

The 10

COMMANDMENTS

How well do you do with the 10 commandments? The Bible says that all are sinners. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). "There is none righteous, not even one" (Romans 3:10). "All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way" (Isaiah 53:6). Our main sin is going our "own way," but we "go astray" in many ways and thus commit many sins.

The Bible declares all men as guilty, but it also shows how guilty man is. The Bible tells men how to live. When man decides to go his own way, he sins. The Ten Commandments are not the sum total of all that God has for us, but it is good to use them to see how we might measure up to God's standards. Most people fail immediately by not even knowing what the Ten Commandments are. If a person fails to know these 10 commands, he is surely ignorant of God's other directives. In two places in the Bible, God's gives us the complete list of the ten commandments that contain principles that men break every day: Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5. Jesus said that man may break a command in his speech

(Matthew. 5:21-22) or even in his thoughts (Matthew 5:27-28). Man sins by his deeds, words, and thoughts.

#1 "You shall have no other gods before Me." There are no other real gods, but when someone follows something other than God, he is making that a god. In the days of Moses, people followed gods of success and pleasure. Although people today don't call them gods they are often elevated as such. Most people are more concerned with what other people think than they are with what God may think of them. They have made people a god. A great number of people make themselves a god, because they put themselves as the final authority. The only final authority is God. Most people put themselves ahead of God and thus make themselves their god. The assumption of the command is that God is to be followed and made first in our lives. We are to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength" (Mark 12:30). To fail to know God's directives is to fail to follow Him. Man is guilty of many counts against this commandment in his regular failure to

study God's word and lovingly do what He says.

#2 "You shall not make for yourself an idol." This command concerns the use of idols. It is not a command against false gods, but a command about using "things" to worship God. Jesus said that God seeks worship in "spirit and truth" (John 4:23, 24). Moses' brother Aaron used a golden calf to worship the Lord. This was a direct violation of this commandment. Aaron was not worshipping another god, but using something to show the strength or fruitfulness of the Lord. He sinned, as do others today. People are also often more in awe of a building than they are of God. Likewise, people are often concerned more with music than with God. People think that they are worshipping when they feel good, but the real question is whether God feels good. He is the one that is supposed to receive worship. The assumption of this command is that we are to worship God. To put in an hour at church and come out the same is not worship. We should leave church wanting to offer our lives as a sacrifice to God. Failure to worship is sin.

#3 "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain." God is glorious and man is not to take His name lightly. Today, some individuals say, "Oh my God!" numerous times a day. They violate this command. So also do others who hear it and let it pass. Others substitute things like "Gee" for God. They are violating the spirit of this command. Others violate the command when joking about God. Still others pray using God's name, but do not even think about what they are doing. Even calling oneself a Christian, yet living as though God hardly existed, also violates this command.

#4 "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." God requires that one day of the week be given especially to Him. God owns every day, but he commands people to set aside one day as special for Him. A forty-year-old has had the opportunity to obey this command over two thousand times. Obviously, people who only go to church twice a year violate the command fifty times a year. But the command speaks about more than just putting in an hour a week. The "day" is to be holy, or set apart to God. Often people say, "This is the only day of the week that I have to . . ."

They should say, "This is the one day of the week that I should at least make sure that God is thought about, honored, and included in all my activities." Many will also have to answer to God for employment on His day.

#5 "Honor your father and your mother." Any disrespect of parents is sin, without exception. A child who disrespects in word, deed, or thought violates this command. Adults have had years of childhood to violate this command, but it does not stop in our youth. Honoring a parent requires more than one day a year. Neglect of a parent throughout the year is not one, but many sins.

#6 "You shall not murder." Someone will say, "Finally, I have a commandment that I don't have to feel guilty about." Are you sure? The command teaches that we are to have a high respect for human life. We kill over a million babies in the United States every year. Having an abortion is not the only sin. Those who assist in the abortion also sin. Those who stand idly by are also guilty. We are also guilty when we become angered at another to the point that we wish that person were dead. But there are also countless other times when we actually

enjoy the killing of another on the television or video. God also tells us to "love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18). Many people are so wrapped up in themselves, that they violate this command multiple times every day. Finally, when we fail to care for our own bodies, we may be guilty of slowly killing ourselves.

#7 "You shall not commit adultery." God hates divorce (Malachi 2:6) and any sexual involvement outside of marriage is sin. Adultery is intimate involvement after marriage. Intimacy before marriage is also sin. Such sins often use others for selfish gratification. Jesus also said, ". . . I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart." (Matthew 5: 28). Films often violate this commandment, and those who watch them, may also violate the command. It is hard to find films that do not promote casual sex. It is hard to find films where viewers do not commit adultery through substitution and voyeurism. One film alone may bring about numerous sins. While each one is responsible for his thoughts, many people dress in such a way to tempt

the impure thoughts of another. Many sin in irresponsible ignorance.

#8 “You shall not steal.” Crooks and cheaters are guilty. An employee steals from an employer, not only by taking things, but also by cheating him out of a full day’s work. The employer or a seller may steal by not paying a full day’s wage or by overcharging. The rates that banks charge for loans and credit are actually usury. The victims of usury are often accomplices to the sin, and are thus guilty themselves. The more numerous and common thefts are stealing from God. People who don’t use the talents that God has given them to use for Him are stealing from God. People steal time from God by using so little for Him. Finally, people steal money from God. God commands people to give back to Him the tithe or the first fruits. People who don’t give at least that much have stolen from God in every paycheck and other income.

#9 “You shall not bear false witness.” This makes a sin of all lies and all deception. Liars are included in a list with murders and immoral persons who will have their part “in the lake that burns with fire and brimstone” (Revelation 21:8). Even a

white lie is a lie. How often has a person withheld truth or deceived others? God also has commanded us to be His witnesses. To fail to properly represent God in our words and our lives is to be guilty of being a false witness.

#10 “You shall not covet.” “To covet” is “to longingly wish for something or someone.” God commands us to be content. Lotteries as well as other forms of gambling encourage covetousness. Each time we fail to be content we are guilty of sin. The sellers of this world are tempted to move us to covet their products. We don’t have to buy something to be guilty of covetousness, but only to lose our contentment. This command includes the sins of worldliness. God made us for Himself, but we often desire to live for this world and all that it has to offer.

Seeing our lives in terms of the Ten Commandments should help us see that we violate His commands every day in the things that we do, say, and think. But God also states that there are sins of omission (James 4:17). When a man fails to do what he should have done, it is a sin. God commands us to pray, to be thankful, to be compassionate, to be diligent, to be fair, to be faithful, to be forgiving, to

be gentle, to be humble. He commands us to be joyful, to be kind, to be merciful, to be patient, to be peaceful, to be respectful, to be self-controlled, to be temperate. God commands our holiness (1Peter 1:16). To fail is a sin. We may compare ourselves with others, but God holds each of us responsible.

We commit far more sins than we realize. If we only committed three sins a day, we would commit over a thousand sins a year. If we multiply that number by our age, we should see that we clearly need a Savior to save us from the penalty of our sin. Jesus is that Savior. He died on the cross to pay the penalty for all your sins. If you do not turn from going your own way and put your trust in the Lord Jesus, you will die in your sins separated from God forever.

Please let us help you to know more about trusting the Lord Jesus Christ.

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