 "When you till the ground, it shall no longer yield its strength to you. A fugitive and a vagabond you shall be on the earth." 13 And Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment is greater than I can bear!"

Cain was isolated from man and God. This judgment serves to heighten to an intolerable level, the experience of loneliness and alienation. Cain offended again love and so was cut off from love. It may be then that many who complain about loneliness and that people do not love them may be being dealt with by God for their bitterness or lack of love and grace.

Revelation

Jesus never related to others in reaction. He also valued close personal friendships.

1 Peter 2:23

who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously;

John 15:15

*I am the vine, you are the branches.
He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit;
for without Me you can do nothing.*

What we must see, therefore, to be set free from defensiveness is the value of the lives of others and therefore of relationships as a keystone of fulfilment in our lives.

Release

The release is into becoming actively able to include one another in our lives.

Romans 15:5-7

Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, 6 that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. 7 Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God.

BORN TO GROW

PURITY, FAITHFULNESS AND COMMITMENT

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The *Born to Grow* series of leaflets is designed to give you
a good basic understanding
of what it is to be a Christian
and how to live
a powerful and effective
Christian Life.

RULE: THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

Exodus 20:14

You shall not commit adultery.

The most common, and most narrow, definition of adultery is unlawful sexual intercourse with married people. However, the rule of this commandment takes much more into consideration. It deals with the whole sphere of unfaithfulness, lust and betrayal in relationships.

Jesus expanded on the rule of this commandment in the Sermon on the Mount.

Matthew 5:27-28

You have heard that it was said to those of old, 'You shall not commit adultery.' 28 'But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

In saying this Jesus emphasised that adultery was essentially a thing of the heart.

In a broader sense, adultery is that which adulterates, or renders impure, the loyalty, faithfulness and honour that should be at the foundation of any relationship. This applies then to every relationship from same sex friendships all the way to marriage. This applies in every sphere of life, from family life to the workplace to places of entertainment and to church.

Obedience to this commandment therefore requires a commitment to living and loving according to God's pattern. This requires a commitment to keeping sexual activity within the bounds of marriage between a man and a woman. It requires a commitment to a lifestyle of personal loyalty and a determination never to use relationship with or the physical being of another as a means of obtaining any form of personal gratification. This requires a commitment to sexual wholeness. It requires that men be committed to living and loving as men with a purehearted and sacrificial commitment to their sisters. It requires that women be committed to living and loving as women with a purehearted and submissive commitment to their brothers.

In this sick and suffering world, the requirements of this commandment are for many, perhaps for most, a tall order. Sexual brokenness is too often the order of the day. This is equally true of those who struggle with either homosexual or heterosexual sin. Many live much of their lives in the storms of temptation, desire and confusion that regularly swirl and eddy around the issues that are at the centre of this commandment.

Relief and release comes progressively. It comes as each person agrees often issue by painstaking issue with the rightness of God's way regardless of how wrong or powerless they they may feel. Change and growth then develops. Most often progress is not instantaneous. Rather it comes along steadily, a little at a time, as newly adopted values and principles take root and as the heart becomes softer and is more able to respond to the voice of God within.

REASON

The reason this commandment is needed as a rule in our lives is to stop us using one another as objects to gratify ourselves. In the study on the last commandment we saw the

importance of relationships. We must see that any using of one another for selfish motives will prevent us from ever developing meaningful relationships. Disobedience to this commandment cuts us off from such relationship and as a result makes us shallow and unfaithful.

REACTION

People that have failed to honour God as God and given Him His rightful place in their lives are condemned to live in various forms of reaction. These reactions become the sin patterns for each commandment.

In the last study we saw that defensiveness resulted in our becoming alienated from one another. Alienation, however, creates a vacuum which is the result of being cut off from the fulfilment of relationships. It is often the drive to fill this vacuum that is the motivating force behind sin against this commandment.

God shows us how much we need one another in this way when he said, before creating women.

Genesis 2:18

It is not good that man should be alone.).

At the point of alienation there are two options. These are:

- to have the need for love met through repentance from self motivated behaviour and the restoration of relationships; or
- to seek to have this need met by seeking self gratification.

The second option is called lust and is sin. The power of lust (or passion) is so great that in His work of salvation God provided for us, especially at this level.

