

**PART IV: BEHAVING CHRISTIANLY**  
**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND OBEDIENCE TO CHRIST**

In Jesus Christ, God calls us to respond to him in three basic ways: by grasping God's revealed truth about Jesus with our minds; by prayerful communion with God in and through Jesus; and by doing God's will. God's will is primarily revealed to us in Jesus' word and example, which are inextricably linked to the Ten Commandments and other moral instructions found in Scripture.

Catechetical instruction deals with the first aspect through teaching and learning the Apostles' Creed. It deals with the second through teaching and learning the Lord's Prayer. It deals with the third by centering on the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17, Deuteronomy 5:6-21), which are the heart of the Law of God that Jesus embodied in his own life, and are summarized for us in the command to love God and our neighbor.

The standards set by the Law reflect values and obligations that are, to some degree, impressed upon the consciences of all people (Romans 2:15). Yet God gave the Law in a clear and unmistakable way to his chosen people, Israel. Delivering them from slavery in Egypt, he established a covenant relationship with them at Mt. Sinai through Moses, giving them the Law. In grateful response to his grace, Israel would worship and serve God, living as his people in accordance with his Law.

In a similar way, the moral teaching of Jesus Christ is universal, authoritative and final. It is set in a family relationship with God the Father and established by his love and grace in Christ. Through the reconciling power of Jesus' cross, anyone who names him as Savior and Lord is freed from bondage to sin and death, adopted as God's child, and called to a life of holiness. The Christian life of holiness, in which obedience to Christ is central, is rooted in the bond that believers have with the Son and the Father through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, keeping the divine Law is a fundamental form of the new life into which we are brought by faith in Christ.

Following the teaching of Jesus, his apostles, like all the Bible writers, always look at the human individual as a whole. They see behavior as a "fruit," not as something external or separate from heart and character. They therefore always speak of human behavior in terms that link behavior with motivation and purpose. For Jesus, acts are only right insofar as the attitude of mind and heart that they express is right. The pages that follow reflect the same viewpoint.

## **THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

### **256. Why did God give the Ten Commandments?**

God's holy Law is a light to show me his character, a mirror to show me myself, a tutor to lead me to Christ, and a guide to help me love God and others as I should. (Deuteronomy 4:32-40; Psalms 19; 119:97-104; Romans 7:7-12; 13:8-10; Galatians 3:19-26; James 1:21-25; 2:8-13)

### **257. When did God give the Ten Commandments?**

After saving his people Israel from slavery in Egypt through the Ten Plagues, the Passover sacrifice, and crossing of the Red Sea, God gave them the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai as covenant obligations. (Exodus 6:1-8; 13:3; 14:26-31; 19:1-6; 20:1-2; Deuteronomy 5:1-5)

### **258. How did God give the Ten Commandments?**

God gave them to Moses audibly and awesomely, from the midst of the cloud, thus revealing his holiness, and afterward writing them on stone tablets. (Exodus 19; 32:15-16)

### **259. How should you understand the Commandments?**

There are four guiding principles: though stated negatively, each commandment calls for positive action, forbids whatever hinders its keeping, calls for loving, God-glorifying obedience, and requires that I urge others to be governed by it, as I am myself.

### **260. What is our Lord Jesus Christ's understanding of these Commandments?**

Jesus summed them up positively by saying: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." (Matthew 22:37-40; see also John 15:7-17; 1 Thessalonians 4:1-8)

### **261. Why can you not do this perfectly?**

While God made mankind to love him perfectly, sin has corrupted our nature, leading me to resist him, to ignore his will, and to care more for myself than for my neighbors. (Psalm 14:1; Romans 3:9-23; 7:21-25; 1 Corinthians 2:14)

### **262. When will you love God perfectly?**

I will only love God perfectly when he completes his work of grace in me at the end of the age. (Philippians 1:6; 1 John 3:2-3)

### **263. Why then do you learn God's Law now?**

I learn God's Law now so that, having died to sin in Christ, I might love him as I ought, delight in his will as he heals my nature, and live for his glory. (Deuteronomy 11:18-21; Psalm 1:1-3; 119:89-104; Romans 6:1-4,11; 1 John 3:23-24; 4:7-9, 19; 5:1-3)

