

# THE WORD OF

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# TRUTH

Bible Study Course

Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.

John 8:32

**31**

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## LOVING GUIDELINES

When we speak of guidelines we imagine restrictions, but when we understand something of the love that God has for you and for me, we see those guidelines as tangible evidence of that love. As loving and wise parents will make rules to protect their children and preserve their happiness, so it is that our loving and wise Creator has given us careful instructions, that if obeyed, will bring:-- love, joy, peace, contentment, health, safety -- in brief, will bring a happy life.

The instructions we are talking about, of course, is that code of life generally referred to as "God's Law". There are three sets of laws that God delivered to the human race. These are:-- the Ten Commandments (moral law), the civil law, and the ceremonial law. Of these, it is the Ten Commandments that God has specifically given to man as his wall of protection (Job 1:10; Ps.119:110-117; Isa.26:1,2).

The civil law is generally addressed in Exodus chapters 21 to 24 and explains a penal code to be used as a guide for the judiciary in cases against those who violate their neighbour.

The ceremonial law sets out the rites and ceremonies relating to the sanctuary services. These ceremonies and feasts associated with the cleansing of sin from the penitent sinner are a "type," or symbol, of the Messiah who was yet to come. The Messiah, who is the real "Lamb of God," is the only One who truly cleanses from sin. The ceremonial law describes, by symbols, the mechanics and essentialities of God's, Christ's and man's part respectively in the salvation plan. Lessons 13 to 15 discuss this law in more detail.

The Ten Commandments, or the moral law, is the foundation for both the civil and ceremonial laws, as well as the Laws that govern the harmony of the whole of creation. The violations against one's neighbour that prompt the discipline of the civil law are breaches of the Ten Commandments, while the ceremonial law explains how eternal life is wrought for all who have transgressed the Ten Commandments. Hence this lesson and the following few lessons will focus on the Ten Commandments, God's Holy Law. We will examine what the Law says and determine its application and relevance for us in the New Testament era.

**1. First let us define sin. What is meant when the Bible describes men as sinners?**

1John 3:4 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: As sin is the transgression, or breaking, of the Commandments, we may now see that an understanding of the Law of the Ten Commandments is a life and death issue to every soul.

**2. Where did the Ten Commandments come from?**

Exodus 20:1; 31:18 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Only this part of the Bible was spoken by and written by God Himself, Personally; all the rest was written by the hand of men

under the guidance of the Spirit of God (2Tim.3:16; 2Peter 1:21). Of all the Scriptures, the Law is the part that is disputed and challenged more than any other. As we continue our study we shall also see that, of all the Scriptures, the law is the part that God will exalt and honour above all else.

**3. God's Word, or Law, existed before it was given at Sinai. Where is the Word / Law of God really established and how long will it last?**  
Psalm 119:89; 111:7,8 \_\_\_\_\_

**4. As God's Law is settled in heaven, what is the attitude of the angels and all the host of heaven in respect to God's Commandments?**  
Psalm 103:19-22 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: This world is the only planet with sin on it (Rev.12:9-12; Isa.24:20-22). God will do His pleasure, to have righteousness throughout the whole of His creation (Dan.9:24). To do God's pleasure, to please Him, is to obey and keep His Commandments (John 8:29; 5:19,30; 1John 3:22).

**5. What will God do with His law?**  
Isaiah 42:21 \_\_\_\_\_

**6. What can God's Law do for us?**  
Psalm 19:7-11 \_\_\_\_\_

Compare Psalm 111:10; 119:99,100 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: This is a very brief summary of the power of God's Law and Word. The blessings that follow obedience far outweigh the transient pleasures of sin and later we shall expand on the miracle of those blessings. No man or woman need miss out on God's wonderful gift.

**7. What assistance do we need that we may discover the wonders of God's Law?**  
Psalm 119:18 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Before reading the Word of God -- pray for His guidance, for Jesus is our teacher (Luke 24:31,32).