2 Peter 1:3-4

as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, 4 by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

The root of this sin is a need produced by the absence of true love. Even in early childhood, if the love and affection that so satisfies a child is wanting, the child will often try to make up for this by seeking out ways of gratifying this need. This emotional deprivation is usually compensated for by seeking sensual gratification. It is at this point that the life becomes predisposed to such things as masturbation, over eating and other self oriented obsessions (which are often compulsive). This seeking for gratification most often continues into later life to the point that many find themselves driven by it.

The drive for self-gratification will usually be found in one of the following categories:

- sensual gratification
- non-sensual gratification
- promiscuity.

SENSUAL GRATIFICATION

In this category are those for whom a “feel good” experience is king. That is seeking gratification, a stimulation or deadening of the senses, has taken priority over true sacrificial love and has become the object of relationship.

There are two subheadings in this category sexual and non sexual.

In the area of sexual gratification are found such problems as masturbation, homosexuality, voyeurism (pornography trades on this), fornication and other perversions

In the area of non sexual sensual gratification is found such things as overeating (the Bible calls this gluttony), thrill seeking and drug abuse (this includes alcoholism and the abuse of narcotics, sedatives and mind expanding - hallucinogenic drugs).

NON-SENSUAL GRATIFICATION

In this category are found those for whom a sense of achievement or even of self righteousness becomes the object that gratifies instead of physical sensation. These express themselves in such forms of antisocial behaviour as the workaholic, compulsive hobbyist, insensitive do-gooder, religious obsessives and so on.

PROMISCUITY

The promiscuous use the experience of relationship as the object of their gratification. They fall in love with love. That is, they confuse romance with relationship. Because of this they are unable to maintain any lasting relationship. They are therefore seen as butterflies flitting from relationship to relationship but have no understanding. Their compulsion often drives them to excessively exposing their inner thoughts. This is spiritually the exposing of nakedness. The motive behind this is attention seeking. In this they never receive the healing promised through the true confession of our faults one to another (James 5:16).

Such people often by “coming on strong”, especially in early stages of a relationship, produce in the other person a pressure of obligation which often weighs heavily.

Promiscuous hearts produce much tension in marriages. Even if a sexual offence never occurs betrayal is always the result. This is because marriage is a total life commitment between two people. It is not just a body commitment.

RESULT

The result of disobedience to this commandment is emotional barrenness. This is both felt by the person involved and observed by those who know them.

These people become shallow. This shallowness seems to appear in two extremes. One is an emotional emptiness. The other is an emotional over responsiveness. They also become hypersensitive. This may appear in ways such as having a fear of exposure or being unapproachable or touchy, especially when challenged about responsibilities in relationship.

Even though sin at this level is still relationship oriented, it is at this point that the sinner becomes personally indifferent. Immorality becomes amorality. Becoming set in this often results in the confession of a sort of ‘liberation’. Situation ethnics rule. Right and

wrong are no longer absolute. What has become absolute instead is feeling good no matter what the cost. At this point, permissiveness gains a foothold in the philosophy.

These people often see favour or advantage as being more important than relationship.

For example:

Judas who betrayed Jesus by trading his relationship with him for advantage (30 piece of silver).

Luke 22:47-48

And while He was still speaking, behold, a multitude; and he who was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them and drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. 48 But Jesus said to him, "Judas, are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?"

Pontius Pilate who betrayed Jesus by trading his office of trust as a magistrate for favour with the Jews and Romans.

Mark 15:14-15

Then Pilate said to them, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, "Crucify Him!" 15 So Pilate, wanting to gratify the crowd, released Barabbas to them; and he delivered Jesus, after he had scourged Him, to be crucified.

See also John 19:12-16

Eli who betrayed both God and the people of Israel by trading his authority as a father and as High Priest for the favour of his sons Hophni and Phineas.

1 Samuel 3:11-13

Then the LORD said to Samuel: "Behold, I will do something in Israel at which both ears of everyone who hears it will tingle. 12 "In that day I will perform against Eli all that I have spoken concerning his house, from beginning to end. 13 "For I have told him that I will judge his house forever for the iniquity which he knows, because his sons made themselves vile, and he did not restrain them.

REMEDY

There are three aspects of the remedy. These are rod, revelation and release. The rod refers to the hand of God upon us in discipline. The revelation is that aspect of the truth which is in Christ that can set us free in each particular situation. The release is the living freedom that is experienced as the soul is set free to obey.

Rod

The judgment of God on all form of adulterousness is disgrace. This may well be the source of much of the shame with which people wrestle.

