

# ON EAGLES' WINGS



This has been a study that I have been sharing since the middle of January 2020. I haven't written every day but I have tried to write consistently. My prayer is that you have enjoyed the study and that you have been blessed!

by Pastor Ron Isam

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## Preface - “Year of Vision!”

Without a vision — Would you indulge me a few minutes for an important word?

January 1st has been a strange day for Diane and I. She has been sick all day and I have spent most of the day resting and trying not to catch whatever it is she has.

I sat down this evening to read the paper and the more I read the more I was impressed with the idea of a need for vision in our lives. I am not talking so much about “having a vision” though I think God does give that to us. I am just talking about having vision.

As we begin this year, I would like to share a well known verse with you. I hear it quoted from time to time, but it has been a long time since I have heard a sermon on it exactly. I find no fault with that, but I do think it is vital for a year that the numbers are consistent with what the eye doctors give you for good sight.

Most will recognize this verse like this:

### **Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)**

*“Where there is no vision, the people perish: but he that keepeth the law, happy is he.”*

I really like The Passion Translation of this verse to help us understand it a little better.

### **Proverbs 29:18 (TPT)**

*“When there is no clear prophetic vision, people quickly wander astray. But when you follow the revelation of the word, heaven’s bliss fills your soul.”*

In 2019, I received a big scare concerning my vision:

I went to this medical doctor that specializes in eyes. Sorry, I don’t know what they are called. I go every 6 months because they say I have the markers for some problems. At any rate, at this exam the doctor seemed to be very intense looking into my eyes. He used more and more tools to see in there. Then he informed me that he thinks I have a tumor in my eye. He even used the word cancer.

He sent me to another eye Institute for an exam by another expert to confirm what he had found which was a tumor that was not there at all 6 months before and it was growing very fast. The next doctor looked and looked and found what the first doctor found. He showed me a magnified picture of it. Then he set me out in a waiting room to wait for some more tests. I got my phone out and wrote a note asking as many people who know how to pray, to pray for me. My phone blew up over the next few hours with people responding and committing to pray. I already had some people praying before that as well.

After bit, a young lady called out my name. She spent the next several hours taking me from



exam room to exam room and in each room she or someone else would run a test. Then off to the next room. This went on and on. Then I finally made it back to the doctor I had started with there at the institute. He took a few more pictures, and then he showed me the first picture and then laid the second one beside it. He said, you do not have cancer in your eye. He said there is what looks like a cyst in your eye, but it is not cancer and furthermore it cannot ever become cancer. Then he told me that I could go.

I walked to my car asking God if it was a miracle or just one of those things. I will let you be the judge of that but for me, I believe the Lord who opens the eyes of the blind had touched me. There was no fanfare, no trumpet sounds, no parades. Just me walking out into the sunlight on a warm Oklahoma day and driving South towards my house. However, I think that is exactly what miracles might look like.

In this verse, it says that without a vision — without divine revelation — people quickly wander away from the right path. No matter if we are talking about an individual or a people (the church) we must have a clear vision given by the Holy Spirit. Most of the reason we have so many stories about pastors falling in some area of their life is because we lack vision, which means we don't keep our eyes on the covenant. It is important to remember that to have right vision looking forward, we have to keep ourselves in line with what God has already said in His Word. Our beliefs are built on the foundation of the Apostles and Prophets. ([Ephesians 2:20](#).)

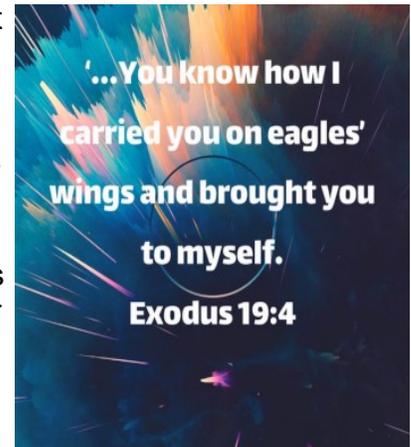
You see, the idea here is that “the vision” is not referring to some new idea or tactic to get more people or more money in your church, the vision that is referred to here must be based on our understanding of the covenant already given to the church. In the Old Testament this was the law. (The Torah). In the New Testament we are given a new covenant of love. Jesus says “if you love me you will keep my commandments.” ([John 14:15](#)) We build our vision based on what God has already said in His Word not as a result of the latest article, podcast or conference we have been to.

To be a person of vision we must not fall for the newest gimmicks that come along, or every wind of doctrine (please read [Ephesians 4:11-16](#).) We must hear from the Holy Spirit through His Word, then based on that we can package it anyway that is consistent with God's direction. If this is true for churches, then how much more is it true for the individual believer. We must be willing to share the vision God is showing us with those in your life that are deeply connected to the Word of God, so they can “judge” it. (Which means to discern it with the whole of God's Word at heart.) It is in this balance that we can keep ourselves from error and following a vision that leads you away from God's plan. We must have a vision that calls us to obey God's plan and it leads you to obedience, which the Word of God says is better than sacrifice. ([1 Samuel 15:22](#)).

Lastly, please be careful with the internet. It is a great gift to our present generation. May I say, that just because it is on the internet that does not make it true. We can be easily swayed by ministries and churches around the world that have a lot of fanfare and excitement which makes it all seem right. ([Proverbs 14:12](#)). Please take what you think is from God and submit it to your pastor, elder or someone who you deeply trust to discern it with you. The Bible tells us that in the last days that even some of “the very elect” will fall away. ([Matthew 24:24](#)). Anyone can be deceived, so we must have 2020 vision to stay on the right path in the year 2020 and beyond.

## Love Letters From Our Father!

It is my plan to try and share a few things from the Father's Heart throughout 2020. There is a lot of teaching on prophecy these days. I guess there always has been, but because we have entered a new decade and because we are living in the year 2020 (can you believe it?) there is a lot of focus on this incredible subject. I listened with intensity this past Sunday as our, dear pastor, passionately opened prophecies from the Bible that are becoming fulfilled in the very days in which we live. I have always loved the subject of prophecy and future events, but I have never been that great at teaching on it. When I would try, it would seem to come out like a dry list of events, an important list, but the passion that Pastor Roger preached with these last weeks is powerful and really helps you understand how much God is preparing the way for us.



As God is preparing us, in these days, for the second coming of Jesus Christ, I want to look back and see how God prepared the children of Israel to make an Exodus out of bondage in Egypt and make their way to the promised land. This is very much what God is doing today, and we may be able to gain some clues from their journey as we prepare ourselves for all the great things God has for us. As He takes us from bondage to the promise of His return we can experience our faith to rise to a new level. Therefore, releasing hope, joy, peace, grace and mercy for the journey before us. He desires to take us, His Church, from barrenness to fruitfulness. He does not want to waste one hurt we experience, but rather turn them into victories and testimonies of His love.

How do you view the Ten Commandments? Do you see them as 10 edicts from an angry gray bearded old man shouting out ways to stop you from having any fun? Do you see him as an old, harsh man, looking down at you over the top of his glasses just daring you to step out of line, so he can fry you like a bug hitting an electric bug zapper? Well, I sure hope not, but many people do. Many struggle because they think in terms of what they have to give up or quit if they come to follow Jesus, rather than seeing all the incredible blessings God wants to pour out upon those who are called to be reflectors of His glory.

In the chapter before God wrote those 10 loving, Fatherly statements, in the rocks on Mount Sinai in Exodus 20. We get a glimpse of the attitude and frame of thinking God was in when He told Moses to speak the following words:

### [Exodus 19:3-6 \(NLT\)](#)

"Then Moses climbed the mountain to appear before God. The Lord called to him from the mountain and said, "Give these instructions to the family of Jacob; announce it to the descendants of Israel: 'You have seen what I did to the Egyptians. You know how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me. And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation.' This is the message you must

give to the people of Israel.”

“You will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth.” Wow! Just Wow! God is a loving Father who wanted to lead these people to His promise, and He wants to lead you and me, as Christ followers, from bondage to the promise of freedom in our daily walk with Jesus. Furthermore, He wants to lead His church, alive in these days, from the religious bondage that has kept us from being all that God has for us, as He prepares the church, the world and creation for the fulfillment of God’s greatest promise of His return so that we can ever be with the Lord.

Next time I write, I will pick up here with more about Eagles Wings. Keep your eyes open. I may not be able to write every day but hopefully it will be often. Blessings!

## From Bondage to Promise!

The journey of faith is really built on the covenant drafted by God to lead His people out of bondage and into the fulfillment of the promises of God. In Exodus, we see God taking His people out of bondage on, what was to be a faith journey, from bondage to promise. In Exodus 20, God introduced the Old Covenant of the law. The Ten Commandments were expressions of a loving Father to lead His children to the promise land. The problem with the law, was not that it was bad. In fact, Romans 7 tells us that it was “holy, just good and spiritual.” The problem with the law is me. I cannot keep it. “I can will to do what it right, but I cannot do it. Every time I try to do what is right evil lies close at hand.” The law, is external and does not provide the power to keep it. What is the purpose of the law then? It is given to us to show us our sin. All we must do is repent of that sin and walk in God’s way, and we will transfer us from bondage to promise.



Therefore, when the new covenant, came into effect, the journey of faith was no longer an external code, without power, it was God coming to us, in a personal way, in the person of His Son Jesus Christ to meet us at the point of our need. The New Covenant allows for the power of the Holy Spirit to lead us from our own bondages to decay and leads us to the fulfillment of the promises of God in our daily life. The opposite of the law is not so much grace, as it were, it is actually, life in and by the Holy Spirit. Therefore, our journey is to repent of sin, and turn to God and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us and guide us into all truth. It is by grace through faith that we are saved. Under the new covenant we have the Spirit of Christ to live His life out through us. ( [2 Corinthians 5:17](#); [2 Corinthians 12:9](#); [John 14:10](#); [1 Corinthians 15:10](#); [Philippians 4:13](#); [Galatians 3:24](#); [Galatians 2:20](#))

So, back to yesterday’s passage about “eagles’ wings,”

[Exodus 19:3-6](#) (NLT)

“Then Moses climbed the mountain to appear before God. The Lord called to him from the mountain and said, “Give these instructions to the family of Jacob; announce it to the descendants of Israel: ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians. You know how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. Now if you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth; for all the earth belongs to me. And you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation.’ This is the message you must give to the people of Israel.”

BEFORE, presenting the Ten Commandments, God Himself sets the context. He calls us His “own special treasure.” These are endearing terms from our Father, not the expressions of an angry judge. We are not meeting an angry God at this point. We are being introduced to

Father's heart. The enemy of our soul spends much of His time, either trying to keep us too busy to be in God's Word, or he uses the ploy of trying to wrench God's Word out of its rightful context. The context of these words of the Ten Commandments is the boundless, faithful, Father-love of the living God. It is almost like you can hear or better yet, you can feel His heart beat as He lays out these love statements. Boundaries given not to put us in bondage but rather boundaries that keep us safe and protected from the enemies ploys against us.

Quickly let me describe the way of the mama eagle. This mama will make a nest at least 8 feet (2.44 m) by 8 feet (2.44 m) - sometimes bigger. One person said that the biggest one was about the size of a VW Bug. It was about 20 feet deep and could have weighed about 3 tons. That is a serious nest. The Mama would fill it with leaves, animal fur, and down from its own breast making the nest so warm and cozy. It is not hard to imagine just how safe, snug these little baby eaglets would feel. When the time was just right (and mama knows that time) she would begin to make things a little uncomfortable for these unsuspecting babies. She would take them out of the nest and take them high up into the sky. She would pick them up, take them in flight to dizzying and greater heights than they would have ever experienced and then...drop them.

Yes, you read that correctly. She would drop them! These babies had never flown before. This was shocking, scary. For them, so far, life had been a cozy, warm, snuggled down into a fuzz ball experience. They had other little ones to play with and regular meals, At night the mama eagle would spread her wings over the nest to protect them and keep them warm. But now, mama has kicked them overboard and there is nothing between them and certain death but the wild blue yonder.

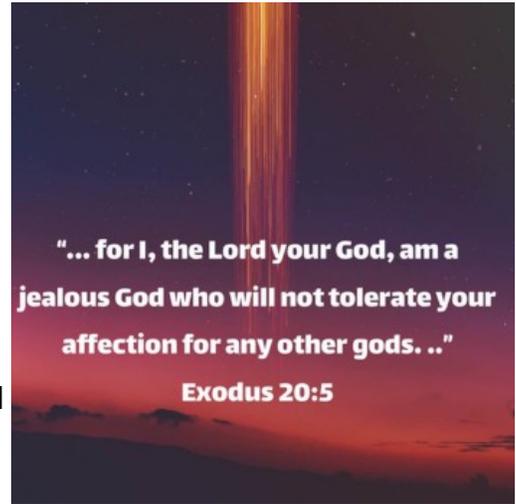
They would begin to flutter, The baby has never done this before. It is a whole new experience. He doesn't know what to do, he hasn't even gone to the DMV to get his learners permit yet. His heart is pounding out of his little chest, and he is headed down and fast. As the little baby eagle plummets to earth, contemplating his very brief life, the mama eagle watches. What does she do? Just at the right time she swoops down just before the baby is to hit the ground, she flies underneath and picks him up. The baby is, of course, in cardiac arrest, but there is a happy outcome for these baby eagles. The Mama begins to climb back into the heavens, the trauma is over, and back to the beloved nest and just in time for lunch. Right? But, what does she do when she regains her original altitude? She drops him again! And then again! Each time swooping down to rescue him and bare him up...on eagles wings.

That is what God is saying to Moses...before you tell them — make sure you remind them— before you give the commands—make sure you remind them, how much I have loved them in the past. Remind them how I have watched over their lives every day and concerned myself with your future. He wants to remind you and me today — “I carried you on eagles wings!”

## No Other Gods – Part 1

As we look at the giving of the Ten Commandments we can compare God's preparation to take His people from bondage to the promise of their possession of the land. As well to experience God's preparation to take us, His people, in our days, from bondage to the promise of heaven.

For the last two days I wrote about the Father's heart in Exodus 19 and his promise to take his people out of Egypt (bondage) and lead them to the promise land. He declared that He would do this "on Eagles' Wings." He was not describing Himself as a tyrannical and harsh God who was going to force them to the promise, but rather we see him in Exodus 19 as a loving Father who desired to see His kids experience His promise rather than making bricks in Egypt as slaves.



In Exodus 20 God gives Moses the 10 Commandments. These 10 loving statements and healthy boundaries were given to help His people live the life He had for them. Well, of course, if you have read the Bible we see these people repay the Father with disobedience, complaining and questioning the entire way. These 10 statements, in essence, are the cornerstone statements for the entire law God gave them. Today, let's look at the first one.

### [Exodus 20: 2-6](#) (NLT)

"I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery. You must not have any other god but me. You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands."

I think the greatest challenge most people living the Christian life has is to always keep Him first. One question I have been asked fairly often about ministry, is what is the hardest part of being a pastor or minister of the gospel? They ask, what is the greatest burden in ministry? Preaching? Counseling? Administration? My answer is: None of the above: The most daunting and demanding task on any given day is more difficult than any of these mentioned tasks. I have spent 42 years trying to have the best sermons I could preach, to see as many people come to Christ as I could, to help save as many marriages as possible and to lead a ministry that is effective in touching the lives of the people God brings along. But the greatest challenge I face every day of my life is probably the very one you face every day as well — is maintaining a close, personal, growing relationship with Jesus Christ. It is keeping Him first at

all times.

We could have very successful businesses, ministries, families and thousands of other things, but the thing that challenges us the greatest, if we are honest, is to make sure that no one, no object, task, duty, pleasure or “god”—comes before our God in our priorities, in our plans, and in our affection. Let me tell you, this is no small thing! The sooner we admit it and find ways to “stir up one another to love and good deeds...: ([Hebrews 10:24-25](#).) the better we all will be. Think about it this way. The church of Ephesus described in [Revelation 2:4](#) worked extremely hard at keeping their hopes alive, staying doctrinally sound, and patiently endured suffering for the Lord’s name. Yet the Lord said that they were on the edge of losing both their light and their witness to the world. Why? Because “you have left your first love.”

People do it in marriage all the time. In my counseling office, I am constantly dealing with couples who are struggling to keep their marriage afloat, and they think it is all kinds of deep problems. Honestly, in most cases it is simply people who have stopped doing “first love” things. I am not often seeing people who have too many OCD problems, or bi-polar problems, or even have endured great distress as a child greater than any others. Most of the time, if I am being honest, is that people have some kind of predetermined idea of what marriage was supposed to be like and so their expectations are not being met, and they are kind of ticked off about it. It sounds like this “You always forget our anniversary.” Or “you never bring me flowers anymore.” Maybe, “I was expecting that we would have more intimate encounters than we do.” Or “I thought we would have sex more often when we got married. What are they saying? The things you used to do when we first got together to woo me and get me connected to you is not happening anymore.

The same things happens with our relationship with God. When we first receive Christ we are on fire. We witness, we invite people to church, we pray, we read our Bible, we ask lots of questions, so we can grow. Then a few weeks later, or a couple of months later, we have already stopped making reading our Bible a priority for our day. Our prayers have been reduced to just “Help me” prayers. It is not that those prayers are not valid, but what happens to the time filled with Holy Spirit led encounters with God? All of a sudden we realize it has been months since we had a journal entry or talked to another person about Jesus. We don’t do it because we don’t like Jesus anymore. We do it because we lose our first love. We begin to put other things, people, activities, “gods” really in front of our God.

I am sorry if this steps on your toes a little, but if we are ever going to be prepared for the second coming of Jesus we must not forget to buy the oil for our lamps. [Matthew 25:1-13](#). For this reason I am going to continue this tomorrow or Monday, the Lord willing, because I want to help us discover some ways to motivate you to love and good deeds and how to develop and rediscover “first love” things that will help you keep this first commandment and prepare you for the return of our Lord, Savior and Soon Coming King.

## No Other Gods – Part 2

### [Exodus 20:3](#) (NLT)

“You must not have any other god but me.”

This first commandment is pretty straight forward, isn't it.? God is not interested in sharing the space in our heart with anything, anyone, or whatever we decide to make a god out of.

You might remember, as a part of this great story was an incident in Exodus 32 after Moses had been in the mountain receiving all the law the people had become concerned because Moses had been gone so long. So, they go to Aaron, the High Priest, “...Come on.” They said.”make us some gods who can lead us. We don't know what happened to this fellow Moses, who brought us here from the land of Egypt.” ([Exodus 32:1](#)) The people of Israel had only been out of Egypt two months, plus the time Moses had been on Mount Sinai. God had declared exactly how He was going to speak to them in ([Exodus 19:9-24](#).) Yet, they were not really interested in hearing directly from God.

I am sure they had no idea exactly what words God was saying or actually carving for Moses, because they had already made the decision in ([Exodus 20:18-21](#)) to have Moses go up and talk with God and come and tell them what He said, but they insisted that they never wanted God to speak directly to them again. Before you get too uptight with these people not wanting to hear directly from God, many people today are convinced that God cannot or will not speak to His people. However, if you have walked with Jesus very long you know full well that God can bring His Word very much alive into the hearts and the ears of His kids if we are willing to hear from God about how to live the life that makes us available to God's purpose. The truth is, God is speaking, the only question that exists is, are we listening?

The key to really hearing from God is found in some powerful verses such as this very familiar one:

### [Proverbs 3:5-8](#) (NLT)

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take. Don't be impressed with your own wisdom. Instead, fear the Lord and turn away from evil. Then you will have healing for your body and strength for your bones.”

This is pretty much the bottom line, isn't it? In everything, you and I do, we must put God first, so he can direct our path. What does that mean? It means He not only gives you direction, but He commits Himself to removing any hindrances or obstacles that stand in the way of His destined purpose for your life. He will make your paths straight (more literally) smooth before you. However, you must take the stance of walking daily in this personal relationship with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ and be open to allow God to communicate with you as well as communicate daily with Him through a faithful prayer life, a Bible study discipline, and a life in the Holy Spirit that puts God first in all we say and do. Just as God was preparing His people in those days from bondage to promise, He is still today through these disciplines mentioned wants to prepare us for the journey from the bondages of this world, we presently

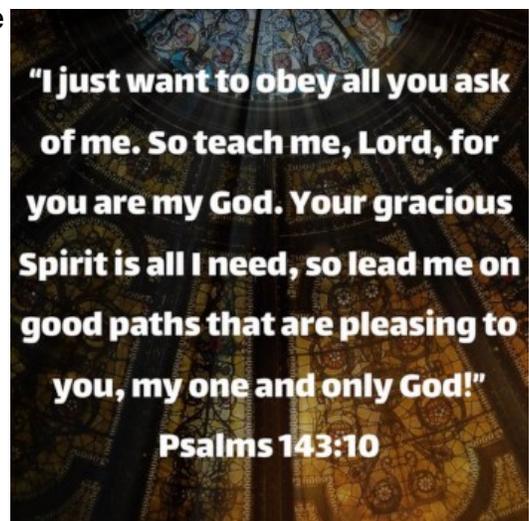
live in, to walking directly into the promise of eternal life forever with the Lord in His presence. There is a condition placed on the promise in these verses in Proverbs 3. It is very clear that we must not depend on our own understanding. Why? Because that understanding is so inadequate, limited, and flawed by sin. The truth is, that when we do not trust in the Lord we can be assured that our personal GPS will be broken. You see “whatever is NOT of faith (trusting in God) is sin.” ([Romans 14:23](#)). We live on a broken planet, and we are broken people. We live in a dangerous place full of traps, pits and swamps. How can we move forward into life without moving into disaster? We must always remember to not rely on our own wisdom or our own sense of direction. The Bible says, “there is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.” ([Proverbs 14:12](#)) We must, in all of our ways, depend fully upon God’s GPS and not our own.

There is so much more that I would like to share about having no other gods before our God. The truth is that man seems to have an innate tendency to make just about anything into a “god.” Oh, we don’t mean to, I guess, but many times when the timing of God seems to be slower than we think it ought to, like it did in Exodus 32, we start taking offerings of all the women’s ear rings, gold bands that represent our marriage covenant, and we start melting it down and forming it into something to worship, in other words we take life into our own hands, rather than trusting God, just because Moses was having a church service with God that went past noon. We start making other gods.

How ironic that while these thoughts in the heart of these men, to make a golden calf to worship, was at the same time God was carving out on a stone this command that His people were to never have another “god” besides Him. It is hard to imagine. As I stop for today let me leave you with one last passage of scripture to think about. May this become your prayer, just as it was the prayer of David.

[Psalm 143:10](#) (TPT)

“I just want to obey all you ask of me. So teach me, Lord, for you are my God. Your gracious Spirit is all I need, so lead me on good paths that are pleasing to you, my one and only God!”



Trust me! If you want to prepare for the second coming of Jesus Christ the King of all kings we must never allow ourselves the approval to have another “god” before the God described in these pages of God’s Word.

Keep watching and I will continue looking at the next commandment. Pursuing Empty Images [Exodus 20:2](#). Blessings on each and every one of you. I pray this study is a blessing to your life.

## Don't Pursue Empty Images – Part 1

The second commandment is vitally important especially on the heels of God's boundary of having no other "gods." You see, God knew that the children of Israel would be meeting a lot of different people, who served other gods and who worshiped idols, as they made their way on the journey from the bondage of Egypt to the promise of a new land.

However, I believe God was looking way ahead to the days in which we live as well. As we make our journey from bondage to the promise of eternal life He knew we, too, would encounter, not only other gods, but the graven images people had made to worship. Let's look closely at this vital commandment:

[Exodus 20:4-5](#) (NLT)

"You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods."

Do you think your spouse would be excited if they looked into your wallet and found a picture of another man or woman that you had once had a close connection too? I don't think so. I know Diane wouldn't like it at all. My mom and dad were married 61 years before my mom moved to be with Jesus. I was 50 years old when my mom passed away and in all the years of my life I had never seen in my dad's wallet. However, my dad pulled a picture, out of his wallet, of a beautiful 18-year-old woman. It was obvious that my dad had carried this picture in his wallet for a very long time.

You guessed it, it was my mom from back when they were first dating. Now, my parents were not known for saying sweet words to one another. I saw them kiss one time in all of my life (I am the youngest of 5 kids). That one time was on the occasion of their 50th anniversary when I led them through a renewal of vows ceremony. There is one thing I knew for sure and that was my dad loved my mom, and he had never had any other plans for 61 years. He still doesn't. At almost 92 he still talks about my mom as the love of his life. My prayer is that we would all have that kind of marriage.

So, by now, you are probably asking what is all of this talk about a picture in your dad's wallet? I believe that the very heart of this second commandment is that, just like my dad, was a one woman, kind of man. We are to be a one God kind of person. My sense of what I think God may be saying in this second commandment is this: "I am your God. I am your Redeemer, I have saved you and bought you for myself at a terrible price. Please...don't ever put anything in the place that belongs to Me." I can hear Him continue by saying: "I love you with all of My heart, and I have always wanted to care for you, protect you, provide for you and bless you. Now—because I love you more than any other—let Me ask something very



important to Me. I am asking that you have no other gods in your life...that I would be the only One.”

What do you think? Do you think this sounds just a little bit too restrictive? Too legalistic? Too much for the Lord to expect or require? Of course not, He is our God. After all, what is the difference between a “carved image” or a “graven image” and a photo in your wallet? I mean, it seems to me that God is saying to you and to me. “Listen, do you have any idea how desperately that I love you? Do you ‘get it’ how much you mean to me?” “Please...don’t put any other pictures in your wallet alongside of the one you have of Me!”