**264. How does God prepare you to begin living his Law?**

Through faith, repentance and Baptism, God in grace washes away my sin, gives me his Holy Spirit, and makes me a member of Christ, a child of God, and an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven. (Acts 22:16; Titus 3:4-8)

**265. How does the Church help you to live out God's law?**

The Church exercises godly authority and discipline over me through the ministry of baptismal sponsors, clergy, and other teachers. (Romans 15:1-7; 2 Timothy 3:14-15; Hebrews 13:7, 17)

**266. How does the Lord's Supper enable you to continue learning and living God's Law?**

In the Lord's Supper or Holy Eucharist, I hear the Law read, hear God's good news of forgiveness, recall my baptismal promises, have my faith renewed, and receive grace to follow Jesus in the ways of God's Laws and in the works of his Commandments.

### **The First Commandment**

**267. What is the First Commandment?**

The First Commandment is: "I am the Lord your God, You shall have no other gods before me."

**268. What does it mean to have no other gods?**

It means that there should be nothing in my life more important than God and obeying his will. I should love, revere, trust, and worship him only. (Exodus 34:14; Deuteronomy 6:4, 10-15; 12:29-31; Jeremiah 10:6-10; Matthew 4:10; 28:8-20)

**269. Can you worship God perfectly?**

No. Only our Lord Jesus Christ worshiped God perfectly. He leads the Church today to seek to do the same. (Matthew 4:1-11; 26:36-46; Revelation 4-5)

**270. Why are you tempted to worship other gods?**

I am tempted because my sinful heart is still drawn to false gods and their appeal for my allegiance. (Ephesians 5:1-21; James 4:1-10; 1 John 1:8-10; 5:20-21)

**271. How are you tempted to worship other gods?**

I am tempted to trust in myself, possessions, relationships, and success, believing that they will give me happiness, security, and meaning. I am also tempted to believe superstitions and false religious claims, and to reject God's call to worship him alone. (Ps 73:1-17; Romans 1:18-32)

### **The Second Commandment**

**272. What is the Second Commandment?**

The Second Commandment is: "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under

the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them.”

**273. What does the Second Commandment mean?**

God’s people are neither to worship man-made images of God or of other gods, nor make such images for the purpose of worshiping them. (Deuteronomy 4:15-24)

**274. How did Israel break the first two commandments?**

Israel worshiped the gods of the nations around them, neglected God’s Law, and corrupted the worship of the Temple, thus earning God’s punishment. (Exodus 32; Judges 2:11-15, Psalm 78:56-72; Jeremiah 32:30-35)

**275. Why did the nations make such images?**

Israel’s neighbors worshiped false gods by means of images, or idols, believing they could manipulate these imaginary gods to gain favor with them. (Isaiah 40:18-26; 44:9-20)

**276. Are all carved images wrong?**

No. God, who forbids the making of idols and worship of images, commanded carvings and pictures for the Tabernacle. These represented neither God nor false gods, but rather angels, trees, and fruits from the Garden of Eden. (Exodus 37:1-9; 39:22-26; 1 Kings 6:14-19)

**277. Are idols always carved images?**

No. Relationships, habits, aspirations, and ideologies can become idols in my mind if I look to them for salvation from misery, guilt, poverty, loneliness, or despair. (Ezekiel 14:4-5; Isaiah 2:20; Ephesians 5:2; 1 John 5:21)

**278. How was Jesus tempted to break the first two commandments?**

Satan tempted Jesus to bow down and worship him, promising him a world kingdom without the pain of the cross. Instead, Jesus loved and worshiped God faithfully and perfectly all his life. He chose the will of his Father over the promises of the Devil, and accepted the cross. (Matthew 4:1-11; Luke 22:39-49; Hebrews 4:14-16)

**279. How will idolatry affect you?**

If I worship idols I will become like them, empty and worthless, and alienated from God, the only One who can make me whole. (Psalm 115:4-8; Jeremiah 2:11-19; Romans 1:18-32)

**280. How can you love God in worship?**

The Holy Scriptures teach me how to worship God, and the Church’s liturgy guides my worship in keeping with the Scriptures. I can show love to God by worshiping him in this way. (Romans 12:1-2; Hebrews 9:11-14; 10:11-25; 12:18-29; 13:1-19)

## **The Third Commandment**

### **281. What is the Third Commandment?**

The Third Commandment is: “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.”

