


# END-TIMES ISSUES



**#38** Introduction to the Ten Commandments

AND BEYOND!

## THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

Scripture tells us there are 10 of them; and that it was God who wrote them on the stone tablets.



[God] declared to you His covenant, which He commanded you to follow—the **Ten Commandments** that He wrote on two tablets of stone.

Deuteronomy 4:13 (BSB)

And the LORD wrote on the tablets what had been written previously, the **Ten Commandments** that He had spoken to you on the mountain out of the fire on the day of the assembly. The LORD gave them to me, ...

Deuteronomy 10:4 (BSB)

### PEOPLE CAN'T AGREE ON THE NUMBERING OF THE COMMANDS!!!

The main issue has to do with the beginning and ending of the list.

There is no question about the commands in the middle; but it effects what "number" we assign to them.

**At the beginning:** Some people *combine* the two commands about "no other gods" and "no images"; others keep them *separate*.  
[We are going to keep them separate.]

**At the end:** Those who treat the above commands as *one* command will often divide the "do not covet" command into two sections.  
(Or else, they may treat the introductory statement – not a command – as though it *were* a command.)

**But does it matter? Not if you are willing to obey all of what the 10 Commandments say!**

IS "DO NOT STEAL" #7 OR #8?

DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT... JUST DON'T STEAL!!!

### THESE COMMANDMENTS DEFINE MORAL CONDUCT.

They are moral principles for guiding all aspects of life:

- They are given to us in **Exodus 20** (spoken by God) and **Deuteronomy 5** (reviewed by Moses, just before the people entered the land of Canaan).

Other parts of the law expand on the meaning of these commandments:

- They show **how these 10 commandments apply** to the many aspects of life – specifically, within the context of O.T. Jewish life.
- They describe the **blessings** of obedience, as well as the **consequences (punishments)** for disobedience.
- (There are also regulations about sacrifices and certain practices that are not relevant under the New Covenant.)

We find applications of these commands in Leviticus 19 (the "holiness code"); in Deuteronomy 12-25; in various passages scattered throughout the books of Moses and throughout the rest of Scripture.

### VARIOUS FEATURES ABOUT THESE COMMANDMENTS.

We tend to divide them into two categories (as in Matthew 22:37-40).

- Category #1:** Those that focus on our relationship with God.  
We can summarize these by the *First Greatest Command*:  
**"Love the Lord your God with all your heart/soul/strength/mind."**
- Category #2:** Those that focus on our relationship with people.  
We can summarize these by the *Second Greatest Command*:  
**"Love your neighbor as yourself."**

Commands in these two categories are often linked together.

EXAMPLES:

- Pursuing **other gods and idolatry** are often compared to **adultery and prostitution**. (Example: book of Hosea.)
- Greedy** is described as **idolatry**. (Example: Colossians 3:5.)

Each command represents a **group of related concepts**. EXAMPLES:

- "**Do not murder**" includes many forms of anger and hatred – Matthew 5:21-26. (Some forms are *not* sinful; these are identified in Scripture. Hatred of sin is an example of *God-honoring* hate.)
- "**Do not commit adultery**" represents *all* sexual conduct and lust that goes contrary to the purposes for which God created sexuality—Matthew 5:27-30; also Leviticus 18.

They are a reflection of God's moral nature.

- They show us how to live holy in the presence of a holy God.
- Leviticus 19 is a passage that applies these 10 commandments to life within the Jewish context. The theme in this part of Leviticus is:

Be holy because I, the LORD your God, am holy.

Leviticus 19:2b (BSB)

**"DO NOT" COMMANDS ARE NECESSARY IN A SINFUL WORLD.**

★ They are "negative," because our sin is "negative." ★

- ✓ One of the law's purposes is to restrain sin. It provides boundaries. This is Paul's focus, when he says...

For the law\* ... is for people who are lawless and rebellious, who are ungodly and sinful, who consider nothing sacred and defile what is holy, who kill their father or mother or commit other murders. The law is for people who are sexually immoral, or who practice homosexuality, or are slave traders, liars, promise breakers, or who do anything else that contradicts the wholesome teaching that comes from the glorious Good News entrusted to me by our blessed God.

1 Timothy 1:9-11 (NLT)

\* (This passage is describing "law" in general, not just the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses *does* restrain sin; but it also points us to Christ, and teaches us how to live.)

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If we, as the human race, had chosen to NOT sin, there would NOT have been any need for all these "DO NOT" commands.

**"DO!!!"**

**DO THESE THINGS!  
ENJOY THEM!**

God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground."

Genesis 1:28 (NIV)

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Originally, only one "DO NOT" command was needed. And it was little, compared to all the "DO" commands.

**"DO!!!"**

**DO NOT!**

**I GIVE YOU  
FREEDOM WITH  
MINIMAL  
RESTRAINT! LEARN  
TO DO GOOD!**

"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

Genesis 2:16b-17 (NIV)

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**The Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.**

It's purpose was to teach us a GOOD thing:  
The knowledge of the difference between good and evil.