Jeremiah 13:25-27

This is your lot, The portion of your measures from Me," says the LORD, "Because you have forgotten Me And trusted in falsehood. 26 Therefore I will uncover your skirts over your face, That your shame may appear. 27 I have seen your adulteries

And your lustful neighings, The lewdness of your harlotry, Your abominations on the hills in the fields. Woe to you, O Jerusalem! Will you still not be made clean?"

To see something of the effect of this judgement in a life, read Lamentations 1:8-14.

The principle of this dealing can be seen for the three categories of sin dealt with in this study.

Sensual

These people fall prey to gossipers and scandal mongers. Consider how much of the media is given to these activities.

Non-sensual

The obsessive behaviour of those in this category becomes the object of ridicule. It is these people who become the "laughing stock". Much "comedy" is devoted to lampooning such behaviour.

Promiscuous

The promiscuous, that is, those who impersonally trade in relationships, suffer an ignominious loss of honour and the experience of obscurity. Extreme examples of this are: the stripping of the uniform of the military traitor (the Judas), the shaven head of the collaborator and the open degradation and despising of the harlot and the adulterer.

REVELATION

The experience of shame may cause people to see the value of personal dignity. Repentance will come through this value being established in the heart. Jesus is our example of faithfulness and commitment in this especially when he restored Peter who was shamed through betraying Jesus by his denial of him. Peter denied Jesus three times and so was required to affirm Him three times.

John 21:15-17

So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs." 16 He said to him again a second time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My sheep." 17 He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.

RELEASE

The release is into purity, loyalty and fidelity. We become protective of one another's dignity and honour. This is a release into active commitment. We become active contributors in all of our relationships. Therefore we are together establishing and furthering our common life in God's purposes through forsaking the taking of personal advantage at the expense of others.

Read Romans 15:1-7.

BORN TO GROW

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Eighth Commandment

Honesty, Hard Work and Giving

RULE - THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

Exodus 20:15

You shall not steal.

The rule of this commandment is expanded in Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 4:28

Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labor, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.

This commandment, therefore, covers three areas of our lives. These are material honesty; productivity (the work ethic) and giving.

Material Honesty

The rule of this commandment in the area of material honesty deals with more than just the act of theft. Ordinances concerning property are found throughout Exodus 21 and 22. Whilst these legal requirements no longer strictly apply, the principles of respect for, responsibility for and restitution of property are still valid.

Productivity

2 Thessalonians 3:10

*For even when we were with you, we commanded you this:
If anyone will not work, neither shall he eat.*

Titus 3:1

*Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities,
to obey, to be ready for every good work,*

God requires us to be productive, to refrain from idleness, laziness and presuming upon others for our welfare. The converse is that we recognise the worth of a person's productivity. We must make sure, whenever it is our responsibility, to pay workers fully and promptly.

Deuteronomy 24:14-15

You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether one of your brethren or one of the aliens who is in your land within your gates. 15 Each day you shall give him his wages, and not let the sun go down on it, for he is poor and has set his heart on it; lest he cry out against you to the LORD, and it be sin to you.

This principle is quoted in 1 Timothy in the context of materially ministering to those who minister to our spiritual needs.

1 Timothy 5:17-18

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain," and, "The labourer is worthy of his wages."

This principle is also seen in 1 Corinthians 9:9-12.

Giving

Malachi 3:8

Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, 'In what way have we robbed You?' In tithes and offerings.

There are two aspects of giving. These are as follows:

Tithes

Our tithes are to be given as 'unto the Lord'. Abraham (Hebrews 7:4-9) was blessed by Melchizedek, priest of the most-high God, who received tithes from him. Tithes are our acknowledgment of God's right of ownership over all we possess.

Offerings

Offerings, as distinct from tithes, include all aspects of our giving in bearing the burden for the welfare of those who are unable to support themselves. It is interesting to note in the Malachi Scripture that God relates all giving to Himself. As it was in tithing, so it is in giving "as unto the Lord" (Matthew 25:31-46).

Matthew 25:44-45

Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' 45 Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.'

See also James 2:14-17

This can also be seen to apply in the converse. Acquisitiveness, the gathering of goods unto oneself, cannot be justified unless it is for the purpose of sharing. The early church moved in a release of this kind of giving. They had all things in common (Acts 2:44-45). Isaiah condemned wrongful acquisitiveness.

Isaiah 5:8

*Woe to those who join house to house;
They add field to field, Till there is no place
Where they may dwell alone in the midst of the land!*

REASON

The reason this commandment is needed as a rule in our lives is to cause us to relate responsibly to the worth of others.