### **282. What does it mean not to take God’s Name in vain?**

All forms of God’s Name are holy, and those who love him should use his Name with reverence, not lightly or for selfish purposes. (Leviticus 19:12; Psalm 29:2; Psalm 99:1-5; Revelation 15:3 – See Questions 169-175)

### **283. How can you use God’s Name irreverently?**

In false or half-hearted worship, oppression of the poor, and conflicts cloaked with divine cause, people use God’s Name without reverence for him, and only to further their own goals. (Ezekiel 36:22-23)

### **284. How can you use God’s Name lightly?**

Profanity, careless speech, broken vows, open sin, and meaningless exclamations all cheapen God’s Name. These treat God’s Name as “empty” of the reality for which it stands. (Matthew 5: 33-37; Articles of Religion, 39)

### **285. How can you honor God’s Name?**

I honor and love God’s Name, in which I was baptized, by keeping my promises and by upholding honor in relationships, charity in society, justice in law, uprightness in vocation, and holiness in worship. (Deuteronomy 12:11; Psalm 138:2; Proverbs 30:7-9; Matthew 5:22-23; Ephesians 4:25; James 5:12)

## **The Fourth Commandment**

### **286. What is the Fourth Commandment?**

The Fourth Commandment is: “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.”

### **287. What does it mean to keep the Sabbath day holy?**

“Sabbath” is from the Hebrew *shavath*, which means “rest.” God commanded Israel to set apart each seventh day following six days of work for rest and worship. (Exodus 19:8-11)

### **288. Why should you rest on the Sabbath?**

I rest, as Israel was to rest, because God rested on the seventh day from his work of creation. The Sabbath rest brought rhythm to life, work, and worship; freedom from slavery to unending labor; and awareness that God is Lord of all time, including mine. (Genesis 2:1-2; Deut 5:12-15)

### **289. Where do you learn about the holiness of time?**

In creation, through the sun, moon, and stars; in the Law, through Israel’s sacrificial calendar; and in the Church’s liturgy, patterned after Temple worship, I learn that time belongs to God and

is ordered by him. (Genesis 1:14-15; Numbers 28:9-10; Deuteronomy 16-18)

**290. Did Jesus keep the Sabbath?**

As its Lord, Jesus both kept and fulfilled the Sabbath. (Matthew 5:17-20; Mark 2:23-27)

**291. How does Jesus bring Sabbath as God's eternal gift to you?**

Jesus now offers himself as the source of my true rest—from the slavery of sin, from the wasteland of human striving, and from Satan's legacy of futile toil, pain, disease, and death. (Matthew 11:25-30)

**292. What does it mean that a Sabbath rest remains for the people of God?**

When the Church is perfected in Christ, all believers will be completely free from sin and its curse, and established in an eternity of love, adoration, and joy. This will be our unending Sabbath rest. (Isaiah 66: 22-23; Romans 8:18-30; 1 Corinthians 15; Hebrews 4)

**293. How do you celebrate this Sabbath rest with the Church now?**

I join in the Church's weekly worship and participation in God's heavenly rest, which brings order, meaning, and holiness to the other six days of the week. (Hebrews 4:9-10; Colossians 2:16-19)

**294. Why does the Church worship on the first day of the week rather than the seventh?**

The Church worships on the first day of the week in remembrance of the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ on the first day of the week. (Matthew 28:1)

### **The Fifth Commandment**

**295. What is the Fifth Commandment?**

The Fifth Commandment is: "Honor your father and your mother."