**8. What may we receive from this Divine Teacher?**

Isaiah 48:17,18 \_\_\_\_\_

**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS****9. The first Commandment makes our relationship with God very clear. What does He require?**

Exodus 20:3 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: God is a great God and a great King, deserving of our undivided worship, allegiance, love and praise (Jer.10:10,11; Psalm 95:1-6).

**10. The second Commandment relates to the first and helps us to understand how to focus our mind on the true and living God without a deceptive distraction. In brief, what does the Commandment state?**

Exodus 20:4-6 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: The first four of the Ten Commandments deal with man's relationship to his Creator, while the last six of the Commandments deal with man's relationship to his fellow man (Matthew 22:37-40).

The commandment concerning images falls under the first category, therefore the images that God is forbidding are those that relate to worship. Notice that God did not reveal His appearance to the people of Israel when He spoke to them from Mount Horeb (Sinai), because He did not want them manufacturing images in that likeness. He knew that the people would lose sight of the real God and become absorbed in the image (Deut.4:9-19).

An image could be a three dimensional figure, or a two dimensional picture or representation. The image may become the focal point in worship, such as by praying before it, or giving it sacred endearment, or undue consideration, or to consider that it may have some special power, or that it may possess some communication enhancement with Deity.

The presence of images in worship, even if it is claimed that they assist in the worship of the true God, is defined as IDOLATRY under the second Commandment. An example of such images that fall into this class would be:-- pictures or images of Jesus, of Mary, or of the saints (so called), a crucifix and also crosses. As God has specifically forbidden the making of such images, where is the inspiration coming from to produce these works of men's hands? (Malachi 3:6; James 1:17; Matthew 5:17-18). Also, pictures and images of Buddha, or of any other idol, or worship figure, are an abomination to God.

Many Christians have these kind of images around them and feel indignant that someone would suggest that they are placing an unwholesome importance upon those images, or giving them some pre-eminence over the heavenly Father or over Jesus Christ. The importance or pre-eminence we may place upon those images may be easily gauged by our resistance, or reluctance, to completely remove those images out of our lives and destroy them. Removing the idols will free us that we may observe the second Commandment. God's people will worship Him in Spirit and truth and not through some man made representation (John 4:22-24; Romans 1:18-23), for God said not to attempt to worship Him using images.

Notwithstanding, the second Commandment does not forbid ALL images; otherwise such things as:- maps, engineering drawings, pictures for educational purposes, pictures in medical books and of things in nature, x-rays, a child's doll, stuffed toys, etc., would all be a violation of that law. However, pictures used in a manner that do not form a part of worship, or do not distort the mind's perception of God, or cause the mind to contemplate unholy behaviour, or become a coveted idol, is not a sin.

One might ask -- may pictures be used at all in a religious or devotional service to illustrate a religious concept? This practice may be acceptable and used to advantage, provided it is clearly

understood by the method of presentation of the picture that it is an *aid to education and not an aid to worship*. God used pictures when instructing His prophets and the prophets, in turn, would convey Gods message using diagrams and pictures (Hosea 12:10).

Further to the question of children's toys; a toy that depicts a principle that is foreign to God is NOT in accordance with the will of God. For example -- figurines that suggest violence, or have a facial expression that indicates anger, hatred, rebellion, or violence. Dolls that are deliberately made ugly, or distorted, or disfigured, or of unnatural appearance (e.g. Garbage pail kids, Cabbage patch dolls, grotesque beings as seen in movies or on TV). At the other end of the scale there are dolls that foster an attitude of self centred pride of dress and appearance, or pleasure in material possessions, or sensual attractiveness (e.g. Barbie dolls). All of these are of Satanic origin and designed to lead the mind away from all that is pure, holy and Christlike (Phil.4:8; Psalm 11:5; 101:2,3; Prov.6:16-19; 21:4; Col.2:20,21; Luke 16:15).

There is another aspect to idolatry, notice the next question...