- ⇒ **Had we chosen to OBEY the command:** We would have learned the difference... and doing the GOOD would have become our nature.
- ⇒ **Because we chose to DISOBEY the command:** We *still* learned the difference... but now, doing the EVIL has become our nature.



... we were by nature children of wrath.

Ephesians 2:3b (BSB)

**THE RESULT OF OUR CHOICE:**

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**THAT'S UNFAIR!  
I WASN'T THERE!**

- ⇒ **BACK THEN:** Yes, we were there, in Adam.
- ⇒ **TODAY:** Every time we choose to sin, we are affirming the choice made back then.

**I APPROVE OF  
WHAT THEY DID!**

★ Since the consequences of being "in Adam" are real, it is vital that we make every effort to become "in Christ"! ★

For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive.

1 Corinthians 15:22 (NIV)

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**What about the Tree of Life?**

- ⇒ **That was also a good tree.** But only for those who are spiritually alive.



- Once the human race was spiritually dead, it was necessary to keep us away from the tree; for the tree of life would make our sinful nature incapable of change.

Once sin had entered the world and had caused the entire world to be cursed, eating from the tree would not have been a blessing. People would grow increasingly sinful. Destruction, pain, wrath and judgment would increase, until it became a literal "hell on earth," with no hope of it ever changing.

★ If people could not die, then Jesus could not die... and *nobody* could be saved. And there would be *no hope* for resurrection unto *new life*. ★

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⇒ **In the past ...** We were banished from the tree of life. (God was protecting us.)



And the Lord God said, "The man has now become like one of us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from **the tree of life** and eat, and live forever."

So the Lord God banished him from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he had been taken. After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to **the tree of life**.

Genesis 3:22–24 (NIV)

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⇒ **In the future ...** The tree of life will be growing in the New Jerusalem. All the saved will be free to eat from it.



He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes, I will grant the right to eat from **the tree of life** in the Paradise of God.

Then the angel showed me **a river of the water of life**, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the main street of the city [= the New Jerusalem]. On either side of **the river** stood **a tree of life**, bearing twelve kinds of fruit and yielding a fresh crop for each month. And the leaves of **the tree** are for the healing of the nations.

Revelation 2:7; 22:1-2 (BSB); see also Revelation 22:14, 19.

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Today, we **need** those **"DO NOT"** commands.

- ❖ Without them, it's our nature to blindly fall into sin.
- ❖ We often don't even realize we are sinning!



I HATE THE TEN COMMANDMENTS! THEY ARE TOO "NEGATIVE"! I'VE GOT MY OWN "POSITIVE" GUIDE!

⇒⇒⇒⇒  
DO NOT SIN!  
GO THIS WAY!  
⇒⇒⇒⇒

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The **"DO NOT"** commands keep us from **destruction**.

THEY ARE BOUNDARIES TO PROTECT US.

**DO NOT FALL OFF THE CLIFF!!**

⇒⇒⇒⇒  
**FREEDOM!!**  
**DO ENJOY THE WIDE OPEN SPACES!!**  
⇒⇒⇒⇒

The **"DO NOT"** commands also imply a **"DO."**

### WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THE 10 COMMANDMENTS, UNDER THE NEW COVENANT?

None of them have been cancelled.\*  
**They still show us how to live!**



BUT WE DISCOVER:

**When we don't obey them**, we are **living in sin**.

**When we do try to obey them**, we can't. Complete obedience requires **heart** changes that we just cannot make. The willingness just isn't there. For that to change, **we need Jesus!**

\* Even the *fourth* commandment ("Remember the Sabbath") is relevant. The specific way it is *applied* may be different, but the basic principle remains the same. (In the future, we will look further at this.)

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WE ALSO DISCOVER:

God offers to change the hearts of *all* who are willing to repent of their sins and trust him for that change.

WE ALSO DISCOVER:

As we pursue the "renewed mind" of Romans 12:2, God will use his Word to change our thinking ... and ultimately our actions.



**I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will remove your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.**

Ezekiel 36:26 (BSB)

For **God is working in you**, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

Philippians 2:13 (NLT)

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## OUR MISSION

- ✓ **Trust God and rely on him** for the ability to do these things.
- ✓ **Let him use his Word** to change our thinking – which will ultimately change our actions.
- ✓ **Be patient and persistent!** Change often takes time. (Learn more about things like this in Scripture.)

'God, have mercy on me, a sinner!'  
Luke 18:13b (BSB)

... to be made new in the attitude of your minds; ...  
Ephesians 4:23 (NIV)

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.  
Romans 12:2a (NIV)

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**Don't be like the world. Don't be like Israel was (and still is).**

This is what the Lord says:  
"Stand at the crossroads and look;  
ask for the ancient paths,  
ask where the good way is, and walk in it,  
and you will find rest for your souls.  
But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'  
Jeremiah 6:16 (NIV)

**Rejoice in what the  
"DO NOT" commands  
can accomplish!**

**"DO NOT" cross the boundary!  
It will enslave and destroy you!  
"DO" stay within the bounds of  
life and freedom!**

**Follow the One who changes hearts! Pursue his good ways!**

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