**296. What does it mean to honor your father and mother?**

While still a child, I should obey my parents; and I should honor, serve, respect, love, and care for them all their lives. (Proverbs 2:10; 23:22; Ephesians 6:1-4; Colossians 3:20-21)

**297. How did Jesus keep the Fifth Commandment?**

As a child Jesus submitted himself to Mary and Joseph, and honored his mother even as he suffered on the cross by entrusting her to his beloved disciple's care. (Luke 2:39-52; John 19:25-27)

**298. How else do you love God in light of the Fifth Commandment?**

I keep the Fifth Commandment in love to God by showing respect for the aged; submitting to my teachers, pastors, and directors; respecting tradition and civil authority; and ordering myself in reverent humility, as is fitting for a servant and child of God. (Matthew 22:15-22; Romans 13; Colossians 3:18-4:1; 1 Tim 6:1-2; Hebrews 13:7,17; Articles of Religion, 37)

**299. Will such an attitude of honor come to you naturally?**

No. “Folly is bound up in the heart of a child” (Proverbs 22:15). From my earliest days, led and driven by sin, I persistently attempt to rule myself.

**300. Does earthly authority have limits?**

Yes. All authority comes from God, who is the King of kings and expects me to love, honor, and obey him rather than others if they command me to sin. (Exodus 1:17; Daniel 1:8-16; 3:16-18; Acts 5:29; Romans 13:1-5; Colossians 4:1; 1 Peter 2:14-15)

**The Sixth Commandment**

**301. What is the Sixth Commandment?**

The Sixth Commandment is: “You shall not murder.”

**302. What does it mean not to murder?**

Since God declares human life sacred from conception to natural death, I may not take the life of neighbors unjustly, bear them malice in my heart, or harm them by word or deed; rather, I should seek to cause their lives to flourish. (Genesis 9:6; Leviticus 19:16; Deuteronomy 19:4-7)

**303. How did Christ cause life to flourish?**

Jesus sought the well-being of all who came to him: he made the blind see and the deaf hear, caused the lame to walk, cured the sick, fed the hungry, cast out demons, raised the dead, and preached good news to all. (Luke 4:17-21; Matthew 14:13-21, 34-36)

**304. How did Jesus extend the law against murder?**

Jesus equated unjust anger with murder. (Matthew 5:21-22; 1 John 3:15)

**305. Is your anger always sinful, or can it be just?**

Anger can be just if I am motivated not by fear, pride, or revenge, but purely by love for God’s honor and my neighbor’s well-being. More often than not, however, human anger is sinful. (Ephesians 4:26-27)

**306. What other actions may be considered forms of murder?**

Suicide, abortion, genocide, infanticide, and euthanasia are forms of murder. Related sins include abuse, abandonment, recklessness, and hatred or derision.

**307. Is it always wrong to harm or kill another?**

There are rare times when the claims of justice, mercy, and life itself may require doing harm or even bringing death to others. It is the particular task of government to do this in society. (Romans 13:1-4)

**308. How else can you cause life to flourish?**

As a witness to the Gospel, I can love God and my neighbor by refraining from selfish anger, insults, and cursing, by defending the helpless and unborn, by rescuing those who damage themselves, and by helping others to prosper. (Matthew 5:38-48; 9:35-38; Luke 23:34; Acts 10:34-42; Ephesians 4:25-32; 5:1-2)

**The Seventh Commandment**

**309. What is the Seventh Commandment?**

The Seventh Commandment is: “You shall not commit adultery.”

**310. What does it mean not to commit adultery?**

Marriage is holy. Married persons are to be faithful to their spouses as long as they both shall live. So I must not engage in sexual activity with anyone other than my spouse.  
(Deuteronomy 22-24:5; See Questions 128-130)

**311. Why does God ordain marriage?**

God ordains marriage for three important purposes: for the procreation of children to be brought up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; for a remedy against sin and to avoid fornication; and for mutual friendship, help, and comfort, both in prosperity and adversity. (Genesis 1:28; Deuteronomy 6:7; Proverbs 22:6; 31:10-12; 1 Corinthians 7:2-5; Book of Common Prayer)

**312. What does marriage illustrate?**

The New Testament reveals that human marriage is meant to reflect the faithful love that unites Christ to his Church. (Ephesians 5:21-33)