**11. What did Jesus say was the first requirement of the Law of God?**

Matthew 22:36-38 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: This alerts us to another avenue of idolatry... Placing anything above God in our hearts desires, such as: house, car, career, money, husband, wife, children, sex, food, music, television, love of ease, or anything else, is an idol to us and will displace God from our affections (Matt.19:29; 10:37; Luke 14:26; Col.3:5).

**12. What injunction has God placed upon men in giving the third Commandment?**

Exodus 20:7 \_\_\_\_\_

**13. Give an example of one that blasphemed God.**

Hebrews 12:16 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: "Profane" -- Irreverence or contempt for God or sacred things; irreligious, especially speaking in manifest or implied contempt for sacred things. Example, Leviticus 20:1-3, profaning God and the sanctuary by unholy practices, that of sacrificing children to idols.

Esau despised his birthright ([Gen.25:31-34] "birthright" – The God given right to be heir of the blessing and inheritance. In this case, heir to the kingdom of Christ. According to the promise, Jacob, later to become Israel, received the birthright and the blessing of eternal life [Isa.58:14; Gen.32:24-30; Rom.8:17; Gal.3:29]). Esau had a vile tongue and exhibited little or no regard for God or for sacred things (Heb.12:16).

We can learn a lesson from Esau. His indifference toward the truth and disregard for the transforming power of the Spirit of Christ caused him to forfeit God's offer of eternal life (the heritage of Jacob). This is referred to in Scripture as blasphemy against the Holy Spirit and known as the unforgivable sin (Matt.12:31,32). The time came when Esau realised what he had lost and he sought it with tears, but it was too late. The chance for forgiveness had passed. He was forever lost (Heb.12:17; Luke 13:28; Rev.22:11; 2Cor.6:1,2). So it will be with all of those who lightly regard the truth of God's word and fail to apply it to their lives and cease from sin.

Some other ways the name of God may be taken in vain are worthy of our investigation, that we may avoid this vile sin of irreverence and insult to our loving God and Redeemer. It was stated that blasphemy is the act of being profane and irreverent toward God. It extends further. To claim to have the authority that belongs only to God, or even to claim to be God, is likewise blasphemy (Lesson 10, p.9; Lesson 29, p.11; Rev.13:5,6; Dan.7:25; 2Thess.2:3,4).

Then there is claiming to be able to forgive sins. Notice Luke 5:20-24 --- It is true that it is not blasphemy for Jesus to forgive sins, but the Pharisees did not see it that way. Notice also that Jesus did not

correct them for their understanding of what constitutes blasphemy, therefore their interpretation of this sin was right in the eyes of Christ, for only God can forgive sin for the purpose of salvation. He showed them that He had power to forgive sins and in so doing gave testimony of His claim to be the Messiah. While, at this time, Christ was confirming His Messiahship, at the same time He clearly revealed that men do not have the authority to forgive a sin against God.

**14. What is another way men blaspheme God?**

Romans 2:17-24, notice vv. 23,24 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: To claim to be a follower of Jesus Christ and not do the things that He says is a dishonour to God and is a blasphemy against Him and the Spirit of God (Matt.12:31,32). The heavenly Father also declares such false professors to be liars (1John 2:4-6; Rev.3:9; 21:27).

**15. In the fourth Commandment God specifies His Holy Day. What is the name of that day, which day of the week is it, what does He require on that day and for what reason has He appointed it?**

Exodus 20:8-11 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: The subject of the Sabbath has been treated at length in lessons 26, 27 and 28.

**16. The fifth Commandment introduces the section of the Ten Commandments dealing with our relationship to our fellow man. Briefly state the main point of this testament.**

Exodus 20:12 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: The character of the man or woman is formed in the home. In the early years of childhood, the child learns how to relate to others through a mutual relationship with his/her parents. God has appointed Godly parents to raise Godly children (Mal.2:15); as long as the directions of a parent are in line with the commands of God, He requires the child to obey (Eph.6:1-4).