REACTION

People that have failed to honour God as God and given Him His rightful place in their lives are condemned to live in various forms of reaction. These reactions become the sin patterns for each commandment.

As a result of the emotional barrenness caused by disobedience to the last commandment, the affections are shifted from relationships to objects. Disobedience to this commandment is expressed in a life motivation dominated by materialism. In this,

the life becomes impersonal, hard hearted, unjust and unresponsive to the needs of others. Such people have substituted the value of human dignity for cold cash. They justify and find approval for a morality that is mercenary. Jesus spoke of the mercenary as “the servants of mammon” when He said,

Luke 16:13

No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

In this Scripture, He showed how materialism directly affects relationship with God. This materialistic life motivation affects all three of the areas covered by the commandments as follows.

Material Honesty

As we saw in the previous section, this deals not only with theft, but also with respect, responsibility and restitution for property. Those who offend in this area would seem to be one of the following:

Those Negligent With Property

These people damage the property of others and fail to restore what has been damaged. Consider the principle in the following Scripture:

Exodus 21:33-36

And if a man opens a pit, or if a man digs a pit and does not cover it, and an ox or a donkey falls in it, 34 the owner of the pit shall make it good; he shall give money to their owner, but the dead animal shall be his. 35 If one man's ox hurts another's, so that it dies, then they shall sell the live ox and divide the money from it; and the dead ox they shall also divide. 36 Or if it was known that the ox tended to thrust in time past, and its owner has not kept it confined, he shall surely pay ox for ox, and the dead animal shall be his own.

Consider, then, the importance of insurance. This ensures the ability to make restitution should damage occur. It does not imply a lack of faith as some assert.

The Careless Borrower

This is the person who returns borrowed goods damaged or late without any offer of restitution.

Exodus 22:14

And if a man borrows anything from his neighbour, and it becomes injured or dies, the owner of it not being with it, he shall surely make it good.

The Pilferer

The pilferer or petty thief presumes upon the wealth of his employer. In pilfering he may be dishonest with his employers good or his time (knocking off early or so on).

Titus 2:9-10

Exhort bondservants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, 10 not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

The Thief

This includes not only the obvious, such as the burglar and the robbery but also includes shady business practices which resort to misrepresentation such as devious contracts and so on. These days, such practices through which people gain advantage over others are often considered standard and even applauded.

Proverbs 20:14

*“It is good for nothing,” cries the buyer;
But when he has gone his way, then he boasts.*

Productivity

Those who offend in this area are generally one of the following:

The Unjust Employer

This is the employer who has little regard for the worth of his employees. He sees them only as a means for the achieving of wealth.

Ephesians 6:9

And you, masters, do the same things to them, giving up threatening, knowing that your own Master also is in heaven, and there is no partiality with Him.

The Squanderer

The squanderer has no regard for the worth of his own labours, or the labours of others. He sees productivity only in terms of its “benefit” in allowing self gratification. Included among the squanderers are the playboys, gamblers and vandals. Consider the prodigal son. (Luke 15:11-32)

The Slothful

Scripture ties the slothful to the squanderer in Proverbs 18:9

Proverbs 18:9

*He who is slothful in his work
Is a brother to him who is a great destroyer.*

The slothful is always finding excuses to delay or to avoid any effort (procrastinating) (Prov 20:4, 26:13,14). He is often staring projects and not finishing them.

Proverbs 26:15

*The lazy man buries his hand in the bowl;
It wearies him to bring it back to his mouth.*

Giving

Those who offend in this area may include the following.

The Usurer

The usurer gives, but with conditions that bring bondage. The usurer uses the plight his brother for profit. Scripture clearly prohibits any such action.

Leviticus 25:36-37

Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you. 37 You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit.

Deuteronomy 23:19-21

You shall not charge interest to your brother; interest on money or food or anything that is lent out at interest. 20 "To a foreigner you may charge interest, but to your brother you shall not charge interest, that the LORD your God may bless you in all to which you set your hand in the land which you are entering to possess. 21 "When you make a vow to the LORD your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the LORD your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you.

This also shows us that in condemning usury, God is not condemning credit institutions. All condemnations of usury directly refer to brother using brother. The often quoted Scripture in Romans 13:8 does not refer to financial debt but rather to our putting one another in the bondage of obligation.

