

The Ten Commandments



“We have staked the whole future of American civilization, not upon the power of government, far from it. We have staked the future of all our American institutions upon the capacity of each and all of us to govern ourselves, to sustain ourselves, according to the Ten Commandments of God.”

— James Madison (1751-1836) Fourth President of the United States

“The Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the Mount contain my religion...”

— John Adams (1797-1801) Second President of the United States and Patriot

“The duties of men are summarily comprised in the Ten Commandments, consisting of two tables; one comprehending the duties which we owe immediately to God-the other, the duties we owe to our fellow men.”

— Noah Webster (1758-1843) Father of the Dictionary & American Patriot

“If the time ever comes when we shall go to pieces, it will ... be ... from inward corruption - from the disregard of right principles ... from losing sight of the fact that "Righteousness exalteth a nation, but that sin is a reproach to any people" [Proverbs 14:34]. ...T]he secession of the Southern States in 1860 was a small matter with the secession of the Union itself from the great principles enunciated in the Declaration of Independence, in the Golden Rule, in the Ten Commandments, in the Sermon on the Mount. Unless we hold, and hold firmly to these great fundamental principles of righteousness, ...our Union ... will be ‘only a covenant with death and an agreement with hell.’”¹

“The race that puts its trust in God has always, under all circumstances, more for it than against it.”
— Francis Grimke (1852-1937) Black Presbyterian minister & leader who helped organize American Negro Academy.

“It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded, not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religions, but on the gospel of Jesus Christ! For this very reason peoples of other faiths have been afforded asylum, prosperity, and freedom of worship here.”
— Patrick Henry (1736-1799) Patriot, Lawyer and Orator

“The Law given from Sinai [The Ten Commandments] was a civil and municipal as well as a moral and religious code.”
— John Quincy Adams, (1767-1848) 6th President of the United States

The Ten Commandments

Responsibilities to God

1. I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.
3. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Responsibilities to Man

4. Honor your father and your mother.
5. You shall not kill.
6. You shall not commit adultery.
7. You shall not steal.
8. You shall you bear false witness against your neighbor.
9. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
10. You shall not covet your neighbor's house, or his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.

“‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?’ And he said to him, ‘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 22:36-40 RSV

Editors Note: The Ten Commandments come from the two books from the Old Testament, Exodus 20:2-17, and Deuteronomy 5:6-21.

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain: for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh

day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your manservant, or your maidservant, or your ox, or your ass, or any of your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your manservant and your maidservant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a servant in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out thence with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day. Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you; that your days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with you, in the land which the LORD your God gives you. You shall not kill. Neither shall you commit adultery. Neither shall you steal. Neither shall you bear false witness against your neighbor. Neither shall you covet your neighbor's wife; and you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.”

— Deuteronomy 5:6-21 RSV

“And God spoke all these words, saying, I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a graven 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; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; in it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your manservant, or your maidservant, or your cattle, or the sojourner who is within your gates; for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the LORD your God gives you. You shall not kill. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.”

— Exodus 20:2-17 RSV

Endnotes:

1. Wallbuilder, The Rev. Francis Grimke (1909), <http://www.wallbuilders.com/LIBissuesArticles.asp?id=3930>

Bible quotes courtesy of Crosswalk, <http://bible.crosswalk.com>

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