Most importantly, “Please...don’t carry any other Image in your heart. Don’t look toward any false or made up god for comfort, stimulation or satisfaction in your heart.” God is saying to you and to me: “Here I am! I am able to meet every need you will ever have...without the limits you have placed on Me, but according to My riches in Christ Jesus.” [Philippians 4:19](#)

I have plenty more to say about this second commandment, tomorrow, the Lord willing. However, let me leave you this powerful verse to think about. It is the very last very in 1 John 5. It almost seems like a thought totally unto itself from the rest of this letter. However, it catches the spirit of this incredible commandment.

[1 John 5:21](#) (NLT)

“Dear children, keep away from anything that might take God’s place in your hearts.”

You might ask yourself this question from a modern TV advertisement: “What are you carrying in your wallet?”

## Don't Pursue Empty Images – Part 2

In part 1, I was referring to this second commandment found in:

[Exodus 20: 4-6](#) (NLT)

“You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.”

The cry of our heart every morning must be: “Not going to bow to your idols, not going to bow no more...” Now of course, most of us are not actually getting down on our knees and bowing to a graven image out of stone or wood, but it doesn't mean we are not bowing to the idols of this world.

What are these “images” in our world today that would rise up and challenge our love relationship with the Son of God? What are the snapshots we might be tempted to frame on our desk, alongside our picture of Him? What kinds of “pictures” do we look at on our phone? What are the “pictures you we have in our wallet” that could gradually steal us away from a whole-hearted walk with Christ?

Material things? Jesus told his disciples, “you cannot serve both God and Money.” ([Matthew 6:24](#)) He is not just talking about having a few dollars in your wallet. He is referring more to a spirit of materialism that grips the soul of a man or women and demands all of our energy and the devotion of our heart. In Colossians 3:5 Paul equates greed to idolatry. Though God could have pretty much put anything in that space where greed is, such as, popularity, pleasure, power or even fame.

So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. Colossians 3:5 (NLT)

When these things become the whole purpose of our lives as we, chase after and pursue, these types of things we have already slipped into idolatry. I see people who give the best of their time, their talents, treasures and energy to get more of these things. Their very life is invested in it and that is what a “god” is; when we worship a god, we basically surrender our life to it—no matter what the cost is.

In Bible times as the writers talked about certain cities there seemed to be idols on every corner. Even to this day, when you take a tour of Israel you will see the ruins of the caves and edifices created for the worship of an idol or a god or goddess. However, today you don't have to look further than your and where you carry your phone. There are things that pop up every day that tries to capture your heart. We have video, slick advertising, satellite, cable, internet. There are billboards, magazine covers, sexual indulgences and even promises of

personal power. Anyone who is into advertising, network advertising or many other positions like this will tell you that the purpose of these things are to “capture you and as many people as possible.”

Capture what? Our attention, our interest, our money, our time, our commitment. Is there anything wrong with wanting a new car? Or fashionable clothes? To succeed in business? To be a loyal sports fan? The answer, of course, is “no.” However, these things and hundreds more —may become an idol to us as it begins to capture and then control our thoughts and desires. How does this affect us over time? Well, let’s look at a powerful Psalm that makes some amazing and maybe even frightening statements. Read this carefully and then check your emotional, spiritual and mental wallet to see what images may lurk there around the pictures of those you love and a few Presidents. Then, just maybe you will want to change what is in your wallet.

### [Psalm 135:15-18](#) (TPT)

“The unbelieving nations worship what they make. They worship their wealth and their work. They idolize what they own and what they do. Their possessions will never satisfy. Their lifeless and futile works cannot bring life to them! Their things can’t talk to them or answer their prayers. Blind men can only create blind things. Those deaf to God can only make a deaf image. Dead men can only create dead idols. And everyone who trusts in these powerless, dead things will be just like what they worship—powerless and dead!”

I have so much more I would love to share about each of these commandments, but space does not allow. However, as you look at the idols around you and those who have taken God’s place in your life, be aware, Jesus is coming very soon and it is time to clean any and all of those idols out of your heart. This is part of the process that God must take each of us through if we are to ever move out of bondage and into the promise of God.

## Take Care of My Name – Part 1

As we come to this third commandment we see God brings up this idea of being careful about the way we take care of God's name. When we think about the commandment in [Exodus 20:7](#) we normally think of it the way the King James Version translates it as "Thou Shalt not take the Lord's name in vain." As many of us grew up we were always told we were not supposed to cuss. Of course, this is included for sure.

However, I think this translation may give us a better look of what this actually means:

[Exodus 20:7](#) (NLT)

"You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name."

In this post, I want to focus mostly on the proclamation of how we live under the banner of God's name. The Tabernacle for the journey to the promised land and later the Temple of the Old Testament were set apart by the fact that God placed His name on the people and later His name was placed on the promised land, particularly Jerusalem and more specifically the Temple.

In the New Testament we learn in [Acts 7:48](#) that God doesn't live in "temples made with human hands." As we move further we, as God's people, are proclaimed as the "Temple of God" and as the "Temple of the Holy Spirit." Now, it is in us where God has placed His name. ([1 Corinthians 3:16](#); [1 Corinthians 6:19-20](#)). In [1 Peter 2:4-12](#) the Apostle writes about how Christ is the Chief Cornerstone of the Temple, God is building us all into the temple of God. In this passage He calls His these things: "...you are a chosen people. You are royal priests, a holy nation, God's very own possession. As a result, you can show others the goodness of God, for he called you out of the darkness into his wonderful light." [1 Peter 2:9](#) (NLT)

In the book of Revelation, we see the same promise of His name being on the New Heaven and New Earth that will come and it will include a New Temple. As always, when it refers to this Temple. At this place, God will once again have His name at the Center of this new city. I am looking forward to the fulfillment of this promise.

We see throughout the Old Testament the mention of the names of God. Things like "I Am Your Provider". "I am The Lord who Heals you." I am Jehovah Our Banner." He even declares "I Am who I Am" as well as, many many more, In fact, I have read that there are 955 different names used for God. The point is simply, that God's name is not just a nice handle placed on Him. As you study the Word of God, you will learn more about Him. As you study you will find all of these many parts of God's person and work as you discover these names of God.

When we invoke one of those names—we are calling out for God to invest Himself into our lives where we need it. If we find our life is in turmoil, and we are in need of God's peace, then we have the authority given to us to call for the "God of all peace" to enter our situation. Because you see God didn't just place His name on some property in the Middle East. He has placed His name on you and on me as well.

In the gospels we are exhorted over and over to "ask for anything, in His name, and He will do

it.” ([John 14:13-14](#); [John 15:16](#)). In Solomon’s prayer at the dedication of the temple, in [1 Kings 8:29](#) He asks that God would “watch over the temple, night and day, this place where you have said. ‘My name will be there...’” This is the thing that set the Temple apart was that God said He had placed His name there.” Why doesn’t He say that He placed His presence there? Well, of course, that is inferred and it even physically shows up in this chapter when, God’s Manifest Presence, enters the temple. This is still true today, we must never forget that God’s glory shows up where the name of Jesus is lifted up. Jesus even told us “when I am lifted up (on the cross) I will draw everyone unto myself.” ([John 12:32](#).)

And Finally, in Revelation 19, the John reveals how Jesus will come “riding on a white horse” in [Revelation 19:11-16](#) describes in beautiful language what Jesus will look like when He returns as the Coming King.

The very last thing he says as described in [Revelation 19:16](#)

“On His robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings, and Lord of all lords,”

That is right it proclaims His name. It is the name above every name and at the mention of that name, every knee will and every tongue will confess. ([Philippians 2:9-11](#))

In part 2, I will post more about this commandment, but I will focus more on how we can misuse his name. I can assure you that it much more than just a few choice words that people have claimed are using the Lord’s name in vain. You will want to read that post for sure, because without being legalistic, we want to describe how many times we can use words that truly misuses his name. Sometimes we even do this with humor, but we must be very careful here. Why? Because with this commandment God says: “The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.” Let’s find out what that means tomorrow.



## Take Care of My Name – Part 2

What I would like for you to do is to take a couple of moments and do a little exercise with me. What would go through your mind if you saw your mom's name on the next line?

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What thoughts would race through your mind in just a moment? What images would flash across the memory screen of your mind? What emotions would quicken your heart a little as you think about your mom and her impact on your life?

Anytime we hear a familiar name — no matter who it is — many thoughts and images fill our mind right away. This one might be too easy since we just had a holiday honoring him, but what goes through your mind when you hear (in this case read) the name: Martin Luther King Jr.? How about say, Ronald Reagan? Michael Jordan? Or after today's tragic event think about the name Kobe Bryant!



Certain things, memories, stories, and emotions can flood our heart especially if that person is close to you. A Parent, a Brother or Sister, maybe an Uncle.

Yesterday, I was honored to speak at my Father in law's Memorial Service. There were all kinds of pictures and stories told about this man. It felt like every time someone shared something during or after the service, it was so easy to relate to and it would spur up thoughts of one of your own stories with dad.

As a pastor for over 40 years, one of my favorite things to do was to dedicate children and praying over their parents for the task before them to raise Godly kids. It was always such a joy to mention the child's name before the church family. They were so cute, and many of them were right out of the Bible which always filled my mind with healthy expectations about this child that might come to pass later in their life.

When our children were born we planned their names from particular stories in the scripture. Caleb, is described in the Bible as "a man with a different kind of spirit." Caleb was a man who brought a good report along with Joshua about the promised land that they had spied out for Moses, but the children of Israel chose to receive the report of the other 10 spies. Because of that, the Children of Israel were sent back out into the desert until everyone died, except Moses, Joshua and Caleb. Moses died at the entrance of the Promised Land but never made it in, though he led the people all the way to it. Joshua, was the one who God sent to lead the people into possession of their promise. Caleb, was 80 when they entered the land but the scriptures say he was still as strong as he was when he was 40 years before when they brought the good report. Caleb, is a man who finishes well. Many can start a journey but few find the end with the strength they began. My son Caleb, is a great leader, a very deep thinker and a man of great wisdom. He doesn't talk all the time, but when he does speak people listen and are encouraged.

Jonathan was named after the son of King Saul, in the Old Testament. We named our son

Jonathan, known in the scripture as, a mighty warrior, and he became David's BFF. Jonathan & David were men who were comfortable in their masculinity enough that they could go out and win a battle but later they were not too uncomfortable to embrace one another. King Saul was jealous of David and wanted to kill him. Even though Jonathan was destined for the throne, He knew that David was the man for the job. Rather than fight for his place in the kingdom, he fought to help his friend become the king of Israel. My son Jonathan has accomplished a lot, in his life, but he is also an incredible friend to anyone he meets. He is a friend you want in your corner at all times. This has made him a great net-worker in his work, as a musician, and many other endeavors that he has taken on. He is a talker and as a salesman at times I have teased him that he could sell you the sizzling off of a peach. I am joking, of course, but he does frame his thoughts well and it has helped him no matter if he's leading in music or preaching a sermon.

I could not be more proud of my two sons. They know the Lord and as I prayed many years ago, I asked God to make them better men, better fathers, better husbands, and men than me, with a double portion, of the anointing that I have received from the Lord. God has and is answering those prayers. What are you praying about and speaking over your children or grandchildren? Are you asking for each generation that follows you, to have a name that betters their generation and the generation that follows?

When my boys, and later my grandchildren, were just little babies, I would lay them on the floor, kneel over them and declare the promises of God's word over their lives. We have seen God bring those things to pass. Both of the boys faced many adversities as they were in High school and during college age years, but I watched as the promises I had declared over them when they were babies and prayed for them in my prayer times come to pass. I have been honored to have that time with my grandkids as well. As little children, they giggle, move around, laugh and enjoy watching me pray and declare God's word over them. This wasn't prayers that my kids or grandkids would never experience a hard time, but that they would be given the wisdom and confidence in the Lord to face any challenge that might come before them. I watch with great joy as I see God perform the things He gave me wisdom to declare over them as babies.

I pray that you are praying and declaring the promises of God over your offspring and grandchildren just like that. I pray that each time you mention the name of your child before God you declare, out-loud or under your breath, a promise from God's word. That you will not receive the evil report from the world, the newspapers and other forms of media, my you receive the good report from God's Word over your family. God has called you to be above and not beneath, ([Deuteronomy 28:13](#)). The head and not the tail ([Deuteronomy 28:13](#)). You are more than a conqueror in Christ. ([Romans 8:37](#)). You are the workmanship of God in Christ Jesus. ([Ephesians 2:10](#)). I am already seeing these prayers coming to pass in my grandchildren and so can you.

I didn't make much of a dent in this subject of how to Take Care of My Name, so there will have to be a part 3 tomorrow or the next day, since I will be traveling home tomorrow from Oregon to Oklahoma. I think it is important to know that it is hard to know how to take care to honor the name of God without first learning to take care and honor the name of our family and friends. However, next time I will share how we can honor the name of the Lord. There are a lot of other ways that we can misuse the name of God then saying G\_D. On this next post I will try to share, as graciously as I can, how people misuse his name and many times

don't even realize it. Blessings until next time!

## Take Care of My Name – Part 3

I wanted to take a moment and apologize for not writing lately. I have been pretty sick, but I am somewhat better now. I am very excited about that. I know some of my friends have prayed for me and I believe it is working. Thank you for continued prayers.

It has been my desire to take a look at The Ten Commandments from a little different perspective than normal. For instance, rather than just talk about the Ten Rules God put on us, or the Ten Statements of an angry God. I see them more like Ten loving statements a Father might say to his child so that they can live closer to His purpose for them. It has also been my intention to connect these Ten love statements that give us some important ideas about the way we live for God, but to also tie them into the last days as we prepare for the second coming of Jesus. Just as God gave these statements to the Children of Israel at one of the first big stops after leaving Egypt with the purpose of preparing them for the promised land, I would like to look at them as we prepare for the coming of Jesus to help us experience the promise of heaven. It is my life goals to live the life that God has given me, totally focused, to be a pleasure to Him. To live a life worthy of my calling and to prepare each day for Jesus to return and ever be with the Lord.

Today, I will continue by looking at this third commandment, which is found in:

[Exodus 20:7](#) (NLT)

“You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.”

People's name represent something. A name represents who they are, and possibly (prophetically speaking ) who they might become. When my boys each turned 13 we took a trip to the hospital where they were born. I shared with them, on site, the story of their birth and the meaning of their name. Then I gave them a new name, not a name to call them by, but just a name that described what I was seeing in their life for the coming years. I didn't come up with this idea on my own, nor did I get the idea from someone else on earth, but rather I just followed my Father's example. He actually named people Himself, or changed their names, at certain key moments in their lives. When their character changed, God changed their names.

He changed “Abram” which means “Exalted Father” to “Abraham” which means “Father of a multitude.” [Genesis 17:5](#)

God changed “Simon's” name to “Peter”—A “Rock.” Simon means impetuous (opens his mouth before he engages his brain.). It represented a man who was “wishy-washy,” “an unreliable man,” and he changed it to “Peter” which is someone who was firm and strong and



would take a stand. When a man or woman receives Jesus Christ as their Savior, his or her name becomes eternal. It is recorded in the Lamb's Book of Life. Trust me, that is one place you definitely want your name recorded. If a person's name represents their character and reputation, and is very important to God, why is there so much profanity today? Why do so many people take the name of our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ in vain? I think you might agree that this may be a great concern to the Lord. But, why would He make it one of the Ten Commandments? Why such a straight forward and stern warning? Why all the caution? Do you think it is possible that God knows something about what will happen to my life if I become careless or flippant about the name of God?

Today, you cannot hardly watch a movie, pick up a novel to read, or even listen to music without hearing God's name being misused. One of the definitions for the word "profane" or "profanity" speaks of "debasing or defiling that which is holy or worthy of reverence." It is an attack against something holy. It is an outright attempt to take something exalted or revered and jerk it down off of its pedestal. When we profane something, We try to yank it down to our level, so I can reduce it to being nothing more than I am.

What does it mean then to profane the Lord God? It is nothing less than a denial of His holiness and majesty and power. It is an attempt in some way to pull God down to a common level and make Him equal with us. Let me make this very clear, this is a grave and serious issue. Especially in our day when it is just "normal." One of the things that we deal with a lot in our society is that we have many kinds of people that just cannot stand the thought that someone is "higher" and "more lofty" than them. We are seeing it a lot right now in our political scene. It seems like in our society we have become incredibly good at tearing down people who are in the public light, stars athletes, preachers, high officials and especially the President of the United States. Just today, (Monday) we had the closing arguments in the Impeachment trial and possibly tomorrow (Tuesday) we have the vote of the Senate to remove the President from His role or to find him innocent. Before the end of the closing arguments people who oppose him have already declared that they will continue to find something to fault about him. Why? Well, there are probably a lot of reasons, but mostly because they cannot stand this man being declared the most powerful man in the world.

When we misuse the Lord's name by cursing, we are, trying to destroy the concept of a lofty God above us. Somehow in the mind of the person, who misuses God's name is the feeling that they can take this God, that appears to be holy and reduce Him to someone just like me. To follow this line of thinking to its logical conclusion, there would truly be "nothing sacred" in the universe. Nothing at all! Unless you live in a monastery you will most likely hear the word "damn" several times this week—or even better you will most likely hear it before lunch. To "damn" something means to condemn to a fate. People will "damn" anything and everything using God before it they "damn their car, their spouse, their schedule, their back pain... It seems to be common speech.

Does it really matter? Does God think it matters? Well, I will tell you how much it matters **TOMORROW!** Blessings!

## Take Care of My Name – Part 4

### [Exodus 20:7](#) (NLT)

“You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.”

The truth is, this particular commandment, in my opinion, may be the commandment that is broken the most on any one day. It seems that no matter where you go these days the misuse of God’s name or the name of our Lord Jesus is profaned. In every level of the court system, the legislature, the White House, everywhere. Our society seems to not even notice that in almost every movie, TV show, magazine article, and social media site. I have even heard it in the church facility. Now, I know most people going to a church gathering may not hear it a lot, but just come into my counseling office. I have had people walk into my office right after church service, where they were just praising God, asking if they can talk to me for a moment and sometimes at the top of the lungs throw out of some of the worse uses of God’s name that you can imagine. I am not talking about one bad moment, I am talking about on many occasions.



The Bible tells us about the use of our words. Look at this powerful verse found in Matthew 12:36 where we are warned by our Savior Jesus Christ with these words:

### [Matthew 12:36](#) (NLT)

“And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak. The words you say will either acquit you or condemn you.”

Please take one moment and think about those words... “Words that you use, can either acquit you or they can condemn you.” This is a very serious issue, much more than not simply being polite. The Bible teaches us that we can “ask anything in His name and it will be done for you.” His name can open doors for you, it can move the mountain like things in your path that can keep you from getting from where you are to where God wants you to be. Mark 11 tells us that “if we ask, and don’t doubt, but believe that what you say will come to pass it will be done for you...” There is power in a name, but there is exceedingly great power in the name of Jesus.

Why would God say not to take His name in vain? Because He loves you and me so much. The problem with many people is that they think they can get by with it because they say whatever they want and seemly, nothing happens. Yet, if you look at the Bible you will not go far before you run into a law God has placed in the earth and it is called: “sowing and reaping.” This is what that is, you will almost never ever reap in the same season in which you sow. Think about the farmer, all the work goes into preparing the ground, planting the seeds, watering and then it is wait until a different season for the outcome. With that in mind, take my

word for something. Using God's name in vain will affect your life. You can take that to the bank!

When we use God's name in a careless way, when we regularly call upon His name to "damn" or condemn a person, place or situation, it is my belief that we set something in motion in the spirit—something beyond our own finite understanding. There is power in the name of our God. There is power in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Do you believe that? Do you realize that demons tremble at the mention of that name? Do you believe in the authority of His voice and the authority of His name? That the eyes of the blind have been opened, that withered legs were made strong, and that even dead bodies were raised to life in that name? The Bible has many of those stories, and we have modern stories as well. The name of our Lord was intended to heal and bring life and not condemn or bring death. [Acts 4:12](#) says that "there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved." Read these passages: [Matthew 12:34](#); [Matthew 15:18](#); [Luke 6:45](#).

I have taken way too much time on this one commandment, and I have much more to say because the Bible has so much to say about it.

### **What can you do concerning this commandment?**

1. Recognize Sin and Confess it.
2. Accept His Forgiveness.
3. Practice God's Presence.

### [Psalm 130:3-4](#) NLT

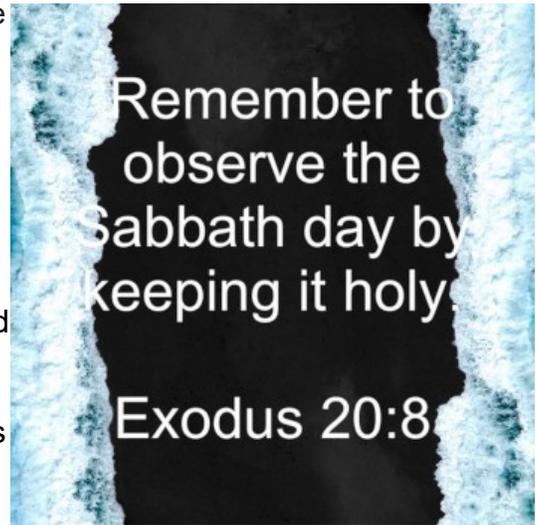
Lord, if you kept a record of our sins, who, O Lord, could ever survive? But you offer forgiveness, that we might learn to fear you.

The Bible tells us that "life and death are in the power of the tongue." It is our call to speak life and not death. Remember this one thought: Whenever you use His name make sure the words you say around it brings life. You may see the results in that exact moment, that is God's part, but our part is to reserve the use of His name properly and keep it holy.

## A Time to Rest – Part 1

When I think of the Ten Commandments, It seems to me that God would only deal with things that keeps us busy doing something to advance the kingdom of God. However, here is the fourth commandment and the message of this commandment is not to “do” but it is to rest.

Please allow me ask you a question. Are you getting enough rest? Let’s take a good look at this commandment. To put it into perspective, I think the third commandment may be one of the most broken commandments of the ten, but I think the fourth one may be the one the least confessed or repented of. Let’s see if you agree with me when this subject has been fully shared. Take a moment to read this commandment through a few times and become really familiar with it.



### [Exodus 20:8-11](#) (NLT)

“Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.”

When I was a younger pastor I found myself working way too many hours. I was living on adrenaline, there was so much to do with being a pastor of a growing church in Garland, TX as well as overseeing the youth ministry for a district, in the denomination, I served in at the time. I found myself averaging about 90+ hours of work each week To keep the church going and then travel and working also in the district office a couple of days a week, which was located completely on the opposite side of Dallas, from where I lived at the time. I loved everything I was doing. We were seeing so many great results at the time. There were many weekends I was off preaching at a youth conference or event in some part of the five state district and then flying home on Saturday evening or sometimes even Sunday morning to preach at the church. You might think, what is the problem with that? I mean, if God is blessing, kids are getting saved, filled the Spirit, and called into ministry. If the Summer and Winter camps are a success and all at the same time God was blessing our local church. We had to take down all the walls in our small church facility to get the people in there. It wasn’t because the church was huge in attendance, but it was growing pretty well, and we had the smallest church facility I had ever served at. This caused me to move my office to my house and that was one of the dumbest things I had ever done because then I just worked all the more. I would work late into the night, living on very few hours of sleep and I became hurtful to people around me, I was ashamed, yet I couldn’t seem to control my anger. I would get

down in the floor to play with my kids, but trust me, my thoughts were really on the work I had laying on my desk. It was a time of great fruit, and yet there had never been any other time in my life, since about the age of 12, that I was so hit-and-miss on my personal time with the Lord each day. I was doing it, but it was usually hurried, shallow and not very life changing.

I remember people telling me these words: "Pastor Ron, I just don't know how you do everything you do..." My response was a sly, prideful and very arrogant come back, even flippant and feigning humility. It sounded like this: "It is just the Lord!" What it was is pride, arrogance, and pretty stupid, if I may say so myself. It was during this time that I made the most mistakes in my life. Mistakes that hurt others, mistakes that made my life and walk with God questionable. I had more shadows cast over me during that season than any other time in my life. As the Psalmist put it in Psalm 23 "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow..." Yes, it goes on to say, "but you are with me..." Well, He was indeed with me, but truthfully I failed Him and the people I was serving than during that particular year. One day, I did something that I knew God was warning me not to do. I wanted to be, Jesus hands extended, but my pride allowed me to say "yes" to a question asked of me, rather than, listen to God's voice and say "no." There was danger there, but I thought to myself "I can handle it," but I couldn't, "The Spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak." It was not moral failure, or taking money, or anything like that, I just was not walking and living in the discernment that I needed to and I left my life and the lives of those I loved and served exposed to the work of the enemy. It wasn't that God wasn't showing me what I needed to see, but rather, I allowed my pride to put a question on my character. Repentance came and God opened many more doors for me to serve him all of these years. I was just 33 years old and I allowed pride to almost sink the ship I was in, but I am here to give glory to God because the enemy meant it as harm, but God showed His glory, and He deserves all the praise.