The Hoarder (Miser)

The hoarder is anxious and defensive about his possessions. In this he fails to meet his responsibilities in giving.

Proverbs 11:24

There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty.

The principle of hoarding results in poverty. For each community there is an overall amount of provision (the economic cake). When this is fully distributed all needs are adequately met. Hoarding causes a proportion of this provision to be withheld from circulation. Some needs therefore do not get met and people come to fear being deprived. They then reinforce the cycle by becoming hoarders themselves. The effect of this cycle is that more and more people have less and less provision and so the result is poverty.

The opposite to hoarding is giving. This sets in motion a faith principle that often works even in miraculous increase of what is given. This principle worked in Scripture in the cases of the widow and Elijah (1 Kings 17:9-16) and in the miracle of the loaves of fishes (John 6:1-13). Even today, God is glorified by the testimonies of those who have experienced His miraculous provision in such ways.

RESULT

Disobedience to this commandments means that a person has given themselves over to a putting of material things before relationships. The result of this is lawlessness. This is because laws are set to govern relationships. Disregard for relationships in those how break this commandment makes laws of little consequence to them.

REMEDY

There are three aspects of the remedy. These are rod, revelation and release. The rod refers to the hand of God upon us in discipline. The revelation is that aspect of the truth which is in Christ that can set us free in each particular situation. The release is the living freedom that is experienced as the soul is set free to obey.

Rod

The judgement of God in this area is the removal of worth on the life.

Exodus 22:2

If the thief is found breaking in, and he is struck so that he dies, there shall be no guilt for his bloodshed.

The removal of the blood-guilt for the life of the thief indicates a removal of worth on the life of the thief. It is interesting to note that people who fit into all the categories mentioned in this study are generally considered to be “worthless people”. This worthlessness may be felt in the life as the experience of being despised or of a general unfulfilment.

REVELATION

What we must see to be set free from lawlessness is the value and importance (worth) of other people. This must include recognition of their intrinsic value as human beings, of the value of their work and of their unique skill and gifts. Jesus is our example of this in that he paid his taxes (Matthew 17:24-27) and valued the worth of the giving of the widow's mite (Mark 12:41-44).

Mark 12:41-44

Now Jesus sat opposite the treasury and saw how the people put money into the treasury. And many who were rich put in much. 42 Then one poor widow came and threw in two mites, which make a quadrans. 43 So He called His disciples to Himself and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that this poor widow has put in more than all those who have given to the treasury; 44 "for they all put in out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all that she had, her whole livelihood."

RELEASE

The release is into an appreciation of the value of others and of our capacity to provide for them. This brings us into a place of responsible productivity and of bountiful giving.

Your worth is not in how much you have but in how you give

BORN TO GROW

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Ninth Commandment

Truth, Grace Integrity

RULE - THE NINTH COMMANDMENT

Exodus 20:16

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.

The rule of this commandment is expanded in Ephesians 4.

Ephesians 4:25, 29

*Therefore, putting away lying,
Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbour,
for we are members of one another.*

...

*29 Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth,
but what is good for necessary edification,
that it may impart grace to the hearers.*

This shows that, as opposed to a false witness, the true witness from our mouths requires the following;

- No lying - (this includes gossip)
- No corrupt words - (foul language, vulgar jokes)
- Speech that is good - (builds others up)
- Speech that is good for necessary edification - (sensitivity)
- Speech that imparts grace.

Colossians 4:6

Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer each one.

THE PRINCIPLE OF COMMUNICATION

The extreme value of communication is nowhere more highlighted than where Jesus himself is identified as the Word of God. (John 1). The reason that this value is so highly placed by God is that all relationship exists in communication. Without true communication there is no real relationship!

Without communication there can be no unity. It was through this principle that God judged mankind at Babel. God destroyed the unity of mankind in rebellion to Him by confusing communication.

Genesis 11:6-7

And the LORD said, "Indeed the people are one and they all have one language, and this is what they begin to do; now nothing that they propose to do will be withheld from them. 7 "Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another's speech."

The first sign of the reversal of this curse at Babel was on the day of Pentecost when all heard a common language given by the Holy Spirit.

THE POWER OF THE TONGUE

Proverbs 18:21

*Death and life are in the power of the tongue,
And those who love it will eat its fruit.*

The tongue is both creative (life) and destructive (death).