When we become of age and leave the parental home to establish our own home, we assume full responsibility for our own actions and reap the results of our own decisions. Wise progeny will recognise a source of sound counsel in their wise parents and in leaving the parental home, a prudent young man or woman will still respect the position and experience of their parents and will give them due honour (Prov.1:8-19; 2:1-19; 3:1-12; 4:1,2).

If a parent should require their son or daughter to act contrary to any of the Ten Commandments, that child is to obey God rather than men (Eph.6:1-4; Acts 5:29; Gal.5:7. Notice Luke 14:26,27, this does not mean to have a hatred of our family, it is simply saying not to place even our closest loved ones, or even ourselves before God. See also 1Cor.7:31,35). Small children know little more than what their parents teach them, or allow them to be taught (TV). Therefore, corrupt parents may set the hearts of their children to wickedness, ruining society and sealing the destruction of the child, unless that child repents before it is too late (Ps.37:28).

Much of the heart rending agony, the crime and pain in this world can be traced back to the deterioration of the home and the absence of love, respect and courtesy between parent and child. Thank God for the fifth Commandment, if only families would rediscover it and governments stop presiding over it.

**17. What is stated in the sixth Commandment?**

Exodus 20:13 \_\_\_\_\_

**18. Killing is the taking of life. What other way may we be classified as a murderer and thus contravene the sixth Commandment?**

1 John 3:15 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: By this exposing of our intimate thoughts and feelings, the Scripture points out that the law of God is not just a set of rules for social acceptability, but is a law that governs the very way we think

and feel. Notice a similar heart-compliance with the Law is called for in the next Commandment.

**19. What is stated in the seventh Commandment?**

Exodus 20:14 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: God desired to protect the sanctity of marriage in this Commandment. So many homes are destroyed and lives shattered because of a disregard for the sacredness of the marriage relation. It seems that adultery and fornication is expected behaviour in many of today's married couples. The moral disintegration of society is the reason for the fall of nation after nation down through history and will be our undoing. The world today is looking more like Sodom every day, the condition just before the second coming of Jesus (Luke 17:27-30).

**20. What deeper application of the law concerning adultery is given by Jesus?**

Matthew 5:27-28 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: As with all of the Commandments, the law relating to adultery is not confined to the literal act, but is a discerner of the very thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12).

**21. State the instruction given in the eighth Commandment.**

Exodus 20:15 \_\_\_\_\_

**22. Those guilty of breaking the eighth Commandment -- what are they required to do?**

Ephesians 4:28 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: The thief is not only required to stop stealing, but he is required to repay the victim of his crime...

**23. What restitution (satisfactory compensation) is to be made, by the thief, to the person he has robbed?**

Exodus 22:7b,9 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Generally, for any theft, the thief is required to repay double. However, for the conditions cited in verse 1 a different compensation ratio is required.

In the case of Zacchaeus, he restored fourfold to the people he had defrauded and Jesus acknowledged his repentance (Luke 19:8,9). We should remember that in making restitution, Zacchaeus acted out of repentance, he greatly desired to *revenge* his wrong act. The truly converted will do all in their power to *undo the effects* of their past sins. This is not an attempt at self justification, but is the heaven-born desire to *reverse, reduce, or revenge*, where possible, the pain caused by their own misdeeds (2Cor.7:9-11; 10:6).

Zacchaeus could not in any way pay the debt of the sin of theft without his life. For the sinner to retain his life, the penalty for sin can only be met by the life of our crucified Lord (Isa.53:10-12; Acts.4:10-12; lesson 1) and the changed heart can only be wrought by the indwelling of the risen Saviour (2Cor.5:17).

**24. What is stated in the ninth Commandment and what does it mean?**

Exodus20:16 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: To bear "false witness" means to say things that are false, or in other words, to tell "lies".