**313. What does it mean to be faithful in marriage?**

To be faithful in marriage is to be exclusively devoted in heart, mind, and body to one’s spouse in the marriage covenant. (Ephesians 5:29-31)

**314. Is divorce ever permitted?**

Although he permits divorce in some cases, God hates it. It severs what he has joined, and causes immeasurable pain, suffering and brokenness. (Malachi 2:13-16; Matthew 19:1-12; 1 Corinthians 7:12-16)

**315. How else is the Seventh Commandment broken?**

Fornication, same-gender sexual acts, rape, incest, pedophilia, bestiality, pornography, lust, or any other form of self-centered sexual desire and behavior, all violate this law. (Leviticus 18; Romans 1:18-28; Matthew 5:27-30)

**316. What does it mean for you to be chaste?**

It means that I must refrain from sexual acts outside of marriage; and I must respect myself and all others in body, mind, and spirit; practice sexual purity; and view others as image bearers of God, not as objects of personal gratification. (1 Thessalonians 4:3-7)

**317. How do you benefit from chastity?**

Chastity enables me to give of myself in friendship, avoid difficulty in marriage, and experience the true freedom of integrity before God. (1 Corinthians 7:32-35)

**The Eighth Commandment**

**318. What is the Eighth Commandment?**

The Eighth Commandment is: "You shall not steal."

**319. What does it mean not to steal?**

Because God is Creator and Lord of this world, the created order is holy, and all things fundamentally belong to him. Since I am required to love God and my neighbor, I must not take what does not belong to me, and I must be true, honest, and just in all my business dealings. (Leviticus 19:10-12; Ephesians 4:28; Articles of Religion, 38)

**320. If the earth and all it contains is the Lord's, is it fitting for you to own property or goods?**

Yes. However, everything I own I hold as God's steward, to cultivate and use for his glory while respecting what he has entrusted to others. (Genesis 1-2; 9; Leviticus 25-27; Psalm 24:1)

**321. How did God teach Israel to respect the property of others?**

God gave land and possessions as a trust from him, which could be bought, sold, and inherited. He required restitution when property was stolen, and forbade unjust loans and interest. (Exodus 22:1; Leviticus 25:36-37; Numbers 27; 33:50-36:12)

**322. What things other than property can you steal?**

I can steal reputation, wages, and honor; credit, answers, and inventions; friendship, hope, and goodwill from others. I must repay and, to the best of my ability, restore what I have stolen. (Deuteronomy 24:14-15, 17-18; 2 Samuel 11-15; 1 Kings 21)

**323. As his steward, how does God require you to use your possessions?**

As I am able, I should earn my own living so that I may set aside offerings for worship, give alms to the poor, and care for my dependents; and I should use all my possessions, gifts and abilities to glorify God, better the state of the creation, and love my neighbors. (Proverbs 19:17, 30:8-9; 1 Corinthians 16:2; Ephesians 4:28)

**324. What is the minimum standard of giving for you as a Christian?**

A tithe, which is ten percent of my income, is the minimum standard and goal of giving for the work of God; yet Jesus expects more than my minimum. (Deuteronomy 14:22-29; Luke 21:1-4)

**The Ninth Commandment**

**325. What is the Ninth Commandment?**

The Ninth Commandment is: “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

**326. What does it mean not to bear false witness?**

It means that I am to love God and my neighbor by speaking truthfully and graciously at all times, and by keeping my tongue from lying, slander, or gossip. (Proverbs 6:19; Matthew 5:33-37; 12:36; Ephesians 4:15-16)

**327. How did Jesus suffer from false witness?**

The Sanhedrin, desiring Jesus’ execution, hired witnesses to lie about him. (Psalm 109:1-3; Mark 14:53-58)

**328. How does Jesus bear true witness?**

Jesus always speaks the truth about himself and me, and bears witness before God and Satan that I belong to him. (John 17:6-8; 18:19-24)

**329. How is false witness borne in court?**

False accusations, lies, withholding evidence, or an unjust verdict all violate truth and justice. (Exodus 23:1)

**330. When is it right to speak of your neighbor’s sins?**

I am forbidden to gossip or slander, but I must speak the truth in love to my neighbor, report crimes, advocate for the helpless, and protect the community. (Ephesians 4:15, Leviticus 19:17-18; Matthew 18:15; James 5:18-20)

**The Tenth Commandment**

**331. What is the Tenth Commandment?**

The Tenth Commandment is: “You shall not covet.”

