

Exodus Chapters 20- The Ten Commandments -- John Karmelich

1. What does it take to become happy?
 - a) OK, what does it take to be happy after you have millions of dollars? ☺
 - b) Believe it or not, that is the focus of today's lesson -happiness.
 - c) Many people go through life being unhappy. Rich people, poor people alike.
 - i) I've always amazed at how many bitter people, especially older bitter people exist. They felt that life has cheated them.
2. The Ten Commandments is God's formula for living a happy life.
 - a) How do I know this? Where does it say that in the Bible?
 - b) The answer comes from, of all people, King Solomon.
 - c) For those of you who don't know Solomon was King of Israel after David.
 - i) When Solomon was king, Israel was at its height of power.
 - ii) The man had everything a person could want. He had money, he had power, he had multiple wives (hey, it's a guy-thing!), he had peace with his surrounding nations, yet despite all this, Solomon still felt dissatisfied.
 - d) This is what the Bible-book of Ecclesiastes is all about.
 - i) It is about Solomon's search for "happiness".
 - ii) To paraphrase the whole book, Solomon tried everything to make him happy.
 - a) He tried being with a lot of women. That didn't do it.
 - b) He tried building a lot of projects. (Ever met a real estate developer and his/her search for happiness?!). That didn't do it.
 - c) He tried owning a lot of possessions. Not there.
 - d) He tried having lots of fun. He had party after party. Still no.
 - e) The point he was making was all the things of this world give temporary satisfaction. Nothing more or less. Most translations of the Bible use the word "vanity". Solomon meant that all these things are simply means of appealing to one's own ego.
 - f) One will never be happy with all these things, even the million dollars as mentioned in the first sentence?
 - g) Why, because God created us with a need to worship him. You can have all these things and still have emptiness inside you.
 - (1) The same way you have a need to breathe, eat and keep warm, there is also an inward need to worship something.
 - (2) If you ignore the true & living God, you will turn to something else, be it singular or plural to fill that need.
 - (a) The problem with that of course, is that nothing satisfies like the true & original God. Thus the need to prohibit false idols. (If you know the 10 commandments, you see where I'm going with this point!
 - (3) A sad truth today is that atheists acknowledge there is a need to worship a god, and therefore, we created one. They can't explain of course, where that need came from!
 - e) Back to Solomon and the Book of Ecclesiastes. The last verse has Solomon's conclusion in his search for happiness:
 - i) Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. (Ecclesiastes 12:13 NIV)
 - ii) John's translation - obey the 10 commandments & you will be happy!

3. This of course, leads us back to the standard Christian questions:
 - a) I thought that if we put our trust in Christ, we are not under the law. I thought the law did not apply to Christians. And what about all those other laws.... Is that for us too?
 - i) The second question I'll answer in outline point #4.
 - b) The best illustration I know is think back to the first time you were ever in love (or say had a crush) on somebody. Did you want to know more about that person? Did you want to spend time with that person? Did just being around that person make you happy? This is what *obedience* to God is all about. Does the law save us? No. But if we *love* God, we will do what he tells us because we *love* him!
 - c) The New Testament implies that we, the church are "The Bride of Christ" (John 3:29, Ephesians 5:32, Revelation 18:23, Revelation 21:9). God uses the model of the husband and wife as a model of our relationship with Jesus & God. The type of ultimate love (giving of oneself obediently out of love) which *should* be the formula for a happy marriage is also the same formula God wants in our relationship with him.
 - i) The main reason husbands and wives argue is usually because both parties want *their* way (guilty as charged!). The secret to a happy marriage is when both parties attempt to out-give to each other and/or out-do each other in giving to each other's needs.
 - ii) That is what God wants for our lives to in our relationship with him. You can not out-give God. But God does want you to give out of love for Him!
4. What about all those other laws in Exodus, Leviticus, etc. Are those for us too?
 - a) I read a great commentary this week about our relationship with "The Law". I checked with a few of my advisors who stated I'm on solid ground with this one, so here goes:
 - b) The Bible speaks of 3 types of "laws".
 - i) There is 1) the "Law of God"
 - ii) There is 2) "The Law of Moses".
 - iii) And finally, there is 3) "Law of Christ".
 - c) The Law of God is essentially the 10 commandments. God will judge all people based on the 10 commandments.
 - i) The "Law of God" is binding upon all rational creatures. It is God's unchanging moral standard for regulating the conduct of all men...This law has never been repealed, and in the very nature of things can not be."
 - a) Arthur Pink "Gleaning in Exodus"
 - ii) Let me explain this further. Do people "instinctively" know stealing is wrong? How about false witness? Or adultery? That is what Arthur Pink is saying.
 - iii) As to worshipping the "true & living God", this goes back to the instinctive need to worship something. Because worshipping false gods leaves one with an empty feeling, as Solomon testified, the instinctive need is there.
 - a) By non-believers, this need is often suppressed to a point of no return.
 - iv) To those who never heard of our God, God will judge fairly based on what knowledge they do have (see Romans 1). To those living in the United States today, there is no excuse as the knowledge of our God is readily available.
 - d) Second comes "The Law of Moses".
 - i) The "Law of Moses" is the entire system of legislation, judicial and ceremonial, which God gave to Israel during the time they were in the wilderness.
 - ii) Jesus commented directly on this on the Sermon on the Mount:
 - a) "Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them." (Matthew 5:17 NIV emphasis added)