Have you ever found yourself in this situation? Now, you may not have been a pastor and had the target of judgement put on you that spiritual leaders sometimes have placed on them. However, you may have found yourself in a time or season in your life that you know your discernment level was turned down on low and the decisions you were making was leading you right down a path to distraction that could hurt you, your family, and those you deeply care about. For me, during that season, I found myself in the deepest depression, sheer exhaustion and, I had become very dense as it pertained to my life and walk with God. A lady in our church was a nurse, and she came to me one day. She expressed her concern for me about the depression and exhaustion she saw on my life. She asked if I would be open to going to a doctor she knew for a simple physical. After, "heming & hawing" around for a bit, I reluctantly agreed. She set up the appointment and when I arrived at that office on that day. There were a lot of things the doctor said to me but there were three things he said, that rocked my world.

First, he read my mail and told me everything I had been thinking on and I had been thinking about it a lot. I had never said any of it to anyone, not even Diane. Secondly, he said to me, "Ron, I will not be your friend until I know you are well." Now, believe me, that was very hard because everyone was my friend and I loved my friends. And finally the third thing was this, he made me take 6 weeks off of work and leave the state. I had to make all the arraignments to get people to preach for me, and take care of my duties and cover everything on my calendar. My whole family, and I, then, drove to California and stayed with my covenant brother and his family. That was the first time since 1979 (11 years) that I had any amount of

time that I went without preaching 3 or 4 sometimes 6 times a week.

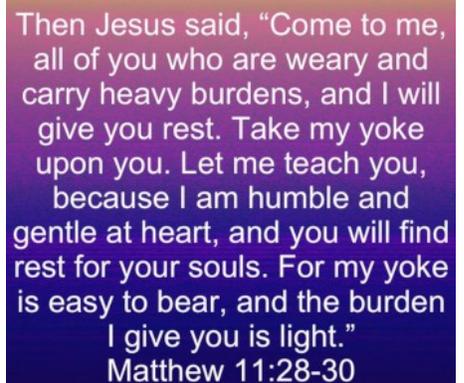
Well, what a mess! In part 2, I will tell you what happened and what I learned about this commandment during that season. This has helped me to begin to take time off and rest, play more with my boys, spend time with my wife and do some things I really enjoyed. At first, when I relaxed I felt guilty, but someone handed me a book called: "When I Relax I Feel Guilty" by Tim Hansel. It changed my life and started me on the right path. I have faced this same depression and fatigue strongly one or two other times in my ministry. The Lord willing I will try to share what I learned during the season I shared about above, helped me, to get the train back on the track and make important adjustments a little better each time. I pray you will take this journey with me and learn how to remember the Sabbath and Keep it Holy.

## A Time to Rest – Part 2

There is no denying that I and most of us have struggled with keeping the fourth commandment. Sometimes I have wondered why God even put this in the “Ten” Commandments. Think about it for a moment. God is giving us what He must consider as the ten most extremely important commandments above all the rest. These ten things were so important to Him that he literally wrote them in stone with his finger, and then hand delivered them on a mountain top. And with all of these crucial, critical things in the world he makes “remember the Sabbath Day” as number four?

[Exodus 20:8-11](#) (NLT)

“Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.”



Then Jesus said, “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light.”  
Matthew 11:28-30

Why? I mean if I was going to put them on a list of commandments it might show up on the list as number 41 or maybe number 60. I mean, I can see where it is important and all, but alongside murder, adultery and things like that? Why would the Lord make a law emphasizing rest and more than that, connect it to a day? Why does the Lord say A Sabbath rest is so important to His people? The truth is that the older I get, the more mentors and even friends that have passed away and with the disease I was diagnosed with, it seems to me that we should realize that the time is short...there is so much to do before Jesus comes. As a long term pastor, it was easy to think that way because it is God’s work after all, then maybe the Sabbath doesn’t apply to that kind of work. Let me assure you it does.

Recently, my Mentor, Don Pickerill wrote an eight-page paper concerning the Sabbath. He asked me to read it and then give him some feedback to see if it had any merit. I had to tell him that it was probably the most important paper he has ever written. The Bible mentions the word “Sabbath” 168 times. Don writes, “It is the most emphasized command and essential biblical guide.” Then he goes on to emphasize the Sabbath from Creation to then end of the Bible. I wish I had space to share the entire paper with you.

In my early pastoral ministry from 1977 to 1995 (or so) I have to admit that I resisted this fourth commandment...and I paid for that resistance. The truth is I paid a big cost. I am not trying to imply that everyone who resists this commandment will be diagnosed with a disease or be forced into a horrible back surgery or into an early retirement. The truth is, when we don’t rest properly, things begin to break. The breakdown may not be physical, it can be emotional, spiritual, financial or in your marriage. For me, when I would get to the point of

exhaustion I would usually become different from who God had made me. I have always been pretty laid back and easy going person, but when I do not honor this day or this type of rest I have had a tendency to get short with people. I hurt relationships, some I have never been able to restore and I have asked God for forgiveness but unfortunately, there have been a couple of people I haven't been able to restore the friendship. This breaks my heart. Almost every broken thing happened in my life in ministry when I didn't take the time to honor this commandment.

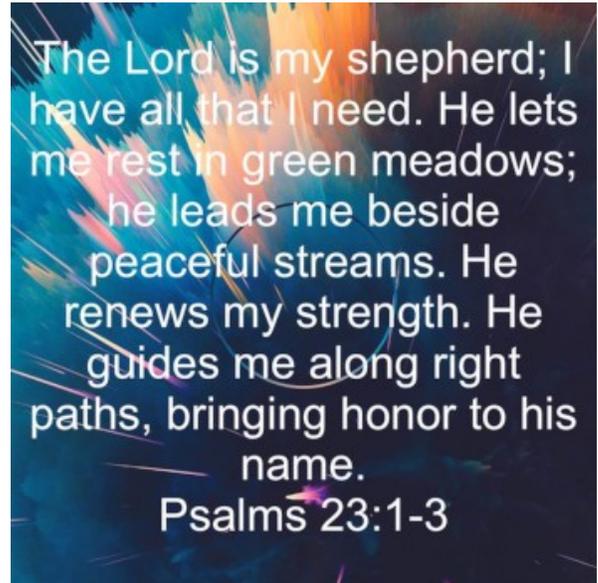
In 1995, I started taking study breaks, I would go away somewhere for a week and write sermons and be away from the office. Truth is, I still wasn't resting like God was calling me to rest. It wasn't until the last few years (besides the year of 2013-2014 after the tornado) I started taking a month off at a time during the summer. This gave me true rest. When I would come back from that month off, I was ready to tackle the world and preach, teach and counsel with a new energy until the next year. I still took the shorter study breaks as well, but the times that helped me was when I took a considerable amount of time off. Not everyone can do that, so that is why it is vital that we take the Sabbath Day and relax, enjoy your family, renew, restore and refresh in the Lord.

I would like to emphasize, that keeping the Sabbath Rest is vital in the days in which we live. However, there is a time coming, before Jesus returns, that we need to have this Sabbath Rest mastered. We will need it more than ever. If you have not learned to truly rest in the Lord, then the last days could be much more difficult for you.

In the next part, I will give you a few more things about the Sabbath rest, but I will try to give you some ideas about what to do on a Sabbath to actually be able to learn to rest in the Lord. You see, the "Sabbath Rest" is not so much just a day, it is a way to live. Blessings!

## A Time to Rest – Part 3

This morning I woke up thinking about the 23rd Psalm and in a real spirit of prayer. I say for quite a while praying and asking God for a certain miracle that I need and I'm believing for. Mostly I was focused on truly being a delight to the Lord in some areas where God was showing me I needed a new level of His Lordship in. A major part of my journey with the Lord is to try to keep my "first love" things going. To be Faithful to the Word, to be Constant in prayer, to walk Confidently in the Spirit, and to always be Aware & Ready to share the love of God wherever I can. For me, this is resting in the Lord. When I allow God to do this work in my life, I am at the most peace, and I am finding rest in being an obedient servant of the Lord. I have been a Christ follower for 57 years and I can tell you that when I am doing these first love things, in the power of the Spirit, I am at true rest.



We are looking at this fourth commandment. There is just too much to say about it in these posts. Look at it once again:

[Exodus 20:9-11](#) (NLT)

“Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.” “You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.”

Do you remember what David sang about to the Lord in the 23rd song? The part that was in my Spirit early this morning were these words:

[Psalms 23:1-3](#) NLT

“The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need.  
He lets me rest in green meadows;  
he leads me beside peaceful streams.  
He renews my strength.  
He guides me along right paths, bringing honor to his name.”

“He lets me rest in green meadows.” You see if we do not take the time rest, if we do not seek our quiet meadows and peaceful streams with our Shepherd. If we don't take the time then sometimes things will happen that causes us to have to rest. The Father provides all of the

things we need to rest, but when we press through with the pressures of time and activities to the point that we will not rest, then things begin to break down, because you see, we were made for times of rest and times for refreshing. We must learn to Re-Create.

The reference in Exodus 20 goes back to creation. It says: "You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God." I have read this over and over and there just doesn't seem to be any room to just press right through and "get r done". Because when we do, we are doing it in our own strength and I assure you that strength will not last. I am not saying that God is going to bring something bad on you, but I am saying that He has created us to have a regular kind of rest periods in our lives and when we do not obey then this "created body" we walk around in can and will begin to break. Aren't you thankful for His amazing grace?

God shows us the example: "For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy." In creation, he gave us to example of resting.

In the Old Testament, The Sabbath was from Sundown Friday to Sundown Saturday. When I was in Israel they still practice this to this day. When you go to the market area of Jerusalem on Friday it is buzzing, everyone is there, everything is out for sale. Because if you need something on Saturday you will not find it. Everything is cooked before Saturday, and everything is prepared for that day to be with family for the Sabbath activities. Mostly, it is resting from the other six days.

Well, what are we to do in modern America, when Saturdays are filled with our kids soccer games, baseball and the other million things to do to be prepared to go back to work on Monday. The truth is, many people work on the weekends and their days off are not even on Saturday. What are they supposed to do? Jesus made provision for that:

[Mark 6:30-32](#) (NLT)

"The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and taught. Then Jesus said, "Let's go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile." He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn't even have time to eat. So they left by boat for a quiet place, where they could be alone."

Jesus wanted to go off and get to a quiet place to be alone and rest with his disciples, but the crowds were so large and so many wanted ministry from Jesus. Even though, it was a time for rest, Jesus had compassion for the people and stayed and ministered to people. It was in this story that two of the greatest miracles take place. First, Jesus feeds 5000 men, as well as their families, with a little boys lunch. Secondly, just after that great miracle, Jesus came walking to the boat that the disciples were in walking on the water.

Even Jesus struggled to find time to rest while he walked on this planet. In the New Testament, grace entered into the mix, next time I will write about how under grace the Sabbath is not so much a certain day but a way of living each day in the rest of the Lord. Many may still practice the certain hours we mentioned above, but more importantly we must realize that Jesus said:

[Mark 2:27](#) (NLT)

“....“The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath.”

And

[Matthew 12:8](#) (NLT)

“For the Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath!”

Read the next part as we try to develop these thoughts. In the meantime — search for ways to rest in the Lord.

## A Time to Rest – Part 4

As I study the many things the Word of God has to say about The Sabbath rest of the Lord, I realize there is no way, even in four posts, that I can cover this incredible subject.

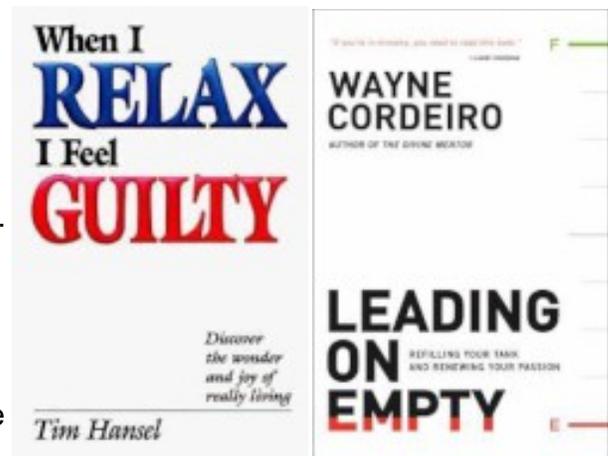
([Exodus 20:8-11](#) NLT)

“Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.”

The first three commandments have to do with our relationship with this God. O how loves us. We should put Him first. It should be our call to never allow anything or anyone to come between our time with Him. We should never put any other god's before Him or even turn to any other options. He must be first. We must carefully live to never dishonor His name, but always use His name with tenderness and speak truthfully of Him, as He speaks of us.

And the Sabbath? Maybe the Lord wants us to use this time of rest (whether it's a day, two days, or half a day) to accomplish these things. Perhaps taking this break from the pressure of the week that we have worked may we require us to just sit down, be quiet, and while no one else is around to distract us, ask yourself some questions:

- Lord, are you truly first in my life? ([Matthew 6:33](#))
- Lord, is there anything standing between you and me, that I must work on? ([Psalm 139:23-24](#))
- Lord, when I am in trouble, facing hardships and difficult issues, who do I turn to you? ([Psalm 121:1-2](#))
- Lord when I'm lonely and bored and feeling empty, are you the One I seek? ([Hebrews 11:6](#))
- Lord, could it be that I have subtly created some other gods and images that somehow satisfy me or fulfill my needs? ([Philippians 4:19](#))
- Lord, have I been guilty of dishonoring your name this week, or have I not



honored the weightiness (glory) of your name? ([Psalm 79:9](#))

— Lord, is there any chance that I love You less today than I did last week—or last year? ([Revelation 2:4](#))

— Lord, please “search my heart, O Lord! ([Psalm 73:26](#), [Psalm 139:23-24](#))

No matter where we are in life, whether we are given over to being a workaholic, or involved in non-stop activities, we must not give in to these temptations. Overwork is applauded by some and others demand it. No matter if you determine your work schedule or a company does and you feel obligated to “press through” and test your physical limits and emotional strength, you must learn to find rest. It is God’s command. This is the only way to protect what God has invested in you.

I have a book in my library called: When I Relax I Feel Guilty by Tim Hansel. This is an older book but I recommend it to anyone who finds themselves having difficulty resting.

If you are in ministry, at any level, there is a book I recommend for you. It is titled: Leading on Empty by Wayne Corderio, This is a must read, no matter if you are loaded up with all the strength in the world, or you are truly leading on empty.

Both of these books you can order on Amazon or through the authors' ministry. Please take the time to order and read these books, but most of all, please carve out time in your week to truly rest, disconnect, recharge, and refresh, or you will find yourself on a journey to being empty and having nothing to offer anyone. How do I know this? I found myself there, and I am not proud of some things that showed out in my life during those times.

The Sabbath rest may simply be to take some time and remind ourselves...

— Of Who God is, ([Psalm 18:31](#))

— Of the terrible price He paid to redeem (buy back) us from satan’s grasp on our lives. ([1 Corinthians 6:20](#))

— Of what He has promised to accomplish in your hearts and in our lives, ([Psalm 119:123](#)) and

— Of the place He is preparing for us when all of our frantic, running around this little planet we call earth are in the rear view mirror...and we will be caught up in Him alone. ([John 14:1-3](#); [1 Thessalonians 4:17](#))

Let me end this part on the Sabbath for now (so much more to share) with a couple of small illustrations:

I read a story one time about a wife who explained to her husband this little truth. She said, if you buy a pair of shoes today and you wore them everyday they would wear out in about 6 months. However, when you buy shoes, if you will purchase two pairs, and you alternate them every other day they will last two years. When I read that I thought, what a tricky way to get her husband to buy her more shoes.

Then I read another illustration: This one was about bowling pins. The author of this story said that he was talking to a guy who ran a bowling alley in his area. This business owner told the author that every couple of weeks that they would pull out all the bowling pins from service, at this particular bowling alley anyway, to let them rest. The author asked the man if he was pulling his leg. The man said, "no, they had found that if they took the pins out of use and placed them on a shelf and replaced them with another set, it would make the pins better."

They found that if they did not take the pins out and let them rest they would lose their vitality and wouldn't bounce around as much. It seems that all of that bouncing around, flipping and knocking around, works a hardship on the pins, eventually it takes its toll. However, if they take them out and give them a week off, set them on a shelf, they will come back stronger and with more life and vitality.

I don't know if all bowling alleys go to that much trouble, but I can assure you that if rest makes shoes last longer, and resting bowling pins causes them to come back from rest with more vitality and bounce, then I am convinced that it is vital for us to do so as well.

Farmers even allow dirt to rest, because if you plant every year, year after year and do not allow for rest times in the fields, the crops will not produce as well. They even change what they plant on each field. One year they may plant corn and another year they plant beans.

I think that in Exodus 20:11 when God worked 6 days and then on the 7th he rested, He may have just been giving us a clue that creation works better that way. We may tend to forget, but these 10 commandments, especially this 4th commandments was written in stone to remind us.

([Psalm 139:1-3](#); [Psalm 103:13-14](#); [Psalm 127:1-2](#); [Psalm 139:23-24](#); [Psalm 46:10](#))

Though there a many more things I could say about keeping the sabbath day holy, but I will end this conversation here for this time. Please, keep finding ways to rest in the Lord. Not just on a certain day of the week but rather walk in the rest of the Lord at all times, making special effort to gets days off to spend with your family and eat together, both of the Word and Food! This is highly spiritual.

## The Promise and A Command – Part 1

Many years ago I met a young man who was really living a very devoted life to God. It seemed that living for Jesus came so easy for this brother. He was a devoted husband, fairly early in his marriage. He and his wife were at the hospital getting ready to have their first baby. Everything seemed to be perfect, looking on from the outside. We had prayed together asking God for a blessed delivery and that God would be with them all as this baby was to be born.

After the baby was born, there was a complication we had not anticipated, and we had not prayed about. It was a total shock when this little baby was born with a hernia. It was serious enough that the doctor felt like he needed to do a surgery to repair it right away. So, after prayer the baby was taken to surgery for this “routine surgery.” A short time after the surgery, the new repair did not hold and the hernia again broken through the wall. The baby was in great pain which caused his parents to also be in great emotional pain.

While they were doing this procedure, the second time, the young man went down to the chapel to pray. As he was seeking the Lord for his new son’s healing, the Lord reminded him that his relationship with his father had been non-existent. Back before he had come to know the Lord, he and his dad had experienced a bad separation. The young man was in rebellion against his father and God. The father did not possess the wisdom to deal with it, and because of a deep anger in his own life they had been estranged for like 5 or more years, and they had not even spoken to one another.

As the young man prayed the Lord spoke to his heart, that if he wanted to see his baby healed he needed to get this relationship with his dad healed. He called his dad, worried about how his dad might treat him since their big blow up years before. Unbeknownst to the young man, his father, also had become a devoted follower of Jesus during that season. When he made the call, he was well-received with the love of Jesus by his father. They decided to meet for breakfast at a nearby restaurant to the hospital to talk things out. God wonderfully restored their relationship as they shared, cried and prayed together in the restaurant. They didn’t care what people thought, they poured their hearts out to one another and experienced a great healing. During this talk the young man revealed to his father, that he had a brand-new grandson.

Together they walked back over to the hospital, and they went up to the room where his wife was waiting. The doctor returned and said that something had happened when they had gone in to do the repair the second time. He said I cannot explain it, except to say it is a miracle. He put some X-ray films up on the light board. On the left was a picture of where the little baby had the hernia, and a slide that showed where they had repaired it. They had taken a new X-ray before they were to go in for the second time and there was no hernia, and there was not even a scar where they had done the surgery before. The doctor was in complete awe of

“Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.  
Exodus 20:12

what only God could have done. The new mom was overjoyed, not really knowing the full extent of the prayer meeting that her husband and father-in-law had experienced. However, the father and the grandfather knew, full well, that there had been a miracle simply because this young man had begun, in those moments, to “honor his father and his mother.”

The Fifth commandment is the first commandment with a promise. We will look for it for a couple of days but here is what it says:

[Exodus 20:12](#) (NLT)

“Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”

In the 6th chapter of Ephesians we get a little more expanded understanding about this incredible commandment with a promise. I will end for today with these verses, but please, watch out for the next post or two to get the most out of this command, as we see why it is vital that we get relationships with our parents healed and learn to truly honor them.

[Ephesians 6: 1-4](#) (NLT)

“Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do. “Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.” Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger by the way you treat them. Rather, bring them up with the discipline and instruction that comes from the Lord.”

Until the next part, Be blessed!

## The Promise and A Command – Part 2

In the last part I shared a story about a miracle that happened in a little baby boy that was brought on just simply by the restoration of a relationship through the power of forgiveness between the boys dad and grandfather. The thing with miracles are, that they are not necessarily an equation that works the same way every time. However, in this command we have a promise that is given by God when we simply learn to honor our parents it releases power to be prosperous, and to live a long life. By the way, my dad honored his mom and still does —He a week or two from being 92 years old, still lives on his own (with much help from my brother), cooks some for himself, and though he can't drive anymore, he can get in my car, and we can go out to eat together. He likes that!



If you were to write out the Ten Commandments on a sheet of paper evenly spaced, and then folded that piece of paper in half the fifth commandment would most likely be right at the fold of the paper. The interesting this is that the fifth commandment seems to live right in the fold of our life as well. In many ways the outcome of our lives depends on how we respond to this command.

### [Exodus 20:12](#) (NLT)

“Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”

This commandment is simply put, but living it out in our lives is very difficult to some of us. In many ways our future is affected deeply by the way we process our past. Many families just will not go there.

Many years ago, I met a family who came to my counseling office because their lives, as a family were just falling apart. I took about 90 minutes and allowed them to talk about their issues with each other. A good portion of it became very heated and some things were pretty hurtful. This family each day were failing to simply keep this commandment. At the end of their 90 minutes of stating their case, and believe me they could have filled a lot more minutes, but I stopped them. One of the more out spoken adult children asked me. “Well you are the pastor and a man of God, so what is the answer?” I allowed the words to that question to just kind of ring out until silence came in the room. All eyes were on me, waiting for my answer to that poignant question. I let it sit silent in the room as I could see their heads kind of bow down waiting for the answer, braced for me to say, “it is your fault to one or more of them.” I simply said, “you as a family have completely shattered the fifth commandment.” I could see them trying to figure that out. After a moment or two of silence and trying to figure out what I was talking about, the same adult as before, strongly asked— “Well, tell us what is the fifth commandment is?” Everyone again looked at me waiting for the answer, looking for a

way to blame whatever I said on another person in the family. I just quietly read the fifth commandment as it is stated above.

You see, this family had a business they owned together. Some years before they had broken apart over what I came to find out was about \$37.00. They each thought their parents had “cooked the books.” In some way to cover it. They became suspicious of their parents, who had always done the bookkeeping for the family business, and they began to think that “if they did that here then they must have been skimming off money from the years before.” Part of the family wanted to just forget it, if that was true, because after all it was their parents. And the others demanded to check the books for many years, so they could just see how much their parents had “stolen” from the business.

This whole family was a part of the church, and each Sunday part of the family parked on one side of the building and came in one set of doors and the rest of the family parked on the other side of the building and came in, and they all sat on different sides of the sanctuary. I thought it odd but I hadn't been at the church for very long.

Now, Let me tell you the first part of the story that caused this meeting above to come to pass.

In the family they had a sick little boy. I think he was about 6 or 7. When they brought him to church one day, they brought him forward when I asked If there were any sick among us to come for prayer. Now, this family, was connected to a certain kind of teaching and felt that it was a lack of faith to go to the doctor, but they did believe in bringing him to the pastor for prayer. When I knelt down in front of this little boy, family from both sides of the church came to pray for him. I laid my hands on the little boy's stomach. It was as hard as a rock. No matter how I touched him on his belly, it was just hard. I prayed for him and it seemed like nothing happened. Everyone returned to their seats determined to believe God for a miracle. However, I knew something serious was wrong though I hadn't heard their story yet.

I had been scheduled for a physical the next day and I asked the doctor about the boy and what could be wrong. He said, “I cannot diagnose the boy without him being here, but he said, listen to me right now, you need to get that boy to a doctor and like yesterday.” That was why the meeting above had happened. I had called the entire family together, because I had been told about the problem concerning their business. At the end of the meeting above, I told them to get that boy to the doctor. So, they did it, reluctantly, but they did it. The doctor they took him to, made an emergency appointment to the closest Children's Hospital. They took him there, and he was diagnosed with cancer. They needed to operate immediately. The family asked if they could schedule it for Monday, but they needed to take this boy back to be prayed for by their pastor, nothing like a little pressure. They reluctantly allowed the boy to have a weekend pass, but the surgery was scheduled for Monday morning to try to remove the large tumor. He had to be back by Sunday afternoon. The doctors were sure that they could get it all if they did surgery.

That Sunday morning, the family asked me if I could pray for the little boy during the service. This family realized they needed a miracle, and after they had returned home for that weekend, they had come together, unbeknownst, to me and had repented and asked for forgiveness from their parents and everyone extended forgiveness to one another. So, again I knelt down in front of this little boys diagnosed with cancer. It had only been one week since I had prayed for him the first time. However, this time, the whole family had come to church together. They came in the same door, and they sat together as a family. They came forward

as a family. As I prayed—I was laying hands on this boy’s hard bulging stomach. I rebuked that cancer and told it to get out, in the name of Jesus. I was bold in my prayer but I also knew this was a very serious situation. As I prayed, the little boy’s stomach went soft, and the hardness was gone immediately.