**25. We all like to think that God is our Father and that we are one with Him, but when we communicate that which we know to be wrong (lie), with whom do we align ourselves and whom does God see is our father, the one to whom we give allegiance?**

John 8:44. Compare Romans 6:16 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: A lie may be communicated in a manner other than by speech. It may also be done through a written document, or by a gesture with the hands or with the eyes. Exaggeration, or understating the facts is also a lie. Similarly, stating the *truth* in a manner intended to impart

a misunderstanding of the true nature of things is to deceive and is a lie. Anything that is designed to deliberately mislead is a lie. However, an untrue statement made with the sincere belief that it is accurate and true is not a lie, for in making that statement, there is no intent or attempt to mislead.

**26. The tenth commandment may be summed up in a few words...**

Exodus 20:17. You shall NOT \_\_\_\_\_ that which you have no right to have or should not have.

Note: To covet is to greatly desire, or want to possess. Clearly, this is an instruction to abandon every unwholesome thought, desire and ambition. The heart should be so inclined toward God that the things of this world become subordinate, or secondary, to our pursuit of righteousness, the attainment of the character of Christ and finally, the crown of life. It is therefore not wrong to covet the good things and that which will strengthen our hold on Christ and make our ministry more fruitful (1Cor.12:31).

**27. Paul expands on the deeper meaning of covetousness. What word does he use to expose the roots of this practice?**

Colossians 3:5 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: It is common among people to covet to the point where the attainment of some earthly desire is so strong as to leave no room for God. The heart has given place to the devil and we become led by our lust. Our objective becomes our idol (Ephesians 4:27; James 1:14; 1John 2:15-17).

It is clear then, that our thoughts may be centred either on satisfying our carnal (fleshly) and worldly desires, or centred on Christ and what He wants us to be, with holy thoughts, holy motives and holy feelings.

**28. What affect do the thoughts, that we allow to abide in our hearts, have upon our character?**

Proverbs 23:7 \_\_\_\_\_

Compare Proverbs 4:23 \_\_\_\_\_

Matthew 12:35 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: When God said not to covet, He was saying to keep the thoughts pure and holy; do not allow anything to linger in the mind that would lessen our desire for purity and righteousness. One impure thought cherished and nurtured will weaken our hold on Christ and thus make certain our execution of that thought, if not in reality, through lack of opportunity, then fully lived out in the reprobate mind.

All sin originates in the mind of the person before they sin. For example, stealing is a physical activity, but it had its origin as covetousness in the mind of the thief. The same principle applies for adultery, fornication and murder; in fact, covetousness is the precursor to the transgression of any of the Commandments.

**29. How do we keep the mind free from unChristlike thoughts?**

Proverbs 23:26 \_\_\_\_\_

2Corinthians 10:4,5 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Just as we would call on God in prayer to remove a desire for a certain temptation, so we may call on Him to remove every vile and disgusting meditation (Isa.55:7; Psalm 19:14). IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL THE THOUGHTS WITHOUT THE POWER OF JESUS CHRIST (Jer.13:23; 10:23,24; John 15:3-11). When we see this miracle worked in our lives there is a wonderful peace, a thrilling joy and a great blessing (Jude 24). Lessons 3 to 7 will give more details on victorious living.

**WHAT THE LAW MEANS TO THE TRUE CHRISTIAN**

**30. When God's people acknowledged their sin, turned unto the Lord and gave praises to Him, what did they declare about His exalted Majesty, His worthiness of worship and His Law?**

Nehemiah 9:5 \_\_\_\_\_

Nehemiah 9:6 \_\_\_\_\_

Nehemiah 9:13,14 \_\_\_\_\_

**31. When God brought His people out of the heathen practices of Egypt, He gave them the Ten Commandments. What was the reason for this and how did the moral Law help them in their daily life?**

Deuteronomy 6:24,25 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: Egypt, with its idolatry and corruption, is a symbol of this world (Jer.23:7,8; 1Cor.10:1-11; Hosea 9:3,4,6,15,17). The exodus of the children of Israel from Egypt and their entry into the promised land, is a type of the deliverance of God's faithful people from this sin sick world into the kingdom of Christ at His second coming.