**332. What does it mean not to covet?**

I am not to let envy make me want what others have, but in humility should be content with what I have. (Micah 2:1-2; Hebrews 13:5-6; Philippians 4:10-13)

**333. How did Jesus practice contentment?**

In contentment, Jesus took on the form of a servant without wealth or possessions, and in his earthly life loved and trusted his Father in all things. (Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 2:3-11)

**334. How is covetousness especially dangerous?**

Covetousness begins with discontent in mind and spirit, and as it grows in the heart, it can lead to sins such as idolatry, adultery, and theft. (2 Samuel 11:1-4; 1 Kings 21:1-15; Luke 12:15; James 1:15)

**335. What should you do instead of coveting?**

I should think often of the inheritance that Jesus has prepared for me, meditate upon his care for the birds of the air and the flowers of the field, be generous with what God has entrusted to me, and help others to keep what is rightfully theirs. (Matthew 6:25-34; Romans 12:13; Philippians 4:8; Hebrews 13:5; 1 Timothy 6:6-10; 1 Peter 1:3-5)

**Need for Atonement, Healing, and Joy**

**336. Is it possible for you to keep all these commandments?**

No. I fail to fulfill them perfectly, however hard I try. One purpose of the Law is to show me my utter inability to obey God flawlessly, and so to point to my need of Christ's obedience and atoning death on my behalf. (Isaiah 53:4-6; Romans 3:19-31; Hebrews 10:1-14)

**337. Since you cannot keep God's commandments perfectly, what has Jesus done on your behalf?**

As the perfect human and the unblemished Lamb, Jesus has offered himself to God, suffering death for my redemption upon the cross, which is the once for all "sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world." (1662 Book of Common Prayer; Hebrews 10:10,12)

**338. Does Christ's obedience excuse you from personal obedience?**

No. Obedience is always due to God as our Father, Lord, and Creator. Despite my sin and weakness, I should strive always to obey him, looking to Jesus for salvation and to the Holy Spirit for strength. (John 14:15-16, 23-24)

**339. What is the first benefit of Christ's sacrifice?**

My sins are forgiven when I confess them and ask for pardon through Christ's shed blood. I live by being forgiven. (1 John 1:8-9; Hebrews 9:11-12)

**340. Are you still broken, despite God's forgiveness?**

Yes. Sin leaves me wounded, lonely, afraid, divided, and in need of Christ's healing ministry. (Psalms 32:1-5; 51; 130; Matthew 15:19; 1 John 2:1-2)

**341. How does Jesus heal you?**

Through the gift and fruit of the Holy Spirit, Jesus mends my disordered soul from the effects of sin in my mind, will, and desire. (Acts 2:38; Romans 8:26; 12:2)

**342. What is this healing called?**

This healing is called sanctification. In it, by the work of the Holy Spirit, my mind, will, and desires are progressively transformed and conformed to the character of Jesus Christ. (Romans 12:1-2; Ephesians 2:1-3; 3:14-21; 4:17-19; Philippians 2; Colossians 2-4; 1 John 3:2-3)

**343. What does the Church offer you as helps for your sanctification?**

The Church's teaching, sacraments, liturgies, seasons, ministry, oversight, and fellowship assist my growth in Christ and are channels of God's abundant care for my soul. (Ephesians 4-6; Philippians 3; Colossians 3; Ascensiontide Collects)

**344. For what does sanctification prepare you?**

Sanctification prepares me for the vision and glory of God in conformity to my Lord Jesus Christ, who has promised that "the pure in heart shall see God." (Matthew 5:8)

**345. With what attitude should I live a life of sanctification?**

God calls me to a life of joy. Constant thoughts of God's love for me, and of my hope in Christ, will keep me always rejoicing. (Philippians 4:4; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19)