The next day, I had travelled with the family to the same Children’s Hospital. The parents asked the doctor to reexamine him, the doctor was reluctant, because of the surgery schedule. The family said, we want another CAT scan (I think it was) and when the doctor came back in, he was a little pale, and had big question marks in his eyes. He said, are you sure this is the same child you had here on Friday? They said it was, and he put some film up for them to see, the Friday scans and then the Monday scans. What happened? This family began to keep this 5th commandment at the fold of their life.

Jesus is our Healer. This commandment has a promise, which I will write about in the next part as well as I will write about how you honor your parents, especially if they are seemingly dishonorable? Begin today— Honor your parents, this is the first commandment with a promise....

#### [Ephesians 6:2-3](#) NLT

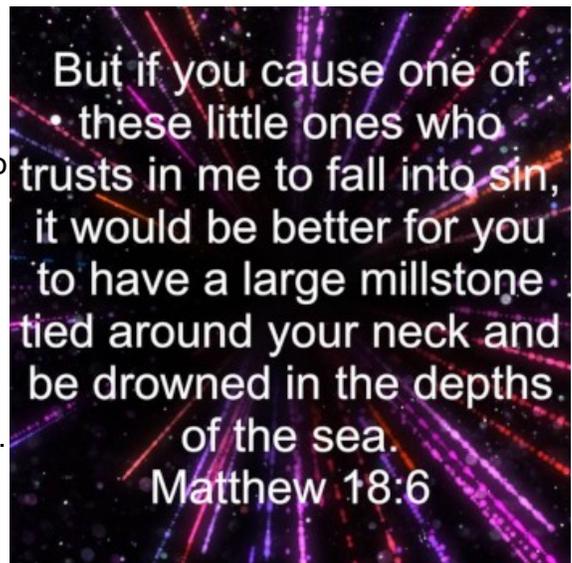
“Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.”

Come on—Start Today!

## The Promise and A Command – Part 3

Why should we honor our father and mother? The answer is so that we might live. So, that we might not be weighted down or taken captive by bitterness. So, that we might not come to destruction. So, that we might live. So, that we might enjoy God's good gifts to us through the days of our lives.

It seems the Father is asking: "Would you do this? Would you honor the father and mother that I gave you? And if you do, things will be well for you. If you are careful to do this, I will honor your life. I will bless your life, and I will extend your life. Simply, because I love you, however you must hear the warning as well. If you violate this commandment it will affect the entire fabric of your life/.



Well, the next question we must ask ourselves is:

How should I honor my parents? Many people must be able to get by the "why" before we can get to the "how." Why should we honor our parents? In our modern society we have to recognize that many people have had to experience the difficult task of living without their dad present in their life. This pain shows up weekly in my counseling office. No, it is not the thing someone comes in to talk about but it isn't long before they are talking about living without their dad present in their life. He wasn't there to play catch with the ball. He wasn't there to watch his little son or daughter's soccer games. He wasn't there to encourage or comfort the child when it was needed. Many children walk through life without the presence of a dad, no wonder so many struggle with understanding how to walk and recognize how to have a relationship with the Father.

Paul's words to the Thessalonians are sometime hard for a fatherless child to understand, in fact, it sometimes brings pain when they read:

[1 Thessalonians 2:11-12](#) (NLT)

"And you know that we treated each of you as a father treats his own children. We pleaded with you, encouraged you, and urged you to live your lives in a way that God would consider worthy. For he called you to share in his Kingdom and glory."

We all long for a dad who is present. Not only physically in the room but a dad who is truly connected and involved in our lives. We long for a father who will encourage us and comfort us. A dad who will urge us to reach the highest and best in our life. When that is missing, it hurts, it aches. There is no denying.

Last weekend Diane and I went to watch our grandson compete in his gymnastics meet. It was such a joy to watch him do well on his different events. At the end he received quite a few medals and awards. The thing that lifted my heart the most is watching his parents, especially his dad encourage him. They have a special sound they make to let Landon know they are watching and are there with him. I loved watching him compete, but what stood out to me the

most was when Landon would realize that we were all watching and would cheer him on to do his best. I watched other families as well as they encouraged their sons on to do well.

As important as that is to have a dad like that. I have learned that the one thing better than having an involved, and encouraging dad is to be a dad. My dad didn't go to watch me do my sports when I was a child. My parents were married 61 years before my mom moved to be with Jesus, but being the youngest of 5 kids made them not be all that interested in my sports. They never saw me play baseball as a young child, they didn't watch me play football in Jr. High. They didn't attend my wrestling matches in High School. In College, I played soccer, but they lived too far away to come. My mom and dad finally came and watched me play indoor soccer when they came to visit us here in Oklahoma City. I was in my late 30s at that point, to my knowledge that is the only time they ever watched me play a sport.

I made a decision to be there to watch my boys play. I was a proud dad as my boys played basketball, soccer, football, and I was even there when my son played tennis. I coached my oldest son's soccer teams for many years. I was right there with him. I tried to do everything with my younger son's soccer teams as much as I could. I would go to their practices when I could to be a trainer and when his coach had to miss games from time to time I would go and coach his games. I wanted to be right on the front line. Though I have missed a few games of my grandkids, I try to make it to all of them as well. I want them to know that their grandpa is there for them. I encourage each of you to be just as involved in their lives as possible. We can teach them about honor, by helping them honor others. This is where they will get some ideas about how to honor you.

You may be reading this and thinking that you do not have the kinds of parents that deserve to be honored. The command in [Exodus 20:12](#) and [Ephesians 6:2-3](#) is a command for all of us to keep. It is the command that has a promise with it.

#### [Ephesians 6:2-3](#) (NLT)

“Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.”

This command is for all of us no matter what has happened in our past. I love my mom and dad. They are at the time of the list for me. Did they do everything right and were they always there for me? No, but they are my parents. God gave them to me and I honor them. Even when my mom moved from this life to be with Jesus it was her wish that I preach her funeral. That was very hard, but God was able to help me through it. My dad is almost 92, and He is still living because, he was, a man who honored his mom. His dad died when he was just a little boy, but I can assure you that my dad, honored his mom no matter what happened. He, too, has asked me to preach his funeral when it is time. That is the highest honor, but a very hard one to pull off.

You see, God is not as interested what has happened in our past, He is more interested in our right now. He wants to change our hearts today, not tomorrow. He wants to walk with us and fellowship with us right now, not later on, after we “get things straightened out.” He wants to teach us and bless us right now. Not in some mythical future day when we are “more prepared,” or “have our act together.”

He wants to protect us from destructive thinking and attitudes, right now, at this moment. If we

allow him access to our heart, He will help us settle this matter of honoring our parents. We can be different people, a better son or daughter who forgives freely from our heart. We can be better parents to our children—an honorable parent—A parent that is free from bitterness. A parent and a child that our Heavenly Father can bless, and we can be used by God in amazing ways.

God doesn't ignore the pain that parents sometimes inflict on their children. He places a great value on the home, and he holds parents responsible for the way they parented their children. Jesus even said how this might come about:

[Matthew 18:6](#) (NLT)

“But if you cause one of these little ones who trusts in me to fall into sin, it would be better for you to have a large millstone tied around your neck and be drowned in the depths of the sea.”

The Lord notices the great pain children have had to live with. He takes it very seriously. He knows when a person is abused or neglected at home. Even though God knows all of this, He still teaches us to “honor your father and mother.” So, how are we to do that? Simply by loving them. In my last post about this commandment I will try to share how you can love your parents, even when they have acted out and have been unlovable. To honor them, even when they have been dishonorable. We will take up that question in the next post. Be Blessed!

## The Promise and A Command – Part 4

I guess I should begin by saying, I am sorry for these posts being so long, but I am finding that when you really break down these commandments it is overwhelmingly helpful to truly know how to live life, not just by keeping a list of rules, but by recognizing that the Father, loves his kids, and He longs to give us some practical ideas on how to live out the love of God in the earth in which we live. I pray this has been a help to you so far.

Today, I will write the last post on this 5th commandment. You will find it at:

[Exodus 20:12](#) (NLT)

“Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”



This is the first commandment with a promise, [Ephesians 6:2-3](#), which we have already shared about in other posts which you can find on my page.

Let me end this discussion about this 5th commandment by giving you the “how to’s” of honoring your mom and your dad. This is where the rubber meets the road, as they say. How do you honor your mom and dad? Simply put, you honor them by loving them. To truly love someone is best spelled T—I—M—E. You truly love someone when you spend time with that person. In doing so, you put them high on your list of “Things to do!” Each day, even since I have been retired, I start my day by taking out my legal pad and I write at the top of the page, in all caps — THINGS TO ACCOMPLISH!! — The things that make it on this list are the very important things I plan to accomplish in my day.

On a pretty regular basis, if you were to see my "THINGS TO ACCOMPLISH Page", you would see on the first or second line these words: “Call Dad!” Now, I write it down because my day can get crazy at times and I do not want to forget to call my dad. I know his day, I know the schedule of the Western’s he watches, many times, through his closed eyes. I know that there is a time when the Western’s are over for the day, and there is a couple of episodes of Andy Griffith, but after that the news shows begin. I try to call my dad, if at all possible, during Andy Griffith, because of the shows he watches, those two episodes are the least important. He doesn’t like to miss the news (local and national) Now, I can call my dad just about anytime, but to honor him. I try to call at the best time for him.

There are a couple of other notes to call certain people in my life people like my Mentor — Don Pickerill, my Covenant Brother—Jeff Miller. My partner and very close friend who helps me in ministry, my co-laborer in the faith — Johnny Fowler. Another person, I usually text is my very close friend and brother in the Lord — Gregg Johnson. And there are others, as well. The reason I write it down at the top of my list is because I want to honor these people in my life, and they are almost always right at the top of my list.

You might think to yourself, “I really don’t care to spend time with my parents. I think they love making me feel miserable.” That may be. Honoring them, by your presence, or your phone call, may be difficult for some who are reading this. There are others, who have lost their parents already and would give anything to get to call them or go see them. My dad lives about 2 or 2 1/2 hours from me. I try on a regular basis to go there and see him too. The thing is, that no matter how hard you may find it, to go and spend time with your parents or to call them up on the phone, let me tell you very candidly, you and I must obey the Lord’s command.

**Jesus said:**

[John 14:15](#) (NLT).

“If you love me, obey my commandments.”

[John 15:10](#) (NLT).

“When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father’s commandments and remain in his love.”

I want to tell you, I love calling my dad. He is so funny, if the truth would be known, we say just about the same thing every time we talk. But, I can feel the smile on his face when I call. When I go there to see him, I can see that smile on his face. It means the world to him and to me. My dad will be 92 years old on March 6th. He still lives in an apartment alone. One of my brothers, lives very close to him and is over there a lot. I am thankful for my brother Bob, who takes care of our dad, his money, his medications, everything. He has helped my dad maintain his dignity and live his life out the way that is best for my dad. He and his wife Carol have made major sacrifices for their parents. I honor them today, they may not see this, but I am so thankful for how they have cared for my dad.

My dad didn’t do everything perfect as we were growing up. He didn’t have a good model, His dad died when he was 5 or 6. My dad, has shown all of our family how to honor parents, by the way he honored his mom. Even though things were not perfect in the Isam household, he is my dad. I would do anything in this world for him at the drop of the hat, just because he is my dad. I felt the same way about my mom before she moved to be with Jesus.

That is the best reason I can think of for obeying the Ten Commandments. I want to “remain in His love.” I don’t want to live or remain in any others place for any other reason. For me, life means walking and talking and ministering while I’m being swept along in the main current of His love. And that means I need to obey, even when the obeying is difficult or just the same ole, same ole, day in and day out.

I have clients that come to my counseling office, that really struggle with their parents. Some clients are young, some are older. They swear they do not want to be like their parents, but no matter how hard they try NOT to be like their parents, they seem to come out almost exactly like them. I have read that 80% of what a child does comes from his father. That is scary for me if I am being honest. But, let me make it clear, our kids learn how to honor us, by the way we honor our parents. How we talk to them or about them.

I have not heard my dad say the words “I love you” during my life. I had not witnessed my

mom and dad kiss until I was honored to do a renewal of vows ceremony on their 50th Wedding Anniversary and when I got to the part, where I said “You may now kiss your bride,” my dad and mom kissed in front of me. That made me happy. Now, I am pretty sure they did kiss at some point, because they had 5 kids, at least they did something.

I am the youngest child in my family, so by the time I came around, a lot of that was kind of left by the wayside, but I can assure you: I know my dad loved my mom and I know he loves his kids. He may not have said it with his words, but, He went to work every day. He was so faithful to his work, that when he had a stroke and had to go on short-term disability, he had enough personal holidays, that he hadn't used, to pay his full salary until long term disability kicked in. My dad worked for Sears for 36 years refinishing furniture. He taught me how to do that skill. He may not have watched my sports, but he helped me know how to prepare a piece of furniture and stain it and make it look good. I learned that by spending time with my dad. All of my siblings and I learned something very valuable from our dad, and that is we each have a very strong work ethic, just like our dad.

When my boys have asked me what I want for my birthday, or Father's Day, I always say the same thing. I want to spend time with you. I love being with my boys. They are pretty busy with work, honoring their marriage and raising their kids, but when the three of us get to go somewhere or watch a game together or something like that, it means the world to me. There is nothing that they could ever buy for me, that would come close to the value of them carving out a couple of hours to spend with me. As we build the generations we need to pass on this important value. So, that each generation honors their parents better than the generation before them.

Bottom line: There are a lot of ways to express our love and honor for our parents. However, the truth is, you really cannot say you love someone without being willing to give up something for them. Time and Energy are two of our most precious commodities...but then, sometimes we're rewarded for that sacrifice in ways we never expected. I will tell you one more thing. No matter how old I get, I may one day be very old and unable to get around and my boys may have to take care of me, but I can tell you this. I never get tired of hearing my boys saying, “Dad, I love you!” No matter if it is in person, or on a text. By the way, the next generation, my grandkids tell their PAPA that they love me too. I never get tired of hearing those wonderful words, “PaPa, I love you.”

Take time to call your mom or dad (both) and say “I love you”. Call your kids and tell them “I love you.” It is ok you even say “Dad, Mom, I honor you!” Or “Son or Daughter — “I honor you!” If you have not done it in the past —Start Today!

## Eradicating the Seeds of Murder – Part 1

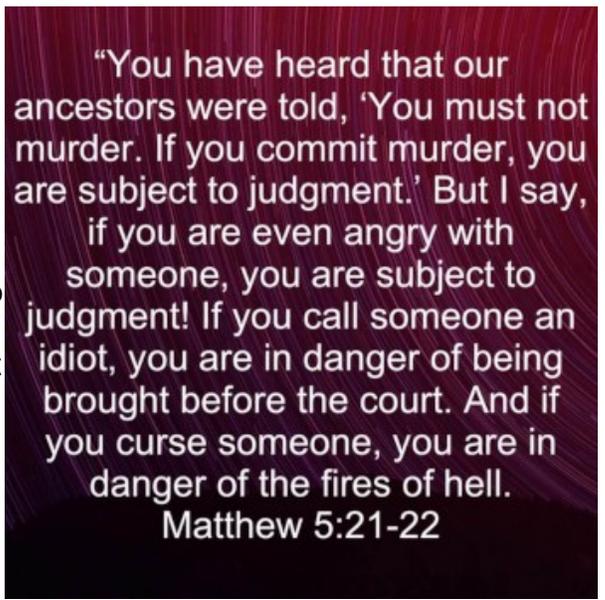
As we come to the next commandments we move into how we treat others. I would think that most of those who might actually stop and read these posts are not contemplating murder right now. I am not saying that it may have never entered your mind, but taking all things into account, most of us do not carry a physical seed of murder in our heart.

The truth is, that Satan, has always sought a way to get a foothold in our lives. God knows full well how depraved the human race has become. I mean, just watch a news cast, or read a newspaper and you will begin to realize that doctors, who have taken the oath, to save lives are now taking lives. Whether it is by the alleged drunk 47 year old doctor who left his post at a heart hospital, had a bunch of drinks, and drove his car up over 100 miles (160.93 km) an hour, slowing down all the way to 65, before rear-ending a 31-year-old young man on a motorcycle and then tried to drive away, wrecking and then ran away before being caught by the police. This doctor is now facing first-degree manslaughter charges, DUI and other criminal charges. Truth is one life was taken and another ruined because of a decision. If it isn't that, we have doctor in our country who take no thought of taking the lives of the unborn babies through abortion.

Just a couple of weeks ago, a very distraught dad, took a corner by a local high school in our city, at a very high rate of speed. He was impaired as well, he hit a parked car and then went across the street at like 70 miles (112.65 km) an hour hitting 6 high school students who were out running preparing for their track season. Three of those high school students died that week. Others were injured physically and a lot more were injured mentally as they watched this man's truck run down their fellow students.

I doubt that, either the doctor I wrote about first, or the distraught dad, who had lost his son in a car accident the week before, who hit the students, woke up the day of their accidents and thought, you know I think I will go out and murder someone today, but unfortunately, that is what happened. You and I react to stories like this with shock when we hear about or experience these kinds of things in our communities, or see them on the nightly news. But, let me say, that none of it is "news" to Him. He knew the morning news last night. He knew it 10,000 years ago. He knows what the headlines will be tomorrow. He has always known.

From the moment God came walking in the garden the day he asked Adam "Where are you?" He wasn't asking his location, He was asking him where he was in terms of his relationship to the Father. There was a time, just 9 chapters into the written Word, when the human race had descended so deep that God was sorry He ever created mankind. It was then that God plucked one godly family out of the mess the world had become and sent a worldwide flood that would wash the planet clean and begin again.



"You have heard that our ancestors were told, 'You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.' But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.  
Matthew 5:21-22

The problem is, that when the evil man's heart goes unchecked, God knows that men and women will simply destroy themselves. He knows all too well the seeds of murder that grow in the human heart. If it were not for His intervening grace and restraining hand, man could very well have eliminated himself from the world and ended his own history—Probably a very long time ago.

Yet, in God's great love He has not let that happen. That is why when He met with Moses on the mountain before the eyes of the watching nation, He included these four weighty words among the Ten Commandments.

[Exodus 20:13](#) (NLT)

“You must not murder.”

Are we approaching, another time in history, like it was in the days of Noah? “When the Son of Man returns, it will be like it was in Noah's day.” [Matthew 24:37](#) NLT.

By the time a child grows up in America, he or she will have views tens of thousands of murders and acts of violence on television and the movies. If that wasn't enough, we can now “act out” violent inclinations with a video game or on a computer screen. There are games where the player gains points, for instance, for running over pedestrians—including little old ladies on walkers. Good fun, huh? When this game, I am referring to first came out, each person in the two stories I told about above, the doctor and the distraught father, they would have been the age to play those games when they were young. Another game that came out, way back then was called “Postal.” It was a game where berserk postal employees, get points for killing innocent bystanders, including women and children. You could actually “listen to the victims moan and beg for mercy.” The website that promoted this game had these words: “Execute them if they get on your nerves.”

Those games are old and out of date now, but I don't have the nerve to write about the modern games. When it comes to violence and killing, our culture seems to shrug and say, “That's just the way it is.” What causes students to go into their schools and gun down fellow students? What causes people to invade one of the most sacred places we have on earth, the church sanctuary and kill people as they worship. What makes a young man walk into a movie theater in Colorado and begin to just kill people who are sitting there watching a movie? What makes a mom in Florida push her own eighteen month-old son out of the window of a speeding car onto the median of the highway?

We live in an angry world, and I am here to tell you that we are living in a time when drive by shootings are in the news in our country nearly every day. Now you may be saying; “Pastor Ron, I have never murdered anyone. And for that matter, I've never committed adultery either, so why am I wasting my time reading about this stuff?”

Before you check out on me, Look at the Lord's words in Matthew 5 for a moment. It seems that many, in His day, had read these commandments and were inclined to check out, too. But Jesus caught them (and us) up short when He said these words:

[Matthew 5:21-22](#) (NLT)

“You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’ But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in

danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.”

In the next part, I will share what this passage means, so keep looking to see how this applies to our lives in 2020. Be Blessed!

## Eradicating the Seeds of Murder – Part 2

In our last post we ended with the passage of Scripture we will begin with in this post. However, just before that let me remind you what we are discussing from [Exodus 20:13](#) (NLT) where God gives us this very simple but sometimes not fully understood commandment. “You must not murder.” Most of us do not wake up on any given morning with the thought “I think I will go out and murder someone today.” That would be a completely absurd thought, for most of us in this world, though we know there are some exceptions.

That doesn't mean that many people do not carry the seeds of murder in their daily life. For most, it wouldn't be a thought to take someone's life, but Jesus makes it clear in the New Testament how these seeds can live even among the people of God at times.

Look at this passage we shared last post:

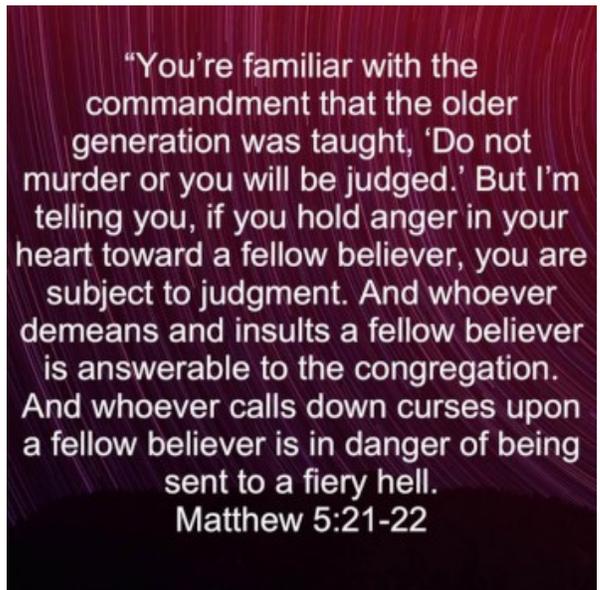
[Matthew 5:21-22](#) (NLT)

“You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’ But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.”

Well, what is the meaning of this strange passage?

First, Jesus refers to the commandment to not murder found in [Exodus 20:13](#). However, Jesus uses very powerful vocabulary here. He says, you have heard this commandment from your ancestors, to not murder. Then He says: “But I say!” By using those words, He is not contradicting the original commandment, but rather, he is bringing out the meaning of how it is to be applied in the New Covenant. Jesus said: “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” So, if we love Jesus, we will do our best to not only keep, murder out of our actions, but hear how Jesus calls us to keep the seeds of murder also, out of attitudes toward others. The “anger” referred to in this passage leads us to judgment. It doesn't matter if it is the taking of a physical life or taking someone hostage with our attitudes, we open ourselves up to judgment.

The second part of this passage in Matthew 5 is that Jesus said, “But I say!” “If you are even angry with someone,” you are subject to the same judgment as that of murder. Wow! Jesus really intensifies the playing field here. This moves the commandment from applying only to those who might take another person's physical life, but it equally applies to someone who is angry, (with no real cause). This is true because in these passages found here in the great



“You're familiar with the commandment that the older generation was taught, 'Do not murder or you will be judged.' But I'm telling you, if you hold anger in your heart toward a fellow believer, you are subject to judgment. And whoever demeans and insults a fellow believer is answerable to the congregation. And whoever calls down curses upon a fellow believer is in danger of being sent to a fiery hell.  
Matthew 5:21-22

“Sermon on the Mount” found in Matthew 5-7 - Jesus helps us realize that to Him, it not just our actions that brings judgment, but He wants to deal with it while it is still seeds in our attitude so that it never becomes our reality.

This word “judgment” is the word *Kristis* (kree-sis) which is similar to our English word for crisis. This word carries the idea of a separating, the process of distinguishing and selecting. It would be referring to the separating of the “sheep’s and the goat’s” in the divine judgment. To be under judgment would separate us from God. Aren’t you glad for the atoning work of Jesus Christ, and the truth that believers can stand before a holy God with absolutely “No Condemnation?” [Romans 8:1](#)

Jesus extends this seed of murder beyond the action, but includes the “thoughts” and the “words” of unrighteous anger and destructive insults. This is what he says in verse 22: “If you call someone an ‘idiot,’ (Raca) you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.”

This word translated here as “idiot” is a very interesting word. First, it shows contempt for someone’s mind. The translation is literally is like calling someone a “blockhead,” “Empty head” or “stupid or “fool.” This is communicating your judgment of them and that this person doesn’t even deserve to be alive. It would be like you saying “I don’t want to have anything to do with that person.” To even take it a little deeper it would like saying about this person, “As far as I am concerned, he’s dead...and honestly, I wouldn’t mind pushing him over the edge.” This is murder in the heart, even if you do not take their physical life, if you so demean someone and use your influence to get others to feel the same way about a person you are walking in true judgment of another. This level of contempt would make you subject to being brought before the court or the congregation.

Jesus goes on to describe another level of contempt which is when we “curse someone, then we are in danger of the fires of hell.” To “curse” someone expresses a contempt for another part of a person's personality, it is contempt of person’s character. This word “fires of hell” is the word for “Gehenna.” (One of the levels of hell) It refers to a place called “the valley of Hinnon. This valley, in the New Testament times, was a ravine south of Jerusalem where refuse was burned and where human sacrifices were offered to the god “Molech. (see [2 Kings 23:10](#)) It was mostly likely symbolic of the fires of judgment of eternal punishment. (Refers to [Matthew 5:28-30](#)) Just imagine the stench of burning trash and human flesh, that is what we can smell like if we practice cursing others that Jesus loves. I would much rather be described as a “sweet smelling” sacrifice before God.