What did God give to Israel to prepare them mentally and spiritually for the land of their deliverance? --- The Ten Commandments (Deut.6). This is what made these people distinctively different from the rest of the sin loving world. It is the observance of the Ten Commandments that will "mark" God's people for deliverance at the coming of their God (Ezekiel 9).

**32. What has God promised to do for His people concerning His Law?**

Hebrews 8:10 \_\_\_\_\_

2Corinthians 3:3; Ezekiel 36:25-27 \_\_\_\_\_

**33. What is required of His professed people that the promise may be fulfilled?**

Proverbs 23:26 \_\_\_\_\_

1John 1:9 \_\_\_\_\_

**34. When we observe the Law of God in the manner that He intended, what will be our state of mind toward that Law?**

Psalms 119:161-168 \_\_\_\_\_

Note: We will LOVE IT because we LOVE HIM and we will not find the Law a burdensome yoke (1John 5:3). Doing His will becomes our greatest pleasure in life; it is our reason for living (John 14:15).

When God says -- *Take My yoke upon you... for My yoke is easy and my burden is light (Matthew 11:29,30)* -- He is saying that His requirement of obedience from His people is not hard to bear. He can make the Law easy to observe, if we allow Him to change our heart. The reason why so many Christians find the Law of God and the Christian path so difficult is because they have tried to attach themselves to Christ without detaching themselves from the sins they love so much.

It's all a matter of surrender; unaided we cannot keep the Law ourselves, but when we ask God to keep us from falling, that is what He does (Jude 24). Of course, not falling means not falling into sin and transgressing God's moral law, the Ten Commandments.

When we first turn to Christ it is out of a realisation of our need and not out of love, but as we see Him working the miracle of transformation in the soul, our love for Him grows with each victory and the keeping of the Commandments becomes a delight.

Falling in love with Jesus takes time, like forming any close friendship. Learn of Him (Matt.11:29); taste and see that He is good (Ps.34:8); confirm and know Him by experience (Gen.30:27; 2Peter 1:5-11). It has to be nurtured with prayer, Bible study and obedience. We need to become acquainted with our newly found Saviour. First comes the conviction of our need; then the surrender, knowing that we cannot overcome sin alone; then the experience of victory, the liberation from sin and the knowledge of sins forgiven; then comes the heart filled with gratitude, thanks and praise to Him -- and that overflows into love. Why does it take so long? -- see Matthew 9:27-29. The sooner we obey Him, the sooner we love Him (John.14:15).

## CONCLUSION

We have learned that the Ten Commandments are *loving guidelines* from a loving Creator to guide us in our worship of Him and in our relationship toward our fellow man. The Commandments are not merely a code for social behaviour, but are a discerner of the intents and thoughts of the mind. They are directed at the very centre of our being, the part of us that thinks, reasons, loves, hates and responds to external influences (the soul). God's moral Law gives us a Standard by which we may know what is right and what is wrong. It shows that our relationship to others is to be out of compassion and love from the heart and not simply out of an act of courtesy, tolerance, or good manners (Romans 13:8-10; 1Peter 1:22,23).

The Law can show us what is right, but it cannot empower us to do it. This is where Jesus is needed. By asking God for the power to keep all that is written in His Law, we receive the gift of the Spirit of Jesus Christ and then --- *I can do all things through Christ Who strengthens me* (Philippians 4:13; lesson 6 and 7 will help explain how this is done).

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In our next study we shall see how the moral Law of God has a part in preparing the true followers of Jesus to have a place in the Creator's eternal kingdom. It should be understood that *no man is saved because he keeps the Law, he is saved because Jesus has forgiven him his sin and paid the debt of his transgression of the Law -- this is the Grace of God*. The forgiven sinner is now filled with such love, thanks and willingness to please his Redeemer that he obeys His every Word, and the keeping of the Commandments is his delight. This is the miracle of transformation, being born again and it is only wrought by the indwelling of Jesus Christ.

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***My soul has kept thy Testimonies and I love them exceedingly.***

***Psalm 119:167***