The Creative Power of the Tongue

It's creative power is seen in;

- The act of creation. Genesis 1:3
- The maintaining of creation. Hebrews 1:3
- In our stewardship of Gospel. 2 Corinthians 5:19

The Destructive Power of the Tongue

It's destructive power is seen in:

The First Sin.

Genesis 3:1

Now the serpent was more cunning than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman,

*"Has God indeed said,
'You shall not eat of every tree of the garden'?"*

Satan's words sowed doubt about the word of God.

The Sowing of Discord

Proverbs 6:16-19

*These six things the LORD hates,
Yes, seven are an abomination to Him:
17 A proud look,
A lying tongue,
Hands that shed innocent blood,
18 A heart that devises wicked plans,
Feet that are swift in running to evil,
19 A false witness who speaks lies,
And one who sows discord among brethren.*

James speaks of the destructive power of the tongue and on the need for it's being tamed.

James 3:6-12

And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body, and sets on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire by hell. 7 For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and creature of the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind. 8 But no man can tame the tongue. It is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. 9 With it we bless our God and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in the similitude of God. 10 Out of the same mouth proceed blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be so. 11 Does a spring send forth fresh water and bitter from the same opening? 12 Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Thus no spring yields both salt water and fresh.

REASON

The reason this commandment is needed as a rule is to stop the abuse of power in our lives. Power must be bridled if it is to be used for good. This commandment therefore teaches us the value of the disciplined use of communication through which our relationships are improved and developed.

James 1:26

If anyone among you thinks he is religious, and does not bridle his tongue but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is useless.

REACTION

People that have failed to honour God as God and given Him His rightful place in their lives are condemned to live in various forms of reaction. These reactions become the sin patterns for each commandment.

In this last study we saw the disobedience resulted in lawlessness and the consequent removal of worth by God. This lawlessness leads to the abuse of power through communication which does not value the worth of others. This becomes destructive both of their productivity and of their relationship with others.

Lawlessness is in this context, disregard for the regulations which govern relationships. Since true relationships are seen as being of little value, so true communication is seen to be of little value. (A true measure of our care for others is how we care about our communication with them). Communication then becomes seen as a tool to achieve the selfish ends of the lawless one. This abuse of communication takes the following forms.

Misrepresentation

Misrepresentation is not just telling lies about others. It is also the telling of the truth unnecessarily in such a way that it affects another's name. Misrepresentation includes gossiping, maligning, slandering, backbiting, flattering and so on.

Ungraciousness

Ungracious communication includes vulgarity, unnecessary bluntness, dominating (holding the floor), interrupting, needless correcting and so on.

Negativeness

Much damage and needless hurt is caused by negativness. This is not only saying

negative things but is also failing to speak positively. Negative communication includes, being critical, complaining and so on.

RESULT

Since disobedience to this commandment is abuse of the truth, the disobedient become unable to discern truth from falsehood. They become deceitful and values become distorted.

REMEDY

There are three aspects of the remedy. These are rod, revelation and release. The rod refers to the hand of God upon us in discipline. The revelation is that aspect of the truth which is in Christ that can set us free in each particular situation. The release is the living freedom that is experienced as the soul is set free to obey.

Rod

The judgment of God upon abuse of the truth is deception. This is seen in the case of Ahab and the prophet Micaiah in 1 Kings. Ahab wanted to hear what he wanted to hear. He was not looking for the truth. He was looking for something that would allow him to be justified in following his own ideas and impulses. How the Lord dealt with him is very sobering. The Lord actively caused Ahab to be deceived. God will not give truth to those who will not value it.

1 Kings 22:13-23

Then the messenger who had gone to call Micaiah spoke to him, saying, "Now listen, the words of the prophets with one accord encourage the king. Please, let your word be like the word of one of them, and speak encouragement."

14 And Micaiah said, "As the LORD lives, whatever the LORD says to me, that I will speak." 15 Then he came to the king; and the king said to him,

"Micaiah, shall we go to war against Ramoth Gilead, or shall we refrain?"

And he answered him, "Go and prosper, for the LORD will deliver it into the hand of the king!"

16 So the king said to him, "How many times shall I make you swear that you tell me nothing but the truth in the name of the LORD?"

17 Then he said, "I saw all Israel scattered on the mountains, as sheep that have no shepherd. And the LORD said, 'These have no master. Let each return to his house in peace.'"