When you look at these different places of contempt toward another person it represents, “murder in the heart.” That is where it all starts. How then does this 6th commandment reflect the love of God? How does “do not commit murder” show the compassion of a loving God? It is because God knows that if we as believers, love Him with all of our hearts and put Him first in our lives, then we would never injure someone on purpose. It will not be in our heart to offend, slander, hurt, humiliate, destroy, or write anyone off. Instead, a person with the heart of the Father active in them, will have their heart toward men, women and children.

Well, gotta ask one more question: What about the blind, empty-headed fools of this world? What about those who have made themselves my enemy? I am called to love them. Just the same way God loved me so much and sent His only Son to die on the cross on my behalf, not when I got my act together, but right while I was a fool, and blind and had made myself an

enemy of God. You see God knows us, He created us, and He knows how we tick. When His love is so gushing through our lives and washing away all the residual junk out of our lives, we cannot help but be a loving person toward those “for whom Christ died.” It might not be exactly what Jesus said in this passage but it is close:

[Romans 5:5](#) NLT

“And this hope will not lead to disappointment. For we know how dearly God loves us, because he has given us the Holy Spirit to fill our hearts with his love.”

[Romans 15:13](#) NLT

“I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.”

We will take a look at another angle of this commandment in the next part. Keep your eye open for it. Blessings!

## Eradicating the Seeds of Murder – Part 3

For us to be able to get rid of any seeds of murder that tries to creep into our heart we must recognize and deal with the source of those seeds. What is the source? Anger.

According to what Jesus shares in [Matthew 5:21-22](#) the source of murder is not a weapon, it is not a bad experience, as much as it is simply just allowing anger to brew around in your heart. The other thing that we notice in this Sermon on the Mount is that not only do people get, and sometimes stay angry, but they also allow that anger to remove, or to at least, affect the filters on their mouth. You see, anger, in, of and by itself is not the problem. Jesus got angry. He got angry at the money changers in the temple and ran them out. He got angry with a fig tree that looked fruitful but when push came to shove, the fruit was just not there. He also got angry at mourners at Lazarus tomb, as well as the death of some other people. Again, it looked like they were filled with emotion, but truthfully, they may have been paid mourners. So, they weren't really mourning a loss, but they just tried to look like they were sad. Jesus seems to not be very happy with people who looked like they should be fruitful but underneath, there was just simply not fruitfulness.

To eradicate the seeds of murder, we must recognize what Jesus meant when he said:

[Matthew 12:34](#) (TPT)

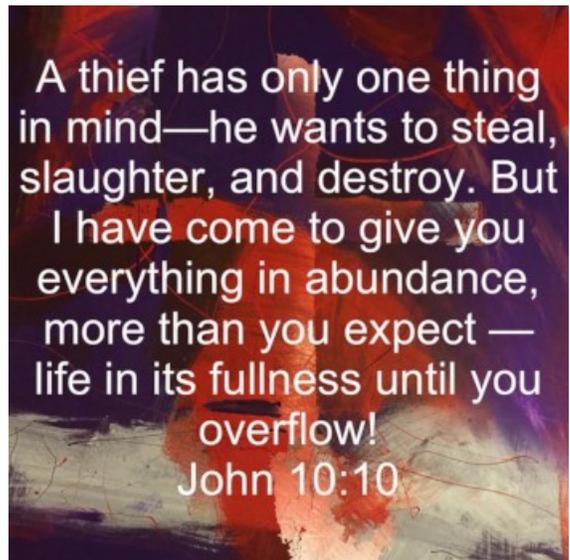
“But you who are known as the Pharisees are rotten to the core! You’ve been poisoned by the nature of a venomous snake. How can your words be good and trustworthy if you are rotten within? For what has been stored up in your hearts will be heard in the overflow of your words!”

It is simple, you cannot say good words out of a mouth that is connected to an ugly heart. The Proverbs writer said it this way:

[Proverbs 15:28](#)

“The heart of the godly thinks carefully before speaking; the mouth of the wicked overflows with evil words.”

My wife, Diane, tells a story about a time when she said something disrespectful toward her mother. Her mom, reached out and popped her on the mouth. I think Diane was a little stunned, but her mom said, “Why should your bottom get in trouble for something your mouth did?’ Well, I am not sure if she had a point or not, but one thing I do know, and that is, if it were possible what really needed to get the punishment was her heart, not her mouth or her bottom.



Parents and grandparents, let me encourage you, when it comes to what is coming out of that child's mouth "punishment" to, any part of the body, is not what is needed. What is truly needed is "discipline." There is a world of difference between the word "punishment" and the word "discipline." Punishment is given for something done wrong, but if you want a heart to change, parents, we must set up discipleship training in our home. You can punish an angry mouth until you are blue in the face, but the true way to deal with an angry mouth, is to disciple your child to really experience God personally. To help them experience a true heart change. What will break a murderous attitude that comes out of a person's mouth? It is to help your home become a redemptive center that it was intended to be. Let me expound on that for a moment.

In the American Church we have tried to make "church activities" especially "churches services" the place of redemption. The mindset, is usually, let's get our kids in church more, and they will find true redemption. Let me say to you, that is not biblical thinking. God ordained "the home" to be the place of redemption. He called parents and grandparents to be the disciple-makers. At the most, people in America may go to their church facility a time or two a week, though that number has been cut way down more recently. Presently, most Christians make it to the church facility a little less than once a month on average. Even if they went there every day, that would not be God's place where true redemption and transformation happens. He has ordained that to be the home and the family unit. Parents and grandparents as the true "pastoral care" ministry for your family. Now, of course, the church can help with that, even train for it, but it must happen more in the home.

I have to tell people all the time, in my office, when they are there for counseling that I do not have the opportunity to be with them in the times when God wants to do His redemptive work. The Holy Spirit has to be there to get that work done. I cannot be there to help them talk nicer to their spouse when they are fighting. I cannot be there to show them when they have said something hurtful and left a wedge between their relationship with their spouse, child or parents. We say very hurtful things in our homes and times with our families. This shouldn't be, but it is the experience of most people. Redemption and discipleship must happen in the home.

Let me give you an idea: Get some grape juice and some crackers, and when you see that you have hurt your spouse, your child or your parents with hurtful words, or you have been the one offended by someone else's words. Take the elements to them and confess your sin, your hurt, your pain and then pray and seal that with communion. Don't wait until they have communion at the church facility to do that. Don't allow those murderous words to turn into seeds for emotional and relational murder in your home. God has called us, to follow Him, to be the priests of our homes. We have to be person who graciously goes to someone when we have been hurt, or go to another person when we have been hurtful to us. This, in time, is what brings disciplines our heart and to our words. Doing this a few times is what causes us, as God's kids, to "think before we speak."

We must learn to have words that are filled with life, not death. We must have words that build up, not tear down. I don't think that there will be many people read this message, and I would think most of them have no intention of murdering anyone. However, listen to me, when you allow those hateful, hurtful, words filled with the seeds of murder to be left unchecked, you are leaving ticking bombs all around your house and the results will most definitely be explosive, destructive and murderous.

Jesus said in:

[John 10:10](#) (TPT)

“A thief has only one thing in mind—he wants to steal, slaughter, and destroy. But I have come to give you everything in abundance, more than you expect —life in its fullness until you overflow!”

Listen to me now, Jesus is coming soon and Jesus tells us that:

[Matthew 12:36](#) (NLT)

“And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak.”

May the Lord Jesus teach us to truly eradicate the seeds of murder out of our home, out of our life, out of our church, out of our work space, out of your neighborhood and especially out of our heart. Remember to think before you speak and you will have a righteous outcome. If we don't heed this word, we are leaving murderous seeds to just live and to grow throughout our life and home.

## Eradicating the Seeds of Murder – Part 4

As we come to the last part on this important commandment where God simply commands us to not murder. One of the major things that has arisen in this discussion is the issue of anger which seems to be the core emotion, when murder is committed. Now, of course, most of us who may be actually reading this post, won't ever face the need to commit a physical murder. However, there are a lot of things we can murder that has nothing to do with a human body. No matter where this spirit of murder intersects a person's life there is always some level of deep anger going on in the emotions of that person.

Why is it that we become angry in life?

Jesus told us in Matthew that if I am angry and hateful to someone, I am a murderer in my heart.

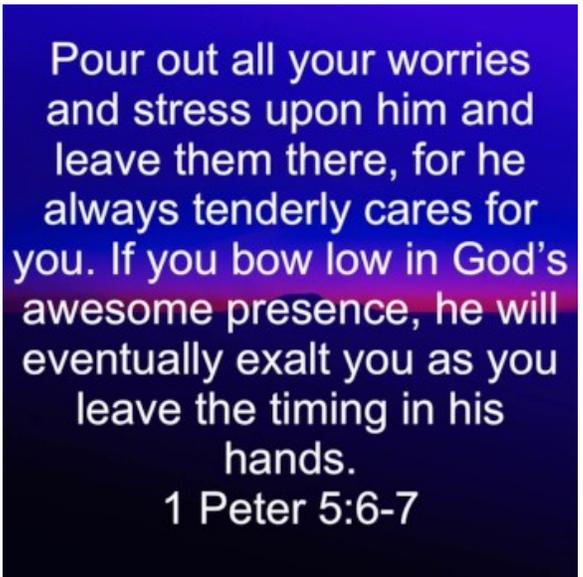
[Matthew 5:21-22](#) (TPT)

“You're familiar with the commandment that the older generation was taught, 'Do not murder or you will be judged.' But I'm telling you, if you hold anger in your heart toward a fellow believer, you are subject to judgment. And whoever demeans and insults a fellow believer is answerable to the congregation. And whoever calls down curses upon a fellow believer is in danger of being sent to a fiery hell.”

So, the questions we must ask ourselves is: How do I deal with that anger? What are the causes of anger? What do I do with them? Why do we become angry?

These are very difficult questions to have answers for, but we must, try to answer them, if we are going to be free of the seeds of murder. The reason we get angry is simple — It is because we get hurt. If you slam your thumb in the car door—someone is going to hear about it. When we get hurt or offended, we can become very frustrated and angry. It begins to simmer deep within (Just as it did with Cain), but in time it will explode if we do not find ways to eradicate the seeds of anger and hate from our heart.

The truth is, all of us have what I like to call a “gripe button.” The size of that button, located right in the center of our emotions, is determined by the ways, times and depth of the hurts or the hate we allow lurking around in our emotions. Like I have said before, anger is not really the problem. There are reasons to feel angry but when that anger is allowed to go unchecked in our heart, there will be an explosion at some point, the problem is that when it does explode most of the time it is not even the person that hurt us that we explode on. They just happen to be the person who is there at the time when the rockets go off. Way too often, this person is the one we love the most, or the one we would never hurt on purpose, but that person just happens, percentage wise, to be around a lot more often. Therefore, making them the target of our displaced anger. In most cases the thing that lights that fuse was a very small



Pour out all your worries  
and stress upon him and  
leave them there, for he  
always tenderly cares for  
you. If you bow low in God's  
awesome presence, he will  
eventually exalt you as you  
leave the timing in his  
hands.  
1 Peter 5:6-7

thing, and honestly, we cannot even remember what started it. Simply put, someone finally hit that “gripe button” when it was really loaded up and it just goes off without warning. Spewing guts and feelings and pain all over someone.

By the way, when this happens in the life of most people they don’t walk away feeling satisfied. Sometimes injuring an important relationship with a co-worker, friend, or someone very close to your heart beyond repair. That has happened to me, I will admit it, because I do not ever want it to happen again. I have one relationship that was absolutely blown into a million pieces because I went off on that person too many times. They were just there more than most other people. We were just good friends and loved one another and enjoyed serving the Lord on the same team. Let me tell you, my friends, you can’t get that back. Once you go off on someone like that they do not want to be the target of that anymore. I apologized profusely, and I think I received forgiveness, but the relationship was never been the same. Friendships are way too important to me to do that to someone I care about. However, they were just in the way when my “gripe button” got hit and no one deserves that!

God knows that anger—unchecked and unrestrained—will eventually manifest itself. And unless I deal with that, and God does something to touch me, and deliver me, I will hurt someone just because I am hurt. As we have said so many times — hurting people-hurt people. It doesn’t take much for us to become angry on certain days. We become impatient in the line at the store, or when you have a slow or uncaring waiter or waitress. We become angry because we want our “rights.” We want what we want when we want it. We tell ourselves that we “deserve” this or that.

How do we deal with this restless, impatient anger? First, we must think before we act. You just can’t imagine the importance of just a moment of thinking before allowing your reaction to express itself. If Cain, had taken a little walk or sat by a stream for 30 minutes, he would not have walked around as a marked man, and an outcast, for the rest of his life. How different his life would have been if he hadn’t called his brother out into the field that day. He would have a family to come home to at the end of a hard day of work. He would have had company at the fire in the evening. He would have had a brother at his side as they built a new world together.

But, it was all lost in a moment. James said it so simply:

[James 1:19-21](#)

“Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.”

Just taking a moment to think, to quiet your feelings, and listen to the Lord before acting out your anger. Look at couple more passages with me before ending this commandment:

[Proverbs 13:16](#) (NLT)

“Wise people think before they act; fools don’t—and even brag about their foolishness.”

In Psalm 73 Asaph, launches out with a bitter complaint to the Lord. He pulls out all the stops on his frustrations and lets all the anger drain out in God's presence. And then, after a while, he says this:

[Psalm 73:16-17](#) (NLT) (I challenge you to study this full [Psalm 73](#))

“So I tried to understand why the wicked prosper. But what a difficult task it is! Then I went into your sanctuary, O God, and I finally understood the destiny of the wicked.”

Then he ends this great Psalm with these choice words:

[Psalm 73:28](#) (NLT)

“But as for me, how good it is to be near God! I have made the Sovereign Lord my shelter, and I will tell everyone about the wonderful things you do.”

I sure wish I would have learned this lesson before going off on my friend. What do you do with your anger, frustrations and pain?

[1 Peter 5:7](#) (NLT)

“Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.”

## Why Does God Put Fences Around Our Marriage? – Part 1

We live in a world that has fallen for the biggest lie of Satan since the beginning of time. That lie is simple — “It is my life, my body and I can do with it whatever I please.” Well, you can, but I don’t encourage it. Taking your life into your own hands is very dangerous. This lie has plagued mankind all the way back to the Garden of Eden. There they were, the first married couple, living in paradise and God gave one simple command - “Don’t Eat!” Now, it wasn’t “don’t eat anything.” It was just that God commanded them to not eat of one certain tree in that beautiful and glorious garden. They could have had anything and everything except the fruit of one tree. Because God has given us, as humans, the power of free will, when someone, a society, the preacher or the policeman says: “Don’t!”

For some reason that is exactly what we want to do. God even tried to help this first couple by telling them “don’t look at it,” “don’t touch it,” but definitely “don’t eat it.” Satan provides the temptation, the lie and the opportunity turns into distraction, distance and finally destruction. The result of eating of the tree brought two things that kills marriages: “Shame” and “Blame.” These two things show up in a lot of places in marriage but no where is it so painful as when we break our marriage covenant.

As mankind went along they got so bad in their sins, that they didn’t just lose the garden, they began to live so far outside the fences that God was “sorry he ever made them.” Finally, everything had to die except, one family, a bunch of animals and a big boat. We were not created to live outside the fences or God’s boundaries because we don’t have the ability to keep ourselves from total depravity unless...JESUS! I will talk about that more later.

In the second book of the Bible we are given these 10 loving statements, boundaries or what I like to call “fences” to help us live right toward God, right toward ourselves and right toward one another.

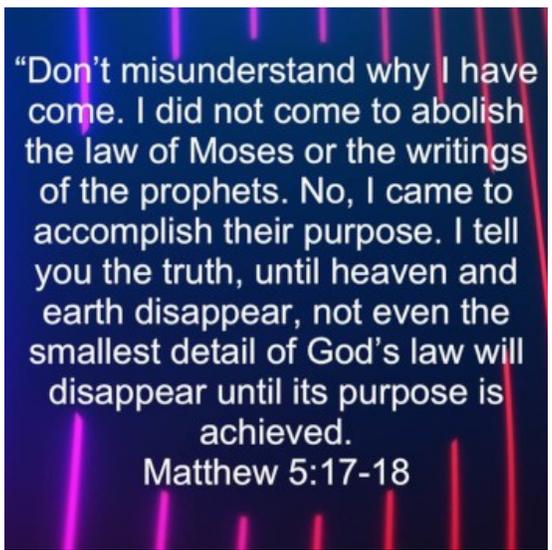
[Exodus 20:14](#) (NLT)

“You must not commit adultery.”

Then Jesus does His commentary on this particular trap this way:

[Matthew 5:27-30](#) (NLT)

“You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’ But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. So if your eye—even your good eye —causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your hand—even your stronger hand —causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”



“Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved.

Matthew 5:17-18

Obviously, if you read these remarks of Jesus honestly, you immediately recognize two things:

**First**, Every man is guilty of adultery when you take into consideration the spin that Jesus places on it!

**Second**, Jesus is very serious about us keeping these fences in our marriages.

Take note, that Jesus only deals with heterosexual example of lust here, but I believe that we would be safe to say that Jesus condemns any kind of lust - sexual or otherwise. When we want something that has not been given to us by God, we are almost always dealing with a lust based sin. Though His context is about adultery, the bigger issue is the power of lust. I can back this up in other places in scripture and I will, as the Lord leads me.

Jesus, just like in the subject of murder, which He ties intimately with anger and hate. He ties Adultery, which is sex with anyone other than your spouse, with the power of lust. The other thing He makes perfectly clear in these two commandments that it is not just the—acting out of this sin that makes us guilty. He ties it extensively to our thoughts. Because “thoughts are motor,” if we are not extremely careful and stay deeply repetitive, then our lust, our thoughts that are out of control, will lead us to the activity of sin. The key is to stay in repentance at all times.

He goes so far as to say that it would be better to enter your eternal reward without an “eye” or “hand” than to allow your whole body to go into eternal damnation. Now, before you start popping our eye balls out of their sockets, or taking a big knife and cutting off your hands, there is a much better opportunity and that is to repent and then place better fences on your thoughts and where and how you spend your time.

I am honored to do counseling, mostly marriage and family counseling. Believe me, if it has been confessed, I have most likely heard it. I have heard the pain of confession, I have felt the utter devastation of a man or woman, when their partner in life confesses this sin. It makes everything feel like a lie. I have been counseling for over 40 years and I can tell you there is not one momentary pleasure that is worth the pain inflicted into the heart of your mate after a failure like this.

Now for this post I am going to end with the passage in Matthew 5, that is just before the statements Jesus made about these two commandments. On my next post, I will tell you more about the fences you will need, to affair proof your marriage and it has a lot to do with bull-riding. Think about how powerful and important these verses all are as you look at this commandment, not with condemnation, but with confidence that God can change your situation and turn your marriage around whether you have committed this sin physically or not. Stay tuned for more. Please read this and meditate on it:

[Matthew 5:17-20](#) (NLT)

“Don’t misunderstand why I have come. I did not come to abolish the law of Moses or the writings of the prophets. No, I came to accomplish their purpose. I tell you the truth, until heaven and earth disappear, not even the smallest detail of God’s law will disappear until its purpose is achieved. So if you ignore the least commandment and teach others to do the same, you will be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven. But anyone who obeys God’s laws and teaches them will be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. “But I warn you—unless your

righteousness is better than the righteousness of the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven!"

## Why Does God Put Fences Around Our Marriage? – Part 2

In this part we are going to continue writing about this commandment found in The Big Ten Commandments:

[Exodus 20:14](#) (NLT)

“You must not commit adultery.”

Today, my wife informed me that her company has decided that she should work from home, for at least a couple of weeks. Now, in the almost 42 years of our marriage we have never been “working from home” at the same time. In a few years, I am sure Diane will join me in the life of retirement and this may give us a little feel, of what that might look like. Of course, this is different in that this was not our idea, and it's not just working from home. It is staying home almost completely. I have a feeling some projects I have to do in my wood-shop just might get done. Now, you may think that I don't like Diane or don't want to spend time with her. There could be nothing further from the truth. I love her, and we still have a lot of laughs when we are together. But, both of us, being in the same house trying to work may have its own challenges. There may be more to this saga as the time goes by.



I mentioned in the last post that this commandment has a lot to do with fences and it has quite a bit to do with bull riding. I am going to do my best to communicate what I meant by that in this post. Before we do, let me remind you again of the commentary Jesus shared with us in the great Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5.

[Matthew 5:27-30](#) (NLT)

“You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’ But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. So if your eye—even your good eye —causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your hand—even your stronger hand —causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.”

If you and I are ever going to affair proof our marriage, whether it is from the beginning of a marriage where there has never been infidelity. Or if you are starting again after someone's failure by breaking the covenant your marriage is based upon. The first step is to build some fences. These fences are not built between you and your spouse, but it is like the fences in the bull riding arena. Those fences have a much different purpose than a fence you may build to just keep the wolves out of your pasture.

I was around horse back riding and working cattle when I young quite a bit, because I had an uncle that didn't mind driving across Tulsa to pick me up and take me out to the ranch he worked on. He taught me how to train horses and do other chores around the ranch. I hauled

hay, I learned how to fly tag and dip cattle even at times we had to brand the young stuff. I loved it to be honest. I used these skills several times helping people in my church who did this kind of work. However, when it came to bull riding, I never had the courage for that. There is no way, I am going to get into a ring with a 2300 to 3000 pounds (1.36 ton) bull for anything or anyone. However, one thing I noticed right away about a bull riding ring was the fences. They were not there so much for keeping the bull in the arena, as much as it was to keep the bull away from the riders and the clowns. The first thing that happens when a bull rider is thrown off of a bull or gets off any way he can after the 8-second ride, is that when that rider hits the ground all of his energy is used to get behind one of those fences.

When I was a young teen I had a couple of friends, who lived up close to Vinita, Oklahoma where there were bull riders and some that were rodeo clowns, commonly called a bull-fighter because of their bright red towel or clothing that is used to get that bull's attention. There were more times, than I can count, when those bull-fighters—who get between that big bull and the fleeing rider, wind up either on the ground getting kicked by the bull, or in a barrel and the bull throwing them all over the ring. The purpose of that bullfighter was to get that bull's attention on him and off of the vulnerable bull rider. Back in the older days these bull-fighters used wooden barrels and when the bull hit it, the horns would go right through the wood and gouge into their leg, thigh or even stomach. There can be a lot of damage done at those moments.

I can assure you that the bull-rider many times is running for his life, as he gets close to that fence, he probably wishes that it wasn't there, but when he jumps up and swings over that fence, as he feels that huge Brahma bull approaching his back-side he is thankful for the fence. When he is over and on the ground on the other side, he is pretty thankful for that fence. I have even seen some of them bend over and kiss that fence. Which is kind of gross, if I am being honest.

Why should a bull rider love a fence? Because the fence isn't just there to restrict and restrain the bull rider, it is there to restrain the bull. The Ten Commandments are a lot like that fence. They serve as a barrier between us and that which would destroy us. They place a restraint on our flesh that wants what it wants at any cost. In our fallen nature, we like to avoid "commands" don't we? We didn't like commands as children, and the truth is, we don't like them much as adults either.

Words like "can't," "shouldn't," or "must" sound harsh to our ears. You see, we are all a bit like Esau, in the Bible. At times, we are willing (in our flesh) to trade anything—even our very birthright—for a plate of stew to satisfy our hunger of the moment. Our flesh cares nothing for happiness tomorrow or peace of heart for a lifetime. It cares nothing of the well-being of those we love. All it seeks is gratification NOW!

If we see a sign on a door that says "Do Not Enter." What is our first inclination? We want to open that door, at least to take a peek inside to see what all the fuss is about. If we see a Detour sign on the road, we will sometimes drive 20 miles (32.19 km) out of our way, all the time thinking, they just didn't get around to taking down the Detour sign. We think, they probably finished on Friday and just forgot to take down the sign. We can sure get ourselves into trouble like that, at the very least we will experience a big delay.

People will say "Well, I can do what I want to do. It's my life. I can live the way I want to live and go where I want to go." If there is a sign that says "Don't do this." We will often just do it anyway if we can get away with it. We have seen this, a lot, already a with this Coronavirus

issue. People, many times, feels like the rules only apply to other people. If God says “You Must Not Commit Adultery!” We think that it really isn’t any of His business. Yet, it is His world, His creation, and it is His business whether people obey His commands or not. He loves people like you and me, so much, that he has made a list of restrictions, not to rain on our parade, but to protect us from that which would be so extremely destructive to our lives and to the lives of those we love. Adultery is one of those things.

In the next post, we will try to see why God should be so concerned about adultery, in particular. We will see why it is imperative that we allow God to place fences in our lives because there is a huge, hot breathed enemy breathing down your backside with one intention. “to kill you, to steal from you, and to destroy you”. John 10:10

[John 10:10](#) (NLT)

“The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.”

## Why Does God Put Fences Around Our Marriage? – Part 3

I think when we think of God giving us the Law we know that He gave us these 10 Commandments. It seems they have gotten most of the attention. However, that is not all the commands God emphasized in the Old Testament. In fact, there are 613 laws in all given in the Torah which makes up the first 5 Books of the Old Testament often called The Pentateuch.

