

First and Great Commandment!



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Surprising as it may seem, the Ten Commandments were not the first thing on the agenda. God first made a covenant with Abraham—his *descendants* would be God's *people*—those who keep their *faith* in God because they *love* God.

If we hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering and base our claim on the promise of Hebrews 10:23 "*He is faithful that promised*" we can ask God for anything and be confident of receiving the answer. And God was faithful because Abraham and Sarah had a son, who had a son, and who had other sons and daughters who became the Israelites.

After being held captive in Egypt and experiencing horrific treatment as slaves, the Israelites prayed for a deliverance and that God would give them their promised land. God heard their request and raised up Moses who led them through the sea and into a wilderness for forty years—which led to the Promised Land—where Israel is located today.

Three months after leaving Egypt, God called for a meeting with Moses on the mountain, while all the people waited at the base. Exodus 19:4 "*Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. 5 Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar*

[special] treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine."

That is God's requirement—to *obey* His voice and *keep* His covenant. The young ruler Matthew 19 would have been heading in the *right* direction, because he said he had obeyed the Commandments, but he chose to serve *money* rather than *God* and went off in the *wrong* direction.

Matthew 19:16 "*What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life; if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*" To keep the Commandments meant *not* keeping laid-up treasure in his possession on earth.

As any game with no rules, the result is confusion—therefore this series on the Commandments will explain *why* God gave us 10 of them. He wants us to have a *good life* and it will be a *scriptural* one if we live by the *Good Book!* The Ten Commandments are a compass pointing us in the *right* direction—they indicate our *love* for God and our willingness to obey His Word.

God asks *two things* of us—to *love* Him with all our heart, soul, and mind, and to *love others* also. Exodus 20:1 "*And God spoke all these words, saying: 2 'I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. 3 'You shall have no other gods before Me.*"

God requires that our faith be always on Him. He purchased *our* life by His *Son's* life on the cross—there can be no competitors or substitutes.

Keeping the *Commandments* of God means accepting the *grace* of God and the *forgiveness* of Christ by faith. Matthew 19:16 "*If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.*" These ten commands of God are an integral and central part of the Christian walk.

Commandment #1 forms the basis for the other nine. God first commands that we do not have idols in any *form, shape, or type*, because the human heart—to whom God gave the

responsibility to choose—will choose to make an idol out of *anything* and *everything* imaginable.

Money has been idol #1 for most people, but an idol can be anything or anyone that is ahead of God. And what *place* God has in our life will be proven by our *obedience* to His Word. When a difficult decision must be made, any rebellion in our heart will be revealed.

The *carnal* mind is opposed to the *spiritual* mind, so a radical change of heart must take place. And since it *is* so radically different, only *God* could change it to a mind totally *devoted* to Him and ever *faithful* to Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:17 "*If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.*"

This *new state* of things would be that no person, no interest, no entertainment, no sports, no job, no career, no activity nor anything else would be put ahead of God. How we *choose* will prove if we *appreciate* the gift of God's Son—John 14:15 "*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*"

Any decision made *outside* of God's will reveals that some *thing* or *someone* has become an idol. If *God* is in first place, then there is no idol and His *Word* takes priority. John 6:45 "*Every one who listens to the Father and learns from Him comes to me.*" If *God* is first, His *Word* is *consulted* first.

There has never been more wickedness, evil, hatred, disrespect, arrogance, pride, and disregard for human life than there is today. **The very core of this horrible condition is Satan.** With the world, *everything* and *anything* is in first place and God in a distant *second*—if He has any place at all.

When *deciding* on some issue—financial matter, healing, work issue, situations in the home or with friends, one of two powers will *control* that decision. If we *obey* the Word, *God* is in control; if we *disobey* His Word, *Satan* has control.

There will be *very few* on earth living by faith when the Rapture takes place and Jesus returns. As the Tribulation approaches, the words of the Master take on greater meaning. *Matthew 13:49* “*So shall it be at the end of the world: the angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just, 50 And shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.*”

If we truly love God with all our heart, soul, and mind, He will be in *first* place ahead of everything, every person, and every other interest. The problem is that when we begin the Christian life, we love everything else *more* than we love God—that must change! Since it is such an important issue, only God can bring it about—coupled with our willingness to learn from Him.

That misplaced love takes *many* forms—love for money, a person, a business, a house, a vacation, a vehicle, or whatever the world could offer. Money is usually first, as it *buys* the other idols. *1 Timothy 6:10* “*The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*”

If there is anything in our life we love more than God, it will be a temptation; but if God is in first place, we will love everyone the same since God loves all of *us* the same. His Son died for the entire *world* because divine love has *no favorites*. We are to have the same love for everyone—in our family, in the church, and everyone else.

When love for God is *perfected*, the love for money is *gone*. It is not possible to say we love both equally—it must be one or the other. *Matthew 6:24* “*No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.*”

Satan will *suggest* anything, so we must *reject* everything from him. We are not to worry because

Psalm 37:19 even “*In the days of famine [God’s people] shall be satisfied.*” Whatever *supplies* are available, whatever *wages* are paid, or however *prices* increase, God will make a way and He will provide what we need in a scriptural way.

Love for God—Commandment #1—enables us to be at *peace* with everyone. We will place everything before God in prayer and will thank Him for what He has already provided. Once we have committed our life to God, nothing can touch our life without His permission.

If one of our children meets with an injustice, it is something to meet scripturally. There is a reason for everything, and if we meet it scripturally, God will turn it into a blessing. Anything that is placed ahead of God must be corrected. If someone asks us for money and we do not want to part with it, then *money* is in first place.

God is well able to protect our children and our loved ones wherever they are, or whatever they are doing. If we claim God’s promise for protection *Psalm 91*, and place everything under the Blood of Christ, nothing can touch us or the children—the Atonement promises it.

Obedience to the *Word* is evidence of our love for *God*. Jesus said *John 14:15* “*If ye love me, keep my commandments.*” And before ascending to Heaven, Jesus said go to all nations *Matthew 28:20* “*Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*” Love for God and *belief* in Christ always go together.

The devil has convinced the world to live according to their own ideas—*this* is a serious error. Three Hebrews proved that they had no other god before the one true God. The compulsory law then is like many now—forced inoculation; required vaccinations; compulsory insurance coverage; etc. Although each is different in concept, the

principle is the same—trust in something other than God.

Love for God means doing what God has commanded us to do. These three men had to meet with the king concerning the new law that they did not obey.

The king gives them another chance, which he normally would *not* do. Satan wanted the Hebrews to compromise their stand of faith and give in just a little—leading to bigger compromises later.

The Hebrews faced a wicked and brutal king but they did not back down. They told him that there would be no purpose in waiting to see if they would obey the *unscriptural* law, because they would *not* obey it and they would *not* bow! They *stood up* for what was right because God was *first* in their life.

The answer the Hebrews gave is the answer anyone would give who had the Holy Spirit. *Daniel 3:17* “*If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king. 18 But if not, be it known unto thee, O king, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.*”

They knew Scripture *Exodus 20:3* “*Thou shalt have no other gods before me,*” so they didn’t bow! Even though the words *Matthew 19:17* “*If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments,*” were not yet written, they *knew* the principle of truth and what God required.

Their focus and their faith were on entering life eternal—*Commandment #1* means *God is #1!*



www.fcgchurch.org

*Be on our free mailing list—contact:

PO Box 24283

Philadelphia, PA 19120

info@fcgchurch.org

#3068 0827 23A