18 And the king of Israel said to Jehoshaphat, "Did I not tell you he would not prophesy good concerning me, but evil?"

19 Then Micaiah said, "Therefore hear the word of the LORD: I saw the LORD sitting on His throne, and all the host of heaven standing by, on His right hand and on His left. 20 "And the LORD said, 'Who will persuade Ahab to go up, that he may fall at Ramoth Gilead?' So one spoke in this manner, and another spoke in that manner. 21 "Then a spirit came forward and stood before the LORD, and said, 'I

will persuade him.' 22 "The LORD said to him, 'In what way?' So he said, 'I will go out and be a lying spirit in the mouth of all his prophets.' And the LORD said, 'You shall persuade him, and also prevail. Go out and do so.' 23 "Therefore look! The LORD has put a lying spirit in the mouth of all these prophets of yours, and the LORD has declared disaster against you."

Strong warning is also given in 2 Thessalonians. This further makes the point made in the encounter of Ahab and Micaiah.

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12

The coming of the lawless one by the activity of Satan will be with all power and with pretended signs and wonders, and with all wicked deception for those who are to perish, because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. Therefore God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false, so that all may be condemned who did not believe the truth but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

See also 1 Timothy 4:1

Revelation

What we must see to be free of deception and false witness is the value of pure communication and a hunger for truth at all costs.

Jesus is our example in this. He so values truth that He is truth. This means that falsehood, deception and anything else that denies or deviates in any way from truth are foreign to His nature. To ever speak or to cause others to believe something that is false then is not just a lie but it is contrary Christ's nature and lacks His creative power.

John 14:6

Jesus said to him,

*"I am the way, the truth, and the life.
No one comes to the Father except through Me."*

Release

The release is into the love of the truth and into the liberty that only knowing the truth can bring.

John 8:32

And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free."

1 John 2:21

I have not written to you because you do not know the truth, but because you know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

BORN TO GROW

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The Tenth Commandment

Grace-Filled Contentment

RULE: THE TENTH COMMANDMENT

Exodus 20:17

*You shall not covet your neighbour's house;
you shall not covet your neighbour's wife,
nor his male servant,
nor his female servant,
nor his ox,
nor his donkey,
nor anything that is your neighbour's."*

Covetousness and envy are the same thing. Jealousy is another thing, at least in the Biblical use of the word. Covetousness and envy must not be confused with the true meaning of jealousy. Jealousy in the strict sense of its meaning, refers to a heart attitude of responsible and righteous commitment. It is an essential part of love. It is a commitment to have and to hold and to protect. Jealousy is an attribute of God. This is revealed in the second commandment and in His declaration of love for His people in 2 Corinthians 11.

Exodus 20:4-5

*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 nor 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 generations of those who hate Me,*

2 Corinthians 11:2

For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ.

Jesus challenged the issue of covetousness when he responded to a person who felt wrongly done by, in the dividing of an inheritance.

Luke 12:13-15

Then one from the crowd said to Him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

14 But He said to him, "Man, who made Me a judge or an arbitrator over you?" 15 And He said to them, "Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses."

Jesus pointed out that covetousness has its root in wrong heart values, principally the value of materialism. Jesus explained true values as being the values of the kingdom of God.

Luke 12:28-31

If then God so clothes the grass, which today is in the field and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, how much more will He clothe you, O you of little faith? 29 "And do not seek what you should eat or what you should drink, nor have an anxious mind. 30 "For all these things the nations of the world seek after, and your Father knows that you need these things. 31 "But seek the kingdom of God, and all these things

shall be added to you.

It is interesting to note that God seems to have included wives among material things. Some have become offended at this claiming that this represents some sort of gender bias. This is not so. It is the covetous who treat others as things. In this commandment, the Lord is actually forbidding this attitude, behaviour or practice. It is the heart attitude of covetousness in which people are treated as things.

REASON

The reason this commandment is needed as a rule in our lives is to stop us from looking to what belongs to others as being the answer for our need for fulfilment and provision. God is the only real source of fulfilment and provision in our lives.

Job understood this principle.

Job 31:24-28

If I have made gold my hope, or have said to the fine gold, thou art my confidence; if I rejoiced because my wealth was great, and because mine hand had gotten much; if I beheld the sun when it shined, or the moon walking in brightness; and my heart hath been secretly enticed, or my mouth hath kissed my hand: this also were an iniquity to be punished by the judge: for I should have denied the God that is above.

REACTION

People that have failed to honour God as God and given Him His rightful place in their lives are condemned to live in various forms of reaction. These reactions become the sin patterns for each commandment.