With that in mind you might have to ask yourself why did God show such concern about adultery in particular, back in that time? To make it one of the big ten seems kind of interesting. We know that God was looking forward and was right, of course, because throughout history this sin has occupied a lot of time and energy. It has created a lot of pain and brokenness. Why is purity and faithfulness such an important thing in the Father's heart when it comes to marriage? I think it is because the home and the church are the two institutions, working together that were ordained by God, on earth to be visible model of the love of God. It is Satan's interest to mar and disfigure both of these models. In particular, Satan seeks the destruction of married love and the family.

How quickly we forget, if we are not careful, that:

[Ephesians 6:12](#) (NLT)

“For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.”

If you watch TV, and I know I watch too much of it, that any given evening you shouldn't be shocked to encounter a constant parade of seduction and suggestive sexual encounters. It seems every show is riddled with immorality, seduction and flirtation. Each show has to have at least one homosexual relationship, Each show has to have every possible kind of sexual connection from serious, to casual to even things that should not even be named among the people of God. Look at how strongly Paul addresses this issue:

[Ephesians 5:3-12](#) (Revised Standard Version)

“But fornication and all impurity or covetousness must not even be named among you, as is fitting among saints. Let there be no filthiness, nor silly talk, nor levity, which are not fitting; but instead let there be thanksgiving. Be sure of this, that no fornicator or impure man, or one who is covetous (that is, an idolater), has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God. Let no one deceive you with empty words, for it is because of these things that the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. Therefore, do not associate with them, for once you were darkness, but now you are light in the Lord; walk as children of light (for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true), and try to learn what is



pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret;”

One of the ploys of the enemy through modern entertainment is to get us rooting for a couple to get together, even if they are not married. We begin to hope that two people can commit adultery or do something that shouldn't be named among us. Look, I know it is just entertainment, but it concerns the Father when His kids are not ready to call sin what it is. No matter how popular the actors, God has given us these commandments not to keep us from having fun, but to keep us from becoming defeated by the enemy in our thoughts or in our actions. Please keep the fences around your life in good repair and do your best to give no place for the devil.

To end this lesson about adultery let me give you the steps to get things right if you have already failed in this sin.

### **1. Make a decision to repent and confess your sin to the Lord.**

#### [1 John 1:9](#)

"But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness."

To repent means to change course. To be going in one direction and to change and go the opposite direction. Pray this prayer or something like this if you are still just in the thought stages.

Lord, I turn from this right now—while its still something in my mind and emotions. By the power of the Holy Spirit within me. I put these thoughts to death, in Jesus name! Amen!

If you are already into an active physical relationship then it is important to pray like this: Father, I know that I have broken my covenant with you. I have given myself to another person and I repent and turn from my ungodly thoughts and actions. I ask you to deliver me and give me the strength, by the power of the Holy Spirit, to walk from this sinfulness and walk back into your arms for protection and for healing. In Jesus name, Amen. Now it's not over yet but You have begun the process of turning from darkness back into the light.

### **2. Accept His Forgiveness - [Hebrews 10:22-25](#) and [Hebrews 10:26-31](#).**

Even after we have confessed and repented of our sin to God, our emotions may refuse to come along for a while. Some people will say: "I still feel dirty—like there is something wrong and I'm not clean." It takes time but we must just soak in the grace of God. That grace does not condone that sin in any way, it just helps us understand the message more deeply and personal. [Titus 2:11-12](#)

### **3. End The Relationship NOW!!! Right now! Not tomorrow. Not a week from now.**

There is not an easy way out. And yes, someone is always going to get hurt. The only way to END it is to End it! No more conversations, now more phone calls, no more meetings. NONE! Don't fool yourself "missionary dating" it not a reality. Don't tell yourself, "I will change him," or I will save her." I am sorry, but if God has not touched the person's heart during the time you have been together, you will probably not be the one that will help them get their life changed. You may need to pray some more. But, maybe pray: "Lord, thank you for changing me and cleansing me. This thing is over!"

#### **4. Thank God.**

Thank Him for His restoration and resurrection power. People many times need restoration because things in their lives and marriage are broken and need to be fixed. Others need resurrection because something that has died and cannot live again apart from the touch of the One who is Life.

Praise God for His mercy! Remember the woman caught in the sin of adultery? — [John 8:1-11](#)

As she laid there in the dirt, she had been set up, and then pulled out of the very act of sex with a married man. As she looked at all the eyes of the religious men and other men around the street she was met with judgement, shame and terror except in the eyes of one of those men. She saw certain death in the eyes of her accusers, except for the man she was thrown in front of for judgement. What did Jesus say to these men?

"Who of you are without sin? Who of you has never done this or thought it in your secret heart? Let that one throw the first stone." One by one the rocks began to fall out of the hands of the men. They didn't seem so eager to pass judgement, no longer excited about hurling their rock and hearing the crushing, bruising sounds of rocks hitting the flesh and bones of this woman.

[John 8:9-11](#) (TPT)

"Upon hearing that, her accusers slowly left the crowd one at a time, beginning with the oldest to the youngest, with a convicted conscience. Until finally, Jesus was left alone with the woman still standing there in front of him. So he stood back up and said to her, "Dear woman, where are your accusers? Is there no one here to condemn you?" Looking around, she replied, "I see no one, Lord." Jesus said, "Then I certainly don't condemn you either. Go, and from now on, be free from a life of sin."

Was He excusing sin? No! He was forgiving it. He had the right and authority to do just that. Listen, marriages go through hard times. Failure happens way too often, but God is a gracious, merciful and loving and does not deal with us as our sins deserve. ([Psalm 103:10](#); [Romans 4:25](#); [Titus 3:5](#); [Psalm 103:12](#); [Hebrews 9:14](#).)

I didn't touch on it, but most times a couple who has experienced a breach in their relationships through adultery may need to go through some extensive counseling to be able to discover the issues that brought this up. I spend a lot of my time dealing with these very things. If I can be of service to you please feel free to contact me at [pastorron@anchorofgrace.org](mailto:pastorron@anchorofgrace.org) or you can call at 405-818-8251.

If you are in the area where I live in the Oklahoma City area, we can meet in person after this

quarantine is over with. If you live away from this area then we can do it by Skype or FaceTime. There is a cost but mostly we want to just be a blessing to those who maybe need some counseling to get healing and to affair-proof your marriage. Please feel free to call on me.

## Allowing God To Meet Your Needs – Part 1

As we continue our look at the 10 Commandments—the Father’s Ten Loving Statements that help us live life in the days we are in and look with anticipation to the return of our Lord and Savior as the Victorious Coming King.

We have now come to a very special one of the commandments and one that is always relative to the way we live, but it is especially important today in light of all that is happening in our world in terms of the Covid-19 Coronavirus. With so many people out of work or unable to work there is a lot of understandable concern about how we are going to get our ends to meet.

[Exodus 20:15](#) (NLT).

“You must not steal.”

Just this week I read a news article about thieves overtaking people with their grocery baskets before they could get their bags into their car and stealing the groceries the customers had just purchased.

Another article was about the gun stores saying that the purchase of firearms and ammo was up like 43% over last year at this time. Now, I know many are buying guns because they are stuck at home and if someone enters their home to take what they have or injure their family they want to have something to protect themselves. However, I can’t help but think that some others may have other ideas swimming around in their minds. All of this has to do with this commandment — “You must not steal.”

I will go a little further and say that some extreme hoarding that has been going on in the world can also be a form of stealing, simply because those people described in these last paragraphs are not trusting God to meet their needs. Any time we take our provision into our own hands we are not trusting God and therefore we are breaking this commandment. Now listen, if you bought two packages of toilet paper instead of just one, I am not referring to you. That is not what I am bringing up here.

There are different ways of stealing. One may be a business man who specializes in investments and through swindling many people they steal millions of dollars from investors. This is obviously horrible to steal people’s nest egg that was meant to be how that man was going to provide for his family after retirement. I had one of my closest friends get taken in a scheme, and he is still paying for it to this day. It is now his retirement years and rather than having his investments to supplement his social security he has to really watch his budget closely. He wasn’t the only one taken in the scheme, but I assure you that it has caused him some serious financial issues. My heart has just been broken for him.

In contrast, I remember a time when I had an experience with a candy bar. I was probably about 12 or 13 and I had a paper route. I carried a bag over my shoulders that were stuffed with papers on each side. I would ride my bike with this bag over my shoulder, throwing the



papers till they were all gone, except one. I always had one extra paper, in case, someone on my route asked to buy one. On one particular day I finished my route I wound up riding down by a convenience store called Quick Trip. I really wanted a Butterfingers candy bar.

As I looked through the store, I saw the candy bars. As I remember they were about 25 cents each, back then, for a full size candy bar. My problem was, I didn't have 25 cents. I just had about 15 cents. I was tempted to take one. I had that bag over my shoulders, I leaned over by the candy bars and I picked up a Butterfingers but what I didn't figure on was that there were like 5 candy bars still connected, but the paper was perforated. So, as I took the candy bar, rather than getting one I got five, I dropped them in my bag, covered them with my left over paper and bought something for my 15 cents and walked out the door scared as I could be.

As I got down the way, further from the store, I stopped and pulled out one of those stolen candy bars. Now Butterfingers was my favorite, back in those days, but this one just didn't taste all that great as I realized I had broken one of God's main commandments. You see, I was a Christian and just that last Summer I had been filled with the Holy Spirit and received the call of God to preach. I felt so bad, I repented and I didn't eat those other candy bars, but I didn't take them back either. In the next post I will tell you what I did to make it right.

However, for today, I would like for you to see, with me, that stealing is not something I have done ever again, not candy bars any way. However, there have been many times I have stolen from God to allow Him to meet my needs by taking life into my own hands. I have often wondered how the person enjoyed their breakfast that ripped my friend off of his planned retirement investment. I wonder what that person feels as he watches his family enjoy his retirement paid for by the loses of other people. I know some people are very cold in their heart and it wouldn't bother them. I sure know it would make my heart hurt.

The eighth commandment basically speaks to taking something that doesn't belong to me. Someone said that there is more than 100 synonyms to describe the act of stealing. People steal, pinch, snatch, palm, bag, purloin, flinch.....you can take your pick. I guess that means we have learned how to do it in a lot of ways—some big, some no so much. I will share more about this in the next post about why and how people steal and what it does to our heart.

Let's end for today with a passage of scripture:

[Proverbs 15:16](#) (NLT)

“Better to have little, with fear for the Lord, than to have great treasure and inner turmoil.”

This is such a true statement because when we take something that is not ours from someone else, we will live with inner turmoil. If a person does steal and doesn't have that turmoil inside, then they have much bigger issues than stealing someone's investment or a candy bar. Look for the next post and I will share much more that will help discover why God thought this issue of stealing needed to be in one of the big 10.

I pray for God's blessings and protection, not only for your money, possessions and home, but I pray that the father of all lies and the one who comes to “steal, kill and destroy” or any of his workers, will not be able to come near you or your family, in Jesus name! Amen!

## Allowing God To Meet Your Needs – Part 2

So, back to the Ten Commandments today. I took a few days off from writing about this and spoke to a couple of other passages that I felt like God had laid on my heart, for those who might read these writings.

We will continue with part 2 of the commandment found in:

[Exodus 20:15](#) (NLT)

“You must not steal.”



As I read this passage I have to ask myself again why God would make this one of the big 10. I am not saying it is not a vital commandment. It deals with how we deal with one another. We should never steal from one another in any way, shape or form. If we get angry or hurt enough at someone we may try to steal their reputation or steal their friendships. There are a lot more ways to steal than just stealing something material from someone. The devil is a master at this, in fact it is in his job description in John 10:10. Where Jesus said: “The thief’s purpose is to steal, kill and destroy...” The devil not only wants to do these three things to us, but he would also like to influence us to do this to one another as well. In contrast, Jesus completes this verse with these words: “My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.” I love that verse. We have to determine from whom we will find our purpose. The two choices are found in this verse. I pray that you will choose the “abundant life” offered by Jesus, rather than what the thief desires to do to and through you. We can make this decision easily in our mind and heart, but when push comes to shove, our real choice will surface. Choose “Abundant Life,” it is yours to enjoy.

Last time I wrote about this commandment, I told a story about stealing a Butterfingers candy bar back when I was about 12. What I wound up doing was stealing 5 candy bars because unbeknownst to me, the company perforated the paper between the bars, but didn’t separate them. Years went by and this memory left me, I had pretty much buried it somehow. At 17, I left Tulsa and moved to Los Angeles to attend Bible College. What a culture shock that was. I can assure you that experience drove me to really connect with God in ways I didn’t even know I could. As my first Semester came to a close, I was going to be going back to Tulsa for Christmas. After repenting about stealing and other things I had done growing up, God laid it on my heart to go and make restitution for those candy bars. The price had gone up quite a bit by that time, so I felt like I should pay the present price plus 20%. That worked out to be about \$5.00.

The store I had taken it from was destroyed in a tornado or something, so I went to another store in the same chain. I told them my story and asked to pay the \$5.00. They thought I had lost my mind. They said they couldn’t accept it, because they had no way to make their inventory correct. After a long time trying to talk them into taking it, I finally went to the corporate office. After talking to several people I made it to the top person in the company. He said, that “they wrote into their budget a percentage for shoplifting etc” and that it was covered and “though he appreciated my desire to make it right, they just couldn’t receive it.” The man was called into a different office for something, so I took the \$5.00 bill, reached

across his desk and dropped it into the center drawer of his desk and walked out of the building. Do, I think everyone has to go make restitution for stealing like I had done 5 or 6 years before that? No! However, I needed to because I did not want any mark of “the thief” to be on my life.

So, why does God put this commandment in the big ten love statements from a loving Father? Why would he put into a list along with not committing adultery, murder, or worshiping false gods? As I pondered this in my heart, I went to the Lord in prayer. I said to Him. “Father, I believe every one of these commands pertains to your love for me. They really are tender words a loving father would say to His children. But, how does this one fit? How does this eighth commandment demonstrate your love?”

The answer when it hit me, seemed just all too obvious. However, what God must be saying here is: “I don’t want you stealing because I Am Your Provider! ([Genesis 22:14](#)) I want you to understand and believe that I am the One who will supply all of your needs. ([Philippians 4:19](#)) I don’t want you to have to scheme, manipulate, and deceive to obtain things. For then, what would you become? A schemer, a manipulator, and a deceiver. I don’t want you to feel responsible for securing your own future.”

The truth is, every time we steal something—whether large or small—we are saying, “I will be my own provider in this instance. If I don’t take it now, I will be the loser.” The Lord wants us to know that when we place our trust fully in Him, we are never the loser. Through this commandment, God wanted to say to the people of that day and to us today, as well—Let Me provide for you. I want you to trust Me, rest in Me, and be content in Me.

Why do people steal? In the next post — the Lord willing — I will try to give you some insights I have found in the scriptures that may help us understand why this commandment is such a big deal.

([Isaiah 26:8](#); [1 John 4:16](#); [James 1:17](#); [Hebrews 3:6](#); [Psalm 33:20](#); [Psalm 37:3](#); [Psalm 84:11](#))

## Allowing God To Meet Your Needs – Part 3

Today I would like to continue this study on the 8th commandment found in:

[Exodus 20:15](#) (NLT)

“You must not steal.”

In the last part I wrote on this I gave you the reason I feel like God made this one of His big 10 loving statements. If you didn't read that yet, I would really encourage you to go back and find it. If you have trouble finding it please let me know and I will direct you to it.

To end this discussion, I think it is vital for us to look at why people steal. I believe scripture gives us several insights to help us understand why we struggle so much with people stealing in our world.

### **The First is: Because They Want Instant Happiness.**

I think God understands this motive, as He understands all the traps of satan. The deceiver (the devil) convinces us that taking something now will give us an immediate contentment. He convinces us that this rapid acquisition will fill a void in our life and will cause the discontentment that, we so commonly feel, will ease up a bit. Of course, Only the Lord Himself can fill that void in our lives.

I think God placed this commandment here because, in His tenderness, He wants to spare us of the humiliation and damage stealing can bring to our family, to other people we love. In His mercy, He wants to shield our lives from the curse that this activity can bring upon us.

If, even for a moment, we think that stealing is not costly, open your Bible up and read the story of Achan in the Book of Joshua, The Lord had told Joshua and the people of Israel that all the spoils that were collected from the city of Jericho was to be devoted to Him. This was like a first-fruits offering. After all of those years in the desert, they finally crossed the Jordan to take the promised land and the first city they come to is a huge fortified city with big walls. This story really deserves a read, maybe you could do that right now. It was a miraculous win for the people of God. Therefore, God has declared that anything of value was to go into the Lord's treasury. Those were the conditions of this battle and there was no misunderstanding God, as He declared clearly the instructions:

[Joshua 6:17-19](#) (NLT)

“Jericho and everything in it must be completely destroyed as an offering to the Lord. Only Rahab the prostitute and the others in her house will be spared, for she protected our spies. “Do not take any of the things set apart for destruction, or you yourselves will be completely destroyed, and you will bring trouble on the camp of Israel. Everything made from silver, gold, bronze, or iron is sacred to the Lord and must be brought into his treasury.”



Trouble is exactly what came when Achan deliberately violated this clear instruction. What did he do? Read it right from his own words:

[Joshua 7:20-21](#) (NLT)

“Achan replied, “It is true! I have sinned against the Lord, the God of Israel. Among the plunder I saw a beautiful robe from Babylon, 200 silver coins, and a bar of gold weighing more than a pound. I wanted them so much that I took them. They are hidden in the ground beneath my tent, with the silver buried deeper than the rest.”

Instead of waiting on God to supply what he desired, this man, took what did not belong to him, and it brought a very heavy price. What was the price, after just beginning the journey to march across Israel and take it captive, their second battle cost them a loss to a very small little army. Rather than a growing victorious campaign across this promised land, Israel experienced a humiliating defeat because one man, decided to take something he desired and plant it in the middle of his tent.

The other great losses were Achan, all of his family, and the animals were given a death sentence. As the Israelites walked away from the stony grave, they called the place the Valley of Achan or translated: The Valley of Trouble. All of that for one act of stealing.

What Achan was never allowed to know was that just down the road apiece, a few days later, God would have provided him with more than his meager haul at Jericho. In the next battle, God allowed the plunder to go to the troops. All of it! Within hours, had he only waited, had he only obeyed and trusted he may have brought in silver of way more value than that red robe would have ever been worth.

I think this story reminds us that it is always better to wait on God. To trust that the Lord has “plans to prosper and to give you hope.” ([Jeremiah 29:11](#)). When we don’t run ahead of God and try to take life into our own hands, grabbing for our own happiness, comfort and security. God has all of those things laid up for us. However, we can short-circuit that. Not just by going into a store and stealing something, but by just trying to connive, or figure it out, or to take it on to see if we can accomplish it, therefore robbing God of the opportunity to bring everything you need and even the desires of our heart, in His time.

In the big picture, we don’t have to force life, if we can just wait the few short years of our lives and allow God to bless us, in the end there is a treasure stored up for us in heaven that nothing this world could offer could ever compare to the glory that God has laid up for the righteous. It is always better to wait! ALWAYS!!

Peter makes it clear here:

[1 Peter 1:3-9](#) (NLT)

“All praise to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. It is by his great mercy that we have been born again, because God raised Jesus Christ from the dead. Now we live with great expectation, and we have a priceless inheritance—an inheritance that is kept in heaven for you, pure and undefiled, beyond the reach of change and decay. And through your faith, God is protecting you by his power until you receive this salvation, which is ready to be revealed on the last day for all to see. So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you must endure many trials for a little while. These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested

as fire tests and purifies gold—though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. So when your faith remains strong through many trials, it will bring you much praise and glory and honor on the day when Jesus Christ is revealed to the whole world. You love him even though you have never seen him. Though you do not see him now, you trust him; and you rejoice with a glorious, inexpressible joy. The reward for trusting him will be the salvation of your souls.”

There are some other reasons for why people steal, I wish I had room here to develop each of them. People steal because they want security. Other steal because they want to attract friends. But, mostly people choose to steal because they have forgotten about God’s Promise of Care. Believe me, there is a story in the Bible for each of those reasons.

I doubt anyone reading this post is actually out stealing things off the shelves of a store, or out of the house of neighbors. However, just remember anytime we take our life into our own hands and try to provide, satisfy and influence others without the work of Jesus showing out in our lives we are like Achan, we are robbing God out of His rightful place to be our Provider, and the One who takes care of our every need. Achan learned this lesson, because at the end of his story Achan was truly aching.

Trust in the Lord, and please don’t try to hide anything from God by burying it in the center of your life, because God will deal with that in His time. I am so thankful we are now under the reign of Grace and not the law.

## Do Your Words Wound or Heal? – Part 1

We come to the next commandment found in the 10 Commandments, where God says this:

[Exodus 20:16](#) (NLT)

“You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.”

I am not sure if there has ever been a time in history where this commandment is more relevant. Why do I say that?

First, because of the massive amount of information that comes into our lives each moment of every day. In our hands, or on our computer we are inundated with gigabytes of info put out by every person who has a computer. I know we have Snopes and, all of that, to see if it is real or not but no matter the outcome of the test the information has already been put out there. The damage is already done.

Secondly, people are not held responsible for their words. Especially, here in America, one of our great freedoms in the constitution is “Freedom of Speech.”

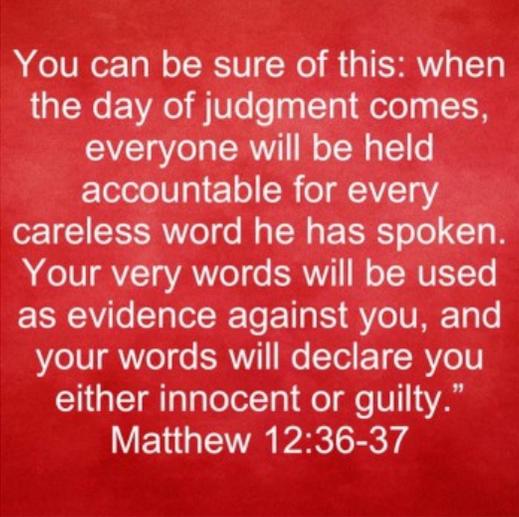
The assumption that precedes that great document was that people would want to promote truth and not lies or false words. However, in our present world, people put out false information with the same demeanor as those who are telling the truth. Therefore, it is very hard to tell the truth from a lie these days. Just a little misquote of someone else, can change the entire intention of the message. We see this happen almost daily in the news media. They don't even have to misquote them, they just cut out the words that they don't want you to hear and only let you hear a few words out of a paragraph. Therefore, changing the whole message. However, when you see the video of a person talking and you are only able to hear the words they want you to hear then it paints a different picture. By doing this, it changes the narrative completely. This is why James tells us this:

[James 1: 19-21](#) (NLT)

“Understand this, my dear brothers and sisters: You must all be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to get angry. Human anger does not produce the righteousness God desires. So get rid of all the filth and evil in your lives, and humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts, for it has the power to save your souls.”

It is a pretty simple equation. God gave us two ears and only one mouth — Use accordingly.

I read a story recently about a pastor in a farming community. There became a horrible rumor about this pastor's integrity ruining his reputation. This began to spread around this community like a wildfire. People began to say horrible things about this pastor. The thought was that he would most likely need to resign his church and leave this community. There was no proof of the charges against him, all there was is this rumor. After some time passed by, the couple who had started the rumor couldn't take it anymore, and they went to the pastor to



You can be sure of this: when the day of judgment comes, everyone will be held accountable for every careless word he has spoken. Your very words will be used as evidence against you, and your words will declare you either innocent or guilty.”  
Matthew 12:36-37

ask for forgiveness. They admitted that they had just gotten disgruntled about something and decided to pass this empty rumor around the community.

The very gracious pastor said to the couple “Of course, I will forgive you!” As the couple got up to leave after prayer, the pastor asked them if they would do him a favor. Being so blessed to have experienced forgiveness and the graciousness of this man they had lied about, they said, “yes, pastor, we will do anything.” He said, “when you get home to your farm, I would like for to kill one of your big chickens.” The couple said “ok?” Thinking “is he asking for a chicken here?” Then the pastor continued, and he said “I would like for you to take out all the feathers and put them in a large plastic bag.” The couple thought the pastor was asking some strange things, but they said they would do it.

Then the pastor said “Lastly. I would like to ask you to take that bag of feathers and stop by several of the intersections of the town and drop a few of the feathers out at each corner. Then I would like for you to take the rest of the bag of feathers over to the large water tower, climb up there and let all the rest of the feathers go out into the wind.” So, the couple got up to leave and do what the pastor requested although they couldn’t understand why. As they got to the door, the pastor called them back for a moment. He said, “Of yeah, after you do all of that I have asked, then I would like for you to go out through the community and pick up ALL of those feathers.”

The couple looked at him and said “Pastor, that would be impossible, those feathers would be all over 3 counties.” The pastor didn’t say anything to them, and slowly, their heads dropped as they began to understand the meaning of his word picture began to dawn on them. Yes, they were forgiven for their actions, but no one could undo the damage they had done by scattering their false and slanderous words.

The Bible tells us that the one thing we will stand before God about is this:

[Matthew 12:36-37](#) (TPT)

“You can be sure of this: when the day of judgment comes, everyone will be held accountable for every careless word he has spoken. Your very words will be used as evidence against you, and your words will declare you either innocent or guilty.”

Friends, we must be more careful with our words, especially the words we say about others. The words we say carelessly, without thinking of the consequences. I totally understand how hard that is, because “out of the abundance our heart our mouth speaks.” The key to changing the words coming out of your mouth is to change the content you tolerate and allow into your heart. May we become people who speak life and not death.

In the next part, I will try to help us discover why God chose this commandment to be one of the Ten Commandments. Blessings on you as you discover how to listen more (to God) and speak less (speaking only what God wants us to.). Be blessed my friends!

## Do Your Words Wound or Heal? – Part 2

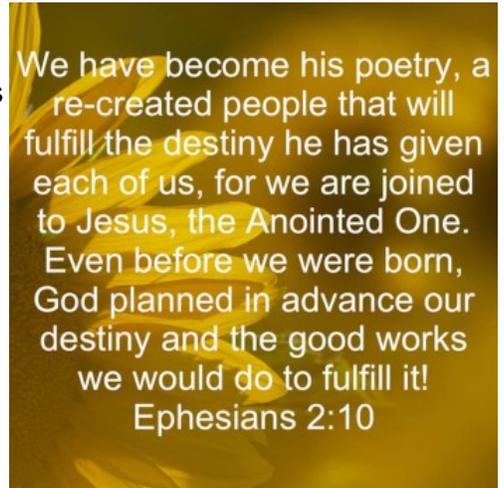
Why would God include this particular commandment as one of the Ten?

[Exodus 20:16](#) (NLT)

“You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.”

I mean, of course, it is important that we tell the truth and that we don't lie in such a way that it would hurt another person or their reputation. But, is that all there is to it? Let's look at some reasons God may have included this command “not to testify falsely against your neighbor” into the 10 Commandments.

For the Lord to say to be careful about what we say about another person illustrates how well God knows us. You see, this wasn't an, out of touch, gray haired old guy engraving these words into a stone. This is a God who knows our tendency to overlook our own depravity. He knows that we will not see the importance of the use of an unruly tongue. He knows the incredible damage it could do in the life of those we come in contact with. Solomon reminds us that “Death and life are in the power of the tongue.” [Proverbs 18:21](#).



We have become his poetry, a re-created people that will fulfill the destiny he has given each of us, for we are joined to Jesus, the Anointed One. Even before we were born, God planned in advance our destiny and the good works we would do to fulfill it!  
Ephesians 2:10

Now, if you have spoken falsely about someone in your life, just remember that we will stand before God for every “idle (careless) word we speak.” However, that doesn't have to be a dread that you live your life with, there is always this special way our God has given us called: “repentance.” Repentance means to turn and go in the opposite direction. In this case, it may be a two-part repentance. We can go to God and ask for forgiveness, and He will forgive us, not because we deserve it but because He is a gracious Father.

However, the other side of that repentance is to go to that person you testified falsely about and ask their forgiveness, and stop the power of those misspoken words. Is this easy? No, of course not, but is it possible? Absolutely! We could start a repentance revolution, because for almost every person you may have spoken falsely about, in most cases they have done the same thing toward you or someone else. Think of the relationships that could be healed. Think of the freedom that comes from not carrying the burden anymore. Maybe God will show you a time you have broken this commandment, not with condemnation, but for the purpose of helping you take care of this business and get to freedom.

Our Words Can Shape A Life — We damage, destroy and even damn people when we speak untrue things about them. Jesus felt this injustice and pain of this very treatment. It fits so well with the day I am writing this which is on Good Friday 2020.

[Matthew 26:59-63](#) (NLT)

“Then the people who had arrested Jesus led him to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest, where the teachers of religious law and the elders had gathered. Meanwhile, Peter followed him at a distance and came to the high priest's courtyard. He went in and sat with the guards and waited to see how it would all

end. Inside, the leading priests and the entire high council were trying to find witnesses who would lie about Jesus, so they could put him to death. But even though they found many who agreed to give false witness, they could not use anyone's testimony. Finally, two men came forward who declared, "This man said, 'I am able to destroy the Temple of God and rebuild it in three days.'" Then the high priest stood up and said to Jesus, "Well, aren't you going to answer these charges? What do you have to say for yourself?" But Jesus remained silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I demand in the name of the living God—tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God."

These religious leaders were not looking for the truth, they were looking for "false charges that they could bring against Jesus, because they were looking for a reason to put him to death." They were looking for anything that could break down his reputation. I mean just a little time before this, people were crying out "Hosanna, Son of David." He was very popular in the lives of those people that day, but these leaders needed something that would squelch those feelings in the crowd and make people think differently about him. Why would they do that to him? Because He had the esteem and the attention of the people, and it was something they coveted so much. They looked for a way to destroy him any way they could, knowing that words were every bit as destructive as sharp stones, or whips and chains.

The truth is, that "bearing false witness" goes way beyond bringing faulty evidence into a judge's courtroom. The Lord intended this, as he did with other commandments, to apply to a lot of different scenarios in everyday life.

When couples come into my office for marriage counseling and one of them says "I'm done! I just don't love my spouse anymore." Believe me, it happens a lot. I have seen hundreds of couples with this at the beginning, and in just a few weeks they are coming in and saying the opposite. There is a statement that I tell them that seems to change the atmosphere. I have become proactive in this by using this with those who come for premarital counseling to try to get ahead of this faulty thinking. What is it that I say that is just a deal changer? I have them turn and look into the eyes of their mate and I make it as uncomfortable as I can. After a moment or two of them looking at each other here is what I say:

"If you look at your spouse today and see less loveliness, strength or value than you did on your wedding day, then you can only look as far as the kind of words you have said to them or about them to determine what has changed your view of them." It is usually very quiet in the room at that point. Because what that does is that it takes the eyes off of the other person and puts it on themselves. As they think through the words they have said to their spouse in private or to other people they have been talking to, their heads usually go down, and they are ready to figure out what is wrong. You see, our words, can and will change our view of other people. When we speak negatively, or say false statements about another person, we begin to see that person through those words. No matter what the truth is, we can only see that person through the power of those words, names or damning statements we have made.

The good news is this. Not every couple I have said that to has handled it well, but most have. Most begin to realize that all we have to do, to see that person that we fell in love with again, is to begin to speak the truth, what God says about that person. He says a lot of things but my favorite is this verse:

[Ephesians 2:10](#) (NLT)

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.”

I love this verse in The Passion Translation. Think about it this way:

[Ephesians 2:10](#) (TPT)

“We have become his poetry, a re-created people that will fulfill the destiny he has given each of us, for we are joined to Jesus, the Anointed One. Even before we were born, God planned in advance our destiny and the good works we would do to fulfill it!”

In the next part I will finish this point and try to give you a couple more reasons why I believe God placed this commandment into the Ten Commandments.

## Do Your Words Wound or Heal? – Part 3

Last time I wrote I ended in the middle of one of the reasons I feel like God put this particular commandment among the Ten Commandments:

In our world today we deal with the same things God's people have always been dealing with. How to control our tongue, because our words will either wound or they will heal. We have a tendency in our world to damage, destroy and even damn people when we speak untrue words about them. Jesus dealt with this when he was facing the religious leaders in [Matthew 26:59-63](#). This was when they had arrested Jesus, and they were trying to find someone to bear false witness against Jesus. Even though these religious leaders knew the 10 commandments, they were looking for people to lie about him.



Most of the time we talk about what kind of words we should not be saying. We live in a world where our words have degraded down so much many times we are numb to it. There seems to be so much of this bad language and even lying in most of the shows we watch on TV or in the movies. It seems that our society takes that on as the norm and just we say very hurtful words without thinking. But what does God want us to say? Let's look at an important passage together.

[Ephesians 4:25.29-32](#) (TPT)

“So discard every form of dishonesty and lying so that you will be known as one who always speaks the truth, for we all belong to one another.

And never let ugly or hateful words come from your mouth, but instead let your words become beautiful gifts that encourage others; do this by speaking words of grace to help them. The Holy Spirit of God has sealed you in Jesus Christ until you experience your full salvation. So never grieve the Spirit of God or take for granted his holy influence in your life. Lay aside bitter words, temper tantrums, revenge, profanity, and insults. But instead be kind and affectionate toward one another. Has God graciously forgiven you? Then graciously forgive one another in the depths of Christ's love.”

What a powerful passage and I think the Passion Translation brings it out so well. I am not sure but I think any words I would add would take away from this amazing passage of scripture.

What kind of words should we say? I would think our words should be words that builds up one another. Words that benefit, words that help others, words that lift up one another. It grieves the Holy Spirit when we speak words that tear down, words that are not true, words that put people down, or words that are filled with bitterness, because they come from a bitter heart. We must be careful with reckless words because they bring pain to the heart of the

Father. Why? Because God knows just how fragile our personalities really are. We cover and guard ourselves to others, but God knows what happens on the inside of a person when someone speaks these kinds of words to them or about them. If you don't believe me just take a moment to read:

[James 3:8](#) (TPT)

“but the tongue is not able to be tamed. It's a fickle, unrestrained evil that spews out words full of toxic poison!”

Poison sickens and kills. It doesn't take a lot of poison to make a relationship sick, to destroy a relationship between people who say they love each other. Poisonous words have wrecked many a friendship, even very long term friendships. We do not want this toxic poison entering into our relationships because it can and will be devastating.

If that was not enough, James also tells us that our tongue is like a fire. It has a destructive capacity that God has warned us to guard against day and night. When you think of the big forest fires that happen often on the West Coast. They do grave damage. I have driven through the incredible areas of Northern and Southern CA as well as through Oregon and Washington. The trees are massive and beautiful. I have also driven through parts of those areas after a needless forest fire. Started with just a little spark. Sometimes it is an accident but many times they wind up finding the person who started the fire and they arrest them. James has another powerful word in:

[James 3:5-6](#) (TPT)

“And so the tongue is a small part of the body yet it carries great power! Just think of how a small flame can set a huge forest ablaze. And the tongue is a fire! It can be compared to the sum total of wickedness and is the most dangerous part of our human body. It corrupts the entire body and is a hellish flame! It releases a fire that can burn throughout the course of human existence.”

Must I go on? There are some that start raging, destructive fires with their words. It only takes a spark here or there—sometimes it is just a match or a small campfire not cared for properly. What can one small flame do? Well, it has destroyed cities, families, friends, and can destroy whole generations. Sometimes these people can spark off a horrible, destructive fire with their words and then just go home and think everything is normal, and never realize the fullness of the destruction they have caused with just a few misspoken words.

God meant for our words to bring healing, help, counsel and encouragement. Our words should add to the lives of others rather than destroy it. May our words deliver healing and blessings. The writer of the Proverbs says it this way:

[Proverbs 16:24](#) (TPT)

“Nothing is more appealing than speaking beautiful, life-giving words. For they release sweetness to our souls and inner healing to our spirits.”

That is where I will stop for today. Next time, the Lord willing, I will write one more section on this subject just because there is so much in the Bible about it. I know, most of us wish it didn't because we find it almost impossible to allow Jesus to be truly Lord of what we speak. I

will share with you next time a couple more reasons this commandment was added to the Ten. Then I will end with some words of encouragement before we move on to the last commandment.

## Do Your Words Wound or Heal? – Part 4

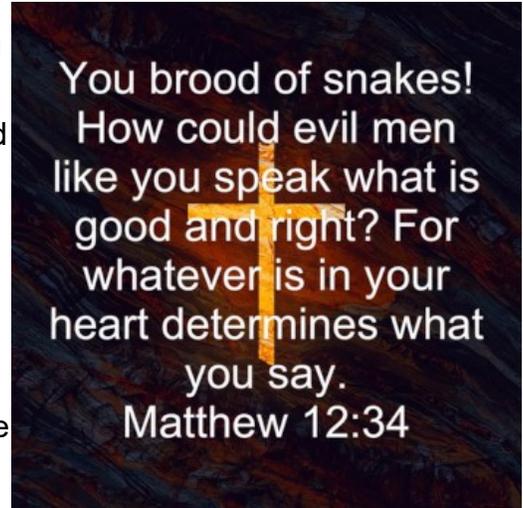
As I mentioned the last time I wrote I would like to end this commandment by sharing a few more reasons why I believe God included this commandment into this great list of the Ten Commandments.

[Exodus 20:16](#) (NLT)

“You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.”

Words Shape Our Lives — and because of that it was vital that God placed this commandment in this list. If you want to know more about this read the last post.

Today I would like to write about another reason why God placed this commandment in this list. It is because in God’s great design He has created the people of God to be—A Witness To The World In Which We Live. It is no different today than when God gave the Ten Commandments. God has always intended for the church to touch the world with his love. When we speak loving and respectful words to one another in the way God has told us to, we let the world know that we are true Christ Followers. This is how Jesus said it in the Gospel of John



[John 13:34-35](#) (NLT)

“So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other. Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.”

It is important that we connect the dots, as Jesus did, by realizing that loving words—matched loving deeds! When this works as He intended, this would become the churches greatest source of evangelism. You see, people watch how we talk and treat, one another. There has been more than one time that I have heard unbelievers, that were looking on at a church event say, “If that is how Christians treat one another I don’t want to be a Christian.”

Paul understood this concept well when he gave us this powerful passage of scripture in:

[Colossians 4:5-6](#) (NLT)

“Live wisely among those who are not believers, and make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be gracious and attractive so that you will have the right response for everyone.”

Maybe you are one of those that realize that you have sparked fire in wrong places with your words. Maybe you realize that you have spread some poison or toxic criticism. If you are, you may be asking, “What can I do now?” “How can I get my tongue back under control?”

**Come To This Understanding: Only God Can Change Your Words**

People attend seminars, listen to recordings, or read books about how to speak positive words. However, when we are all done with that, we may still not be able to do all the things we “learned.” Neither am I. I may be able to do it for a short while but before long in a moment, when I drop my guard and I will let loose with the same ugly, poisonous words that hurt. Why? Because only God can change how you speak.

We have all heard of stories where animal keepers have tried to domesticate certain kinds of animals. I guess there are some that can live without incident for a long time. However, that is not the stories we usually read about. We usually hear about the cougar, leopard or wolf that the owner swore it was tame” but all of a sudden it reverts to an old instinct— to attack, to lash out, to maim and kill.

Our tongue has that same capability. We do good for a while, we talk better to our spouse, kids, co-workers, etc but then something happens and just like that animal we revert to what we know. For most of us, that is not pretty. What we learn in time is that, our tongue is like that animal, and James said that no man can tame it. There is one big reason for that. It is because only God can do that work.

The reason, I write this is not to get you to give up trying, I just want to help you and I to understand that we try to tame our tongue, but what needs the work is our heart and mind. Only God can change bitter water into sweet water. The people of Israel learned that lesson just a short time before God gave them these Ten Commandments. They came to an oasis on their journey named Marah (means bitter) and found that that water was too bitter to drink. What happened? They became bitter. Look at it with me for a moment:

[Exodus 15:24-25](#) (NLT)

“Then the people complained and turned against Moses. “What are we going to drink?” they demanded. So Moses cried out to the Lord for help, and the Lord showed him a piece of wood. Moses threw it into the water, and this made the water good to drink...”

God is all about turning the bitter water sweet in our lives. We can’t do it for ourselves. We could add anything to it that we could come up with but if water is truly bitter you can add all the lemons and sugar you want. The best, on your own, you can come up with is bitter lemonade. It is because Jesus experienced the bitterness of suffering and death for us, we can then experience life that is sweet and clear. In the story in Exodus 15 God showed Moses a tree in this place of bitterness, and He has shown us a tree as well, in the midst of His bitterness... It was the cross that our Lord Jesus Christ died on.

The Bible tell us that “out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” [Matthew 12:34](#). No amount of personal training can change our mouth, but a total surrender to the Lordship of Jesus can change your heart, which directly affects your mouth. This is a vital truth. Seminars, or books on being positive, might be enjoyable, but they do not make a bitter heart speak sweet words. Only God can change a heart.

There is just so much more I would like to share with you on this subject, but this is getting too long. Let me just remind yo, in closing, that it is vital to pay close attention to the Holy Spirit’s direction in your life. He will prompt you in a certain direction to say something or maybe not to say something. It is vital that we listen to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to lead what we think, feel and most importantly what we say.

One more commandment and a conclusion, and we will end this series of lessons. I hope, the few who have responded, have enjoyed it and have learned something that they have never thought about before. May God grace these truths into your lives and into mine.

## Finding True Contentment In A Selfish World – Part 1

As we look at this last commandment we need to deal with a subject that most of us struggle with to some extent. At least, we find it difficult in some area of our lives. For me, it is leather bags. I have one leather bag that I have taken on every ministry trip for the past 30 years or so. I don't give up on some things very easily. That is not my problem. My problem is when I travel or go to an outlet mall you will usually find me at the leather store looking at leather bags. Because of their expense I don't buy them, but I sure do like to look them over real good. I have purchased several, other kinds of bags, to travel with but I still like my old, beat up, well traveled leather bag.

On my second trip to India, I was looking at some bags in a little second hand shop in New Delhi. I was looking at all the things they had, and I stumbled on to some trinkets and in that pile I found one of the most unique keychains. Now, if you don't know, I collect key chains, and I am always looking for them. At present, I have over 4500 keychains. So, I found this keychain that was a little attaché case (much like the bags I look to buy.). On this little briefcase, was a metal button. I couldn't read it because it was so small. I bought it anyway, the cost was only a couple Rupee's. One Indian Rupee equals about thirteen cents in the U.S. currency. At the time I was there it was more like a quarter. So, the keychain only cost about 50 cents. When I got back home in Oklahoma, I got out my magnifying glass and on the little metal snap it read: The Great Seal of the State of Oklahoma. It is one of the most unique key chains in my collection. I didn't buy most of my keychains for they were gifts from the church where I pastored for almost 23 years and their friends, family, employers etc. I love keychains and leather bags. Anytime I hear of anyone leaving for a trip I remind them, remember me, I love keychains. I usually always get a few.

Why am I confessing my intense love for these things? Because, it fits well with this lesson as we look at what it means to truly be content in every area of our lives. Here is the 10th Commandment from the scriptures:

[Exodus 20:17](#) (NLT)

“You must not covet your neighbor's house. You must not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.”

In this command we are introduced to a very powerful word that most of us struggle with in one way or another and that is the word covet. The word means: to desire wrongfully, inordinately, or without due regard for the rights of others: to covet another's property.

You see, once we start coveting, we will never be satisfied. Contentment seems like it doesn't even exist anymore. The more I study about this commandment, I think the main point that God is calling to us, is finding true contentment. It is important that you know that God knows



our hearts, and He knows what happens when people begin to desire after things that don't belong to them. When we want something someone else has and in some extreme cases it leads a person to steal something and some even have damaged whatever the item is because they think in their mind —“If I can't have it, then they can't enjoy it either and if they do at least it is broken or marred in some way.”

Some people even do that with their words. A friend comes in with an item that we begin to covet and rather than rejoice with them that they have something nice or cool, or new, we start picking at it verbally and whisper and try to get other people in the group to put it down too. Yes, that sounds like Jr. High, activity but I have seen full-grown adults do it.

A covetous person is someone with a severe craving for things that another person possess, or they even covet the circumstances of another person's life. A person who is dealing with this issue can and will be able to tell you all the reasons that they would be “better off with that item, because it would better suit and satisfy them and make them happy.” Now, most couldn't be that open and honest, because they know in the depth of our hearts that we should not covet something someone else has. We should learn to be content with what we have...and we need to be content with knowing God and understanding that He knows what is best for us.

There have been so many times in my life where I prayed prayers with only my well-being in mind, just to find out later that it was selfish, and I was seeing the situation through my eyes rather than through the eyes of the Father. For instance, I have prayed while traveling that God would let me sit in a row with either no one or someone that just wanted to rest. Especially, when I was traveling home from speaking at an event. Only to find myself beside someone that desperately needed ministry. All I could think about when I was praying was my own comfort, my own desire to rest, or not being by someone who would hog the arm rest. However, after the flight I was so much more content because I had been able to invest the Word and the love of God into the life of someone else. I am always more content with his plan

One last thing for part one, of this post about the 10th commandment. [Psalm 23](#), which is probably a favorite Psalm for a lot of people, tells us that “The Lord is Our Shepherd.” It tells us that He lead us to a place where we will not want for anything. This Psalm promises are that we should not be in lack. Hebrews 13:5 says:

[Hebrews 13:5](#) (NLT)

“Keep your lives free from the love of money and be content with what you have, because God has said, “Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you.”

Why would the Lord proclaim these things? It is because He knows what coveting and greed will do to a person. He understands how these things can devastate our lives, and in His love for us He wants to spare us from all that a covetousness life can bring.

In the next part we will continue this conversation and look at several reasons why God placed this commandment in the big Ten Commandments and even He used this one as the final commandment in the list. I hope you will continue to join me on this journey.

## Finding True Contentment In A Selfish World – Part 2

Most of us have heard the stories of people coming into great fame overnight, or the stories of someone winning the lottery. Most of the time those things just don't work out all that great.

I read a story one time about a couple who won big in the lottery. Like most of us, they even committed to tithe if God allowed them to win. This couple did win, and they won big—\$48.6 million dollars. After winning the lady said: “We had one month of good times—three years of misery. I'd trade it all for a normal life. It's not worth it! Health and happiness is what I want.”

She became a woman that had three pacemaker operations since the big win. Her husband wrote this “More bad than good came out of this.” He filed for divorce several months after the big win, and legal bills added up to over \$200,000.00 on both sides.

Why does God give us this commandment as the tenth commandment?

[Exodus 20:17](#) (NLT)

“You must not covet your neighbor's house. You must not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.”

He gave us this commandment because he knows a few things about covetousness. Let's look at some of them.

### 1. He Knows That What We Covet Seems To Slip Right Through Our Fingers.

[2 Corinthians 4:18](#)

“So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.”

What is the Lord trying to convey to us in this verse? He is saying that “life on earth is uncertain and fragile, so it is vital that we focus on things that have eternal value, rather than temporal.” He is calling us to concentrate on things that will last. Our neighbors things such as — clothes, cars, houses, and their toys will not last, they will pass away with this life.

Each Christmas, parents run out to try and buy the biggest item they think their kids will love, by the time the next Christmas come around, if that item is still in the house, it is usually sitting on the top shelf between the gifts from the 2 Christmases before that. Though I don't think it is necessarily wrong to get our kids the going thing, as long it is not ungodly, but we should invest in things that will grow them in their relationship with Jesus as well.

But if we freely admit our sins when his light uncovers them, he will be faithful to forgive us every time. God is just to forgive us our sins because of Christ, and he will continue to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.  
1 John 1:9

[Ecclesiastes 5:11](#) (NLT) is an interesting verse:

“The more you have, the more people come to help you spend it. So what good is wealth—except perhaps to watch it slip through your fingers!”

Now I have never had enough that could make that my testimony but I have been honored to meet a few people with money in my life and I have heard this from most of them.

Money and other material things that are not properly managed will slip right through your fingers. One of my pastor friends was telling me that the day, after he received his stimulus check from the government, he came home from the office and saw an empty box from a 75 inch TV on his neighbors front porch. As he walked into his home, he mentioned to his wife that he just saw what their neighbors did with their money. I guess it is possible that they had been saving up for it, but most likely they didn't.

To properly budget your money in your home and enjoy having financial peace is to have an address for every dollar that comes into your house before it arrives. If you have not made a decision before it comes how you are going to use it, you will most likely purchase something that may be enjoyable but can, many times, create spending remorse, after the newness wears off.

Diane and I were married in 1978 and we set out to be in ministry. We never made a lot of money, though God always took care of us, we never had a lot of extra money to do some things we would liked to have done. We always lived in parsonages (A home owned by the church, for the pastor to live in.). We lived in some really nice houses and a couple of really not very nice houses. However, we never made enough money to buy a house, or even set money aside for a down payment. In 1993, after birthing a new church in the OKC area we decided that we wanted to buy a house. Believe it or not, we only paid about \$36,000.00 for that house. We bought it from a couple in our church. It was an ok, house, it was so small you had to go outside to change your mind but it was ours. We decided, after prayer, that we were going to stay in that house, fix it up and it would be the house we would live in the rest of our lives. In 2013, an EF5 tornado had different plans for our house, it took it off and I think parts of it are in Kansas, I don't know, but it wasn't on our lot in one piece anymore. We were blessed to be able to build a very nice house from the insurance money we received. Now we have a much nicer house, much larger house and we are thrilled that God took something so horrible and turned it around for our good and His glory. (Romans 8:28.) We only owed \$7000.00 on our old house after it was destroyed, so now we live in our house debt free, except for taxes and insurance which is a pretty large chunk of change each year. As they say, “death and taxes will always be with you,” I would add insurance to that as well.

Why did I tell this story? We have been blessed to visit people in some really nice homes over the years since we bought that small house in Moore, OK. But, we didn't covet after those houses. We didn't question God why He never allowed us to have one of those incredible homes. We loved other peoples homes but never drove away saying we wish we lived in that house. So, God took a horrible and difficult time and turned it around and gave us the desires of our heart. We had learned to be content in that little house, as we fixed it up, and made it ours we rejoiced that we had a home to live in, and we could call ours. We never entertained much in our home because it was so small, but we always wanted to. Now we have plenty of room and we have people over nearly every week now. We must find a way to be content in

whatever state we find ourselves in. If we do, God will honor you with one blessing after another.