The result of disobedience to the last commandment is deception. The ultimate deception is for someone to believe that he needs for his fulfilment, what belongs to another. Lucifer sinned in this way when he coveted the inheritance of the saints.

Isaiah 14:12-14

*How you are fallen from heaven,
O Lucifer, son of the morning!
How you are cut down to the ground,
You who weakened the nations!
13 For you have said in your heart:
'I will ascend into heaven,
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;
I will also sit on the mount of the congregation
On the farthest sides of the north;
14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,
I will be like the Most High.'*

Just as Lucifer sought to usurp the place of others, so the covetous person seeks to usurp in the life of another. This is the ultimate sin against relationship because instead of making room and giving honour, the covetous seek to take over and even consume the lives of others.

Covetousness operates in three directions, these are toward possessions, toward position or toward another person.

Possessions

This is material envy. The materially envious cannot rest when confronted with the wealth or possession of another. Much advertising deliberately provokes this by promoting an image that gives the consumer a false sense of status.

Our example of this is Achan.

Joshua 7:20, 21

And Achan answered Joshua and said, "Indeed I have sinned against the LORD God of Israel, and this is what I have done: 21 "When I saw among the spoils a beautiful Babylonian garment, two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold weighing fifty shekels, I coveted them and took them. And there they are, hidden in the earth in the midst of my tent, with the silver under it."

Position

Those who covet position see in having position the status they covet. Such includes much ambition; and social climbing.

Habakuk 2:9

*Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house,
That he may set his nest on high,
That he may be delivered from the power of disaster!*

Personal

Personal envy seeks to usurp the identity of another, it is the ultimate in self rejection and idolatry. There are two aspects of this. These are as follows:

Emulation

This is the direct focus upon an obsession with the identity of another.

Association

In this the covetous seek to consume the identity of another by taking their friends or spouse.

RESULT

The result of disobedience to this commandment is emptiness. Life seems void and unfulfilled.

To fill this void, false conceptions of what we are and therefore deserve are grasped at. It is for this reason that history has been a succession of wars over philosophies, ideologies, religions and rights.

These philosophies are idols. They are based on a false conception of what we are and what is our purpose. Scripture observes this truth in Ephesians 5:5 and Colossians 3:5.

Colossians 3:5

Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.

Covetousness is the reason many fall away.

1 Timothy 6:10

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

REMEDY

There are three aspects of the remedy. These are rod, revelation and release. The rod refers to the hand of God upon us in discipline. The revelation is that aspect of the truth which is in Christ that can set us free in each particular situation. The release is the living freedom that is experienced as the soul is set free to obey.

Rod

The judgement of God on covetousness is destruction. This is seen in the judgement of Achan.

Joshua 7:25-26

And Joshua said, "Why have you troubled us? The LORD will trouble you this day." So all Israel stoned him with stones; and they burned them with fire after they had stoned them with stones. 26 Then they raised over him a great heap of stones, still there to this day. So the LORD turned from the fierceness of His anger. Therefore the name of that place has been called the Valley of Achor to this day.

The purpose of this judgment is seen when it is considered that what is destroyed is the false identity of one who has been consuming in envy. See also Habakuk 2:9-11

REVELATION

What we must see to find repentance from covetousness is a deep revelation of grace. Covetousness is falsely seeking what is thought to be deserved. Living in grace is living free for concept of what is deserved. Grace does not seek justice for itself or demand its rights. The Bible reveals that the only way we can relate to God is through grace.

Jesus is our example of this.

Philippians 2:5-8

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Jesus pointed out that if we were to follow Him, then we were to abandon any thought of rights. This is very clear in his comment to the scribe.

Matthew 8:19-20

Then a certain scribe came and said to Him, "Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go." 20 And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

See also the comment of Paul in 1 Corinthians 9:11. This is what Jesus meant when he spoke of taking up the cross.

Matthew 16:24-26

Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny

himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 "For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 "For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?

RELEASE

The release is into having the values of the kingdom of God established in our hearts. We become confident of and content with our treasures in heaven. In this, the vision of God's eternal purposes become clear and life directing. We become as strangers and pilgrims on earth, living a life directed by the promises of God. At this point we live by faith and not by sight.

Hebrews 11:13-16

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off were assured of them, embraced them and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. 14 For those who say such things declare plainly that they seek a homeland. 15 And truly if they had called to mind that country from which they had come out, they would have had opportunity to return. 16 But now they desire a better, that is, a heavenly country. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared a city for them.