## **2. He Knows That The Things We Covet Will Become A Heavy Burden In Time.**

If you don't believe these words just read David's powerful repentance in [Psalm 51](#). David was a King and when it was time for kings to go off to war, David decided to stay home. He wandered out on his patio on the roof to look around and he noticed his neighbor's wife. Had he noticed her before? Had he entertained his "mighty men" in the palace over the time with their wives? Had he noticed the time of the day that Bathsheba usually took her bath? Well, I don't know the answers to all of those questions but there is a good chance that is exactly what had happened. He knew his neighbor had a hot wife and he knew she took her bath up on the roof and he could see easily from his huge house.

He used his position to seduce Bathsheba, and have sex with her and subsequently tried to pass her pregnancy off on her husband, who was so loyal to David that when David called him home to get him to sleep with his wife so he would think she got pregnant with him rather than David. It was the big coverup. The problem is that it didn't work because Uriah, her husband refused to have sex with his wife because his fellow soldiers were out there risking their lives, so he slept on the porch. This caused David to go a step further and he caused Uriah to be killed in battle. Now, this great Warrior-King had now broken the 10th Commandment and the sixth and seventh commandment as well. Not to mention hiding behind the biggest lie and coverup under his command. You can read this story in {2 Samuel 11}.

Take a moment to read these powerful verses in David's repentance Psalm

[Psalm 51:3-4](#) (TPT)

"For I'm so ashamed. I feel such pain and anguish within me. I can't get away from the sting of my sin against you, Lord! Everything I did, I did right in front of you, for you saw it all. Against you, and you above all, have I sinned. Everything you say to me is infallibly true and your judgment conquers me."

For the rest of David's life he endured the gut-wrenching reality as he watched his family sink into heartbreak and defeat. Rape, murder, incest, disgrace, betrayal, rebellion...it went on and on through his generations.

God knows how much a burden these kinds of deep sins can bring as they become active in our life through the gate of covetousness. The weight of these kinds of sins can distract us from God's purpose for our lives. It can press down on us so hard, we call that depression. It will also squeeze the joy right out of our lives.

The Good news!! God has these wonderful tools of confession, repentance, and the ability to receive forgiveness. No matter what you have done, in mind, or body or actions. God will hear the true confession of your heart. He loves it when we become contrite in our heart and then we repent and turn in the opposite direction, walking more closely on the path God has laid out for us. If you will open your heart, at that point, God will forgive you of your sin and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. (1 John 1:9.) God is so good and loves you and loves me with an everlasting love. ([Jeremiah 31:3](#))

Jesus is here to heal your heart, forgive you of your sin and help you to begin to live free from

the power of sin. ([Romans 6:7,10](#) & [Romans 8:2](#)).

If you have never asked God to forgive you of your sin, and asked Jesus to come and live in your heart both as your Lord and Savior, today is the day to do that. Feel free to contact me through private message or contact me through our website: [anchorofgrace.org](http://anchorofgrace.org). I would be so honored to pray for you. If you have made the commitment to Jesus but still walk around weighted down, bruised and broken from the sin that so easily entangles us (Hebrews 12:1), Then I would be so honored to pray for you to find the freedom only God can bring.

If you find yourself in bondage to things that you covet or lust after, maybe pornography, sex outside marriage or the wounds from those kind of activities, please contact me through the ways above, or you can just call me at Anchor of Grace at (405)818-9251. It would be my honor to show you the love of God. No judgement here. I am just here to help you find the freedom only Jesus can bring.

## Finding True Contentment In A Selfish World – Part 3

We are discussing the tenth and final commandment of Ten Commandments or better yet, 10 Loving Commands from Father's heart, this commandment is found in:

[Exodus 20:17](#) (NLT)

“You must not covet your neighbor’s house. You must not covet your neighbor’s wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor.”

We shared in the last post the first 2 things God knows about this sin of covetousness. Today we will begin with number 3.

### **3. He Knows That Covetousness Will Become Destructive In Our Lives.**

I am not sure there is a more clear discourse on this subject than what we find in what Paul wrote to his son in the faith, Timothy.

[1 Timothy 6:6-10](#) (NLT)

“Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can’t take anything with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content. But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.”

Paul wrote these these powerful words to Timothy to tell him that people who long to be rich soon begin to do all kinds of wrong things to get more money...things that can and will bring them and their families to great hurt and even ruin.

Look at [1 Timothy 6:9-10](#) in the Passion Translation (TPT)

“But those who crave the wealth of this world slip into spiritual snares. They become trapped by the troubles that come through their foolish and harmful desires, driven by greed and drowning in their own sinful pleasures. And they take others down with them into their corruption and eventual destruction. Loving money is the first step toward all kinds of trouble. Some people run after it so much that they have given up their faith. Craving more money pushes them away from the faith into error, compounding misery in their lives!”

It seems that it almost works in the opposite way than the world tell us. The more we press after worldly, materialistic wealth, it seem that these schemes squeeze us dry. Rather than



bringing happiness and fulfillment it seems to rob from us of relationships with our family, especially our children, and the people we say we love the most get the least from us.

As a marriage and family counselor, I can assure you that financial pressures are up high on the list of things that bring couples to discussing or threatening divorce. Honestly, the number one reason married couples come into my counseling office is because of unfulfilled expectations. They have come to find out that they have some expectations about life, that has not become their reality, and they are pretty ticked off about it. This can be brought on by financial pressures, sexual expectations, or many other things, but in simple terms, we start out in a marriage relationship because we think we love each other and we want to be together all the time. The more we get on the roller coaster to try to live out the American Dream, in most cases, we spend less time with one another and this brings on a lot of painful issues.

#### **4. God Knows That Covetousness Can Become Very Deceptive.**

In [Luke 12:15](#) (TPT) Jesus tells us:

“Speaking to the people, Jesus continued, “Be alert and guard your heart from greed and always wishing for what you don’t have. For your life can never be measured by the amount of things you possess.”

Come on now! Do we really buy into what Jesus said here? Do we really believe down deep in the core of our being that the words in this passage, no matter what translation you read it in, that these words impact our heart, and affect our actions and shapes the way we live our lives?

We live in a consumer mentality world, and we have very sophisticated marketers that spend billions of dollars every year to try to convince the consumer that what they have is not enough, and they need—no they deserve — much much more. If they can convince us that we will not be truly fulfilled or happy unless we have this certain product or electronic device. They are successful in their field if they get the majority of people to purchase the product that they have dangled out in front of us.

Now, let me say that it is very unfortunate that this happens in the church as well. We do our best to market our church to the point that people will leave one church to come to ours. In fact, for the most part the church in America has not grown that much in, recent years. All we have accomplished, in many cases, has been to get a family to believe that where they have been attending church is not really meeting their needs, so that they will come to ours.

Listen, I believe that people have the right to attend whatever church they want to, but rather than try to sway people away from other churches to ours, brothers and sisters, let’s go out and preach the gospel with our lives and find a way to get people, in the world, to make a commitment to Jesus and then encourage them to attend the church best suited for their needs. We need to see people getting saved, not just moving to the next up and coming church in our community.

Let’s build the Kingdom of God, not just the kingdom of the most well known pastor or worship leader. The true test of the church is that when people leave the gathering they are talking about Jesus and what He has done in their lives, not so much talking about the pastor or the music or whatever program the church has put together. Nothing wrong with loving your

pastor. Nothing wrong with enjoying the worship team at your church, but what we want to do is make disciples that are following Jesus fully. To the point that they become not only Christ followers, but they become disciple makers as well. Believe me when I tell you, there would not be enough church facilities in our city, and they would all be full, if we did this, as one church, in our city in many locations.

Our values do not lie in what we possess. Does that seem like a revolutionary thought to you? Our value should not be wrapped up in what we wear, drive, or where we live. Our value should be wrapped up totally in the amazing fact, that Jesus Christ, the mighty Son of God and Creator of the universe, loved us so much that he laid down His life for us on the cross. He paid the price in full to meet the claim that was against us. By doing that work on the cross he purchased our salvation and made it possible to be called the Redeemed of the Lord!

There are all kinds of material things that are great and ok to have, as long as your identity is not found in that thing, but our identity should only be found in the incredible possibility for each of us to experience a personal, daily life with God, through Jesus Christ. If our identity gets caught up in things we possess then we begin to play the compare game. Let's look at what Paul says about this.

#### [2 Corinthians 10:12](#) (NIV)

“We do not dare to classify or compare ourselves with some who commend themselves. When they measure themselves by themselves and compare themselves with themselves, they are not wise.”

We should never compare ourselves among ourselves. Paul says it is not wise. It becomes too easy to allow our conversations to go to these places of comparisons. Please put a guard on your heart and mind at this point. It doesn't matter what you possess, what matters is who possesses you. Jesus paid the price for us to find out who we are in Him and in Him alone.

#### [Hebrews 13:5](#) (TPT)

“Don't be obsessed with money but live content with what you have, for you always have God's presence. For hasn't he promised you, “I will never leave you alone, never! And I will not loosen my grip on your life!”

In Philippians 3 Paul gives a list of things of which he is according to his education, social and religious standing etc. Then he follows that list with these powerful words.

#### [Philippians 3:7-8](#) (NLT)

“I once thought these things were valuable, but now I consider them worthless because of what Christ has done. Yes, everything else is worthless when compared with the infinite value of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. For his sake I have discarded everything else, counting it all as garbage, so that I could gain Christ”

My prayer is that each of us will not look at what others have, or even what we have been able to obtain in our life, and look only at the One who died on that cross, overcame death, hell and the grave, and made it possible through His work that we can learn to be content with whatever God has placed in our care. When God's people live like this out loud and real in the

world they will stand out as light in a darkened world. This world is so selfish and never happy with what life has brought. True contentment in a selfish world can be one of the greatest ways to be able to talk to someone about knowing Jesus.

### **5. God Knows That True Contentment Brings His Peace**

People lust a lot about possessions and success. Truth is there is nothing wrong with having possessions or success as long as it isn't birthed out of discontentment or lust after money and things that seem to define our identity.

One of the sayings I repeat a lot is this: "God may never ask you to give up everything that you own, but He will ask you to give up everything that owns you."

When I say true contentment brings peace — what do I mean? I mean that it is in those personal times with God—even in the midst of difficult, heartbreaking circumstances—that you and I learn true contentment like the Psalmist wrote about:

#### [Psalm 73:23-26](#) (TPT)

"Yet, in spite of all this, you comfort me by your counsel; you draw me closer to you. You lead me with your secret wisdom. And following you brings me into your brightness and glory! Whom have I in heaven but you? You're all I want! No one on earth means as much to me as you. Lord, so many times I fail; I fall into disgrace. But when I trust in you, I have a strong and glorious presence protecting and anointing me. Forever you're all I need!"

The times I feel the most content is the times I spend in God's presence. I know, in those times, that God is going to take care of everything for me. He is going to work everything out. He is going to arrange it all. I am convinced of that. His presence makes that clear. I don't know what will come tomorrow, or what will come next week, or next month or ten years from now. But this one thing I do know, "in His presence is fullness of joy and at His right hand are pleasures forevermore." [Psalm 16:11](#). (NKJV)

True contentment is found when we learn to practice the presence of God daily. Let's encourage one another on this journey as we walk together in true contentment in the midst of a selfish world.

## Conclusion!

Over the last four months I have been writing about the Ten Commandments. I have tried to convey that these ten statements were never meant to be ten harsh edicts from an angry God, but rather ten loving statements given by our Loving Father in heaven. These statements given in Exodus 20 are more about a journey we are on together with God, than a list of 10 legalistic demands given to force us into a certain mold. At least for me, it seems that most people think that in Exodus 20 God was angry at the people and wanted to see just how hard He could make it on them.

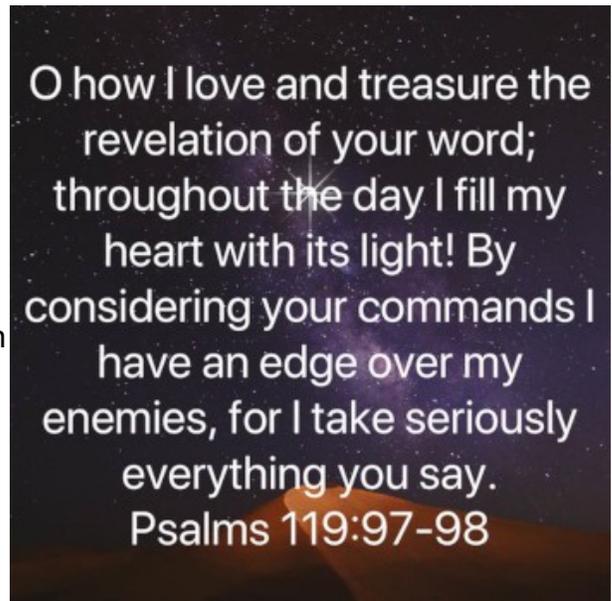
I mean, if you have ever seen the 1956 American religious drama — produced, directed, and narrated by Cecil B. DeMille, starring the great Charleston Heston you would get the idea that God was pretty angry as he carved the words into stone tablets with lightning bolts from His Finger. This film was released on November 8, 1956 just less than a month after I was born, but is it still shown each year by ABC sometime around Easter/Passover. This film brought in \$122.7 million dollars in 1956/57. With inflation that amount would be more like \$1.15 billion in 2019.

I love watching movies. I am very blessed because, if it has been a little time since I have seen the movie, it seems to me like I have never seen it. Not Diane, she remembers just about every movie from beginning to end. There are a few old Western movies that I have watched over and over and I still love sticking them into the DVD player, to this day, and watch them like I have never seen them before.

However, this story is much more than an old movie. This story represents God's ability to really know His people. He knows us so well, He knows the decisions we need to make long before we have experienced much of life at all. Therefore, He gave us this incredible list both in Exodus and Deuteronomy, not because he was trying to make us all just alike, but rather, He wanted us to know that there are consequences for not heeding these words. Rather than putting them out there and watching over us like a Sheriff, just waiting for us to mess up, so he can catch us. He spoke from His heart and gave us these powerful, loving statements to help us navigate through the desert of our life just like He did those Israelite slaves in the Old Testament. He introduced all of this in Chapter 19 like this:

[Exodus 19:4](#) (NLT)

“You have seen what I did to the Egyptians. You know how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.”



He describes this journey out of bondage to the promised land as being done on “Eagles’ Wings.” This would illustrate how the Eagles’ would take care of their little ones and literally carry them on Eagles’ Wings as they grow up and go through the different things that would make them strong enough to fly. It was safe on “Eagles’ wings.” It was warm on “Eagles’ wings.” There was comfort on “Eagles’ wings. You see there were a lot of times on this journey that God had to correct his people because of their complaining and their desire to go back to Egypt. However, even that correction was done as a mother Eagle might correct, and train their young, never allowing anything to overcome them. But notice, also in this verse that God carries us on Eagles’ Wings not just to get them to a geographical location. He said that He was carrying them with the purpose of bringing them to himself.

It is vital that we see this part of our Father’s Heart. God is not just trying to get us to heaven. He is calling us and bringing to Himself. To know Him, to experience Him, to know His love and His ways. This is such a vital part of this message. God is calling us to be close to Him. He not only wants you close, He is carrying you to Himself.

#### [Proverbs 2:7-8](#) (NLT)

“He grants a treasure of common sense to the honest. He is a shield to those who walk with integrity. He guards the paths of the just and protects those who are faithful to him.”

How does He guard your path in life? There are many ways, and one of those ways is the Ten Commandments. They reveal His heart to us. All the way through the Bible you can see it — the Lord’s cares for us. He always seems to be there for every part of our journey. He is always taking us from bondage to promise because He loves us so much.

Look at how the Psalmist sees the commandments of God. In fact, it is a theme of this whole, very long, Psalm 119.

#### [Psalm 119:9-98](#) (NLT)

“I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways. I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word.”

The Psalmist was just saying: “Lord, I just love Your Word.” Your law means everything to me. I think about it over and over again as the days of my life pass by. You see the Psalms were written to help us understand our relationship with God and give us tools to successfully live our life out as worship to the Lord. It is interesting that the sections in this Psalm is broken up by using the Hebrew alphabet. Maybe this is God’s way to help us understand that His law, affects every part of our life, as we would say in English from A to Z.

Earlier in this writing we referred to God’s Word being like a fence. That fence was intended to keep us from danger. Do people sit back and meditate about a fence. Focusing on white pickets, or barbed wire? Probably not, but we would meditate on a love letter from the dearest person in our lives, wouldn’t we? That is what I see in these Ten Commandments. I see them as a love letter from God to His kids, not to put you in a box and not let you out. Rather, He puts those commands there to keep the enemy out. That is the purpose of boundaries in our lives.

Take a moment and listen in your heart as you read about the excitement and the passion in the Psalmist words as he describes his relationship to the commands of God's Word. Maybe take a moment and just read these words out loud if you are where you can.

[Psalm 119:15-16,20,24,32,35,72](#) (NLT)

“I will study your commandments and reflect on your ways. I will delight in your decrees and not forget your word.

I am always overwhelmed with a desire for your regulations.

Your laws please me; they give me wise advice.

I will pursue your commands, for you expand my understanding.

Make me walk along the path of your commands, for that is where my happiness is found.

Your instructions are more valuable to me than millions in gold and silver.”

These are just a few of the incredible truths of how we can see God's commands for us.

I will write one more part about this subject, by way of conclusion. In it, I will share with you a few reasons why we should love his commands with all of our heart.

Then after I am finished, all of this will be compiled into a little booklet and published on our website at [anchorofgrace.org](http://anchorofgrace.org). Maybe you could read back through it, or even share it with a friend.

Blessings!

## Conclusion—The Very End!

As we come to the last part on this very intense and long study on the Ten Commandments, I would like to leave this subject with some final understanding.

### Why I Should Love His Commandments With All My Heart?

**\* Because God's Word Was Written To Keep Us From Disaster.**

[Proverbs 13:13](#) (NLT)

“People who despise advice are asking for trouble; those who respect a command will succeed.”

I have a friend who loves to ride his bike down mountain passes. I doubt he will recognize himself from this illustration, but he is about my age. Yet, he has in incredible shape and takes a lot more chances with this life than I am able to take. I am as old and out of shape as He is fit and in shape. Just remember that round is a shape.

I admire him a lot, except when he puts pics of himself on Facebook with road rash or broken equipment. Not too long ago, last Summer I think, he made a video with a helmet cam going down a mountain trail and at the end of the very rough video he crashed, damaged his body and busted his helmet. I know he must have kissed on that helmet because, it most likely saved him from even greater injury. Those pads, helmet, and other safety equipment may be burdensome at times for him, but I know, at least, a few times, it may have saved his life or at least saved him to be able to ride another day.

The instructions of the Lord are perfect, reviving the soul. The decrees of the Lord are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The commandments of the Lord are right, bringing joy to the heart. The commands of the Lord are clear, giving insight for living.  
Psalms 19:7-8

Now, I have never been much of a daredevil kind of guy. I have taken it pretty safe for the most part in my life, except in one area. I do my best to not try to live this life without the safety equipment of God's Word in this crazy world we live in.

A person who resists, scorns, and rejects God's Word will meet with certain destruction. It may not be on this ride or the next but believe me it will come at some point. I wish I could write this with a little nicer words, but I have walked with Jesus since age 6 and I have been to a lot of places and I have been honored to serve God in a lot of dangerous places and I can assure you, this life is not lived well without the safety of the truths found in the pages of our Bibles.

As a Pastor for now for 43 years on May 13th, I see it all the time. It is in the times when a pastor's hair is receding quickly and turning gray really fast, as I hear people saying things like: "I don't need God." "I don't really need His Word!" "I don't really like the parts of the Bible that contain His commandments, or requirements for life." "I look past the warnings found in the Word of God, because I will do whatever I want to do."

I can assure you that a person's life is headed for a disaster down the mountain trails of life—and I can assure you that God's Word does not hesitate for moment to tell us so. You may think, come on, Pastor people don't really say that. Well, some people don't say it and some

do, but even those who don't say it live as though it is true. I have been in enough hospital rooms, psyche wards, courtrooms, counseling offices and at the bottom of some really rough rides with some people over the years. I have had the honor of seeing inside bloody, broken open skulls, and some injuries that are life threatening with people.

One of the times it really shocked me, and this has happened more than once over the years, when I hear a pastor or leader that assures me that they don't really need the Holy Spirit to preach or teach the Word. Or that they tell me that they can teach a class or even preach a Sunday morning message without being a student of the Word. Believe me when I have heard those kinds of statements, I may sound harsh but I say to them—"Then get out of the ministry right now!"

It is so dangerous to try to live the Christian life without a strong grasp on God's Word and the willingness to take a close look at the lists of all the commands of God, that are in the Bible to get our clues on how to live. Jesus even said: "If you love me you will keep my commandments." John 14:21

**\* Because His Word Satisfies Deeply.**

There are certain things that you must take on any hike in the woods. Things like a map, a compass (especially in the mountains). Then you better consider a canteen, some waterproof matches. These things and a few more (snacks, water etc) are very important because there are so many things that can happen on a hike out in nature.

In the same way, we are on a spiritual journey, and we do not know what we will be facing at the next bend in the road. I mean, who would have thought in early 2020 when everyone was preaching about 20/20 vision, and proclaiming prophecies over this year, that our world would be hit with a pandemic, that would shut down our country and most of the countries of the world. I didn't hear anyone saying that was going to happen this year. In the very same way as you prepare for a hike in the wilderness, we must prepare for a hike in a spiritual wilderness. We better pack in the Word of God, getting our wisdom and counsel from God's precious Word, because if we overlook the counsel of God's Word, we will be wandering around in circles. In fact, it doesn't take long to get to the point that you waste your life away because you haven't stored up the commands, promises and wisdom of God's survival manual.

[Psalm 119:92-93](#) (NLT) says:

"If your instructions hadn't sustained me with joy, I would have died in my misery. I will never forget your commandments, for by them you give me life."

There are people who say, I don't need God, His love or His Commands, look out how good I get a long on the journey without it. Look at how much I have, look at what I have achieved." I am not suggesting, in any way, that people can't attain some financial success or could never be satisfied without God's Word. Because I have seen people, as you have, that do not even entertain God or His Word for their lives and if you just take accomplishments and material things into consideration they have found some purpose in life, just not the correct purpose. However, in most every case when the pressure comes on, those people will admit what they accumulated is pretty empty in sustaining them.

To find out God's purpose and to watch Him bring the things into our lives when we need it, to

experience, to not only seek God's hand of provision but to be able to seek His face, is much more worth it in my experience than to just be able to say, "Look what I have done." The Theme Song in Hell may just be, I Did It "My Way!"

**\* Because His Word Provides The Foundation For My Life.**

In 1991, I took a temporary assignment in a small church in the city of Moore, OK. The pastor had decided to take a sabbatical and they needed an interim pastor for about 6 months to a year. I started in pastoring this little church. I met some of the greatest people who have become my friends over a long time now. Because I don't know how to just maintain a church and keep it about where it is, I began to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit to find what God had for this little church. Well, it began to grow. People began to get saved, filled with the Holy Spirit and healed. The pastor told me, to just go for it because he liked what he saw and thought he might never come back to be the pastor. So, I just did the things I was led to do. After about a year or so we were running 125 to 150 on the weekends.

God was doing a great work. All of a sudden we began to find flying termites all throughout the building. The exterminating company told me for every flying termite you have, there are probably hundreds down in the recesses of the wood floors and beams. The church building was going to deteriorate fast and fall into the basement if we didn't do something. We had to have the building treated. They drilled holes in all of the floors, about six inches apart and in other places and spray the building trying to get the poison down in the recesses of the wood to kill the termites.

We had no idea how much damage was already there. It was about that time, that I began to find out some of the things that were going on illegally in the business of the church. There had been many years of co-mingled funds between church and personal business. It all began to come out, people who were owed great amounts of money and who were coming to collect in some pretty unsavory ways. There had been a lot of things done in business, buy this pastor, that caused the church to be headed for some real destruction. I don't have to tell you how God began to show me the connection to what was happening in the business of the church and the building problems. The board had been responsible for the church, but this pastor's personal businesses had encumbered all of the corporations owned by this man.

Finally everything came to a head and to protect the people who had been in the church for a while and the many who had started to come the church board made a tough decision to remove themselves from not only this faulty building but from this financial encumbrance brought on by mismanagement. So, a new church was started and 6 months later moved to a different location. After the church, was legally established, then they asked me to be their pastor. I served that new church for the next almost 23 years. God did great things.

Well, somehow the treatments on that building must have worked or something because it is still standing now 27 years after we left it. However, the ministry that stayed there soon went under. That whole process broke my heart because the problem was not that God was not working, the problem was the foundation both physically and business wise was flawed.

I often wonder what happens to people who disregard God's loving Word to them. I wonder if our indifference to God's commands might allow for spiritual termites to eat away at our life and character, which in the end brings us down. It sure did that original little church, but the good news is that the people who made up that little church, with a leadership that wanted to find what God's Word says, found their way out and still exists to this day. Some of the people

are different, but the work continues in a church with a large piece of property, an almost brand new building with absolutely no debt, as far as I know.

Remember, the Lord told Moses that he “bore them on Eagles’ wings.” Truth is, He still does. He has led His people throughout all of their journey on Eagles’ wings. I know he will continue that work we started in 1993, but he will also lead us all to what He has for us...!

[Psalm 19](#) is a powerful Psalm and I would like to ask you just to read though it and recognize how important it is for us to be led by all of the parts of God’s powerful Word. It is when we stay close to the Lord and His Word we truly know we have been brought through the journey on Eagles’ Wings.