- b) We as Christians are not required to obey all the ceremonial laws as they are fulfilled in Jesus.
 - c) This was further made clear in the New Testament Book of Acts (15:20). None of the ceremonial requirements nor obligations were placed on Non-Jewish Christians.
 - iii) An interesting side -note is that the Laws of Moses *may* be enforced during the millenium. This is the future 1,000-year period where Jesus will reign on earth. (This is a majority-evangelical opinion, but not the *only* view in the Church.)
 - a) For those interested in studying this point further, see Isaiah 2:3.
 - (1) To those who are resurrected, this should be easy, as we will no longer have our sin-nature in our new bodies.
 - (2) To those who survive during the great tribulation, they will be forced by rule-of-law (by Jesus ruling as King) to obey the law.
 - iv) We will spend some time in Exodus studying the Laws of Moses. They are important as they do point to Jesus Christ. There are also “models and types” of the Christian lives within those rules & regulations. Chapters 21-23 will get into some of the Laws of Moses.
 - e) Finally, we have “The Law of Christ”.
 - i) This goes back to I talked about obeying the law, not as a requirement for salvation, but out of *obedience* to the God we serve. Our salvation is not dependent upon our obedience. However, our rewards in heaven are.
 - ii) "As creatures we are under bonds to serve the law of God (Romans 7:25), as redeemed sinners we are bondslaves of Christ (Ephesians 6:6) and as such it our bonded duty to serve the Lord Christ (Col. 3:21). The relation between the two appellations "Law of God" and "Law of Christ is clearly intimidated in 1st Corinthians 9:21" Arthur Pink
 - a) To those not having the law I became like one not having the law (though I am not free from God's law but am under Christ's law), so as to win those not having the law. (1 Cor 9:21 NIV *emphasis added*)
 - f) The best interpreter of the Law is Jesus himself. The Sermon on the Mount (Gospel of Matthew, Chapters 5-7) is mostly Jesus commentary on the 10 commandments.
 - i) By the time Jesus came, most Jews interpreted the law in a can-be-done method where it was possible to regularly obey the commandments.
 - ii) Jesus' interpretation was *very* strict. Reading it makes it *impossible* for anyone to think they could obey the commandments on their own willpower.
 - iii) This gets back to the basic argument that God's standards are perfect. Because we are *not* perfect, we accept Jesus as substitute payment for our sins because we are unable on our power to keep the law. It is only through accepting Christ, and letting the Holy Spirit work *through* us that we even have a chance of living the type of live God intended by the law.
 - g) OK 2-3 page introduction done; time for the 10 commandments! ☺
5. **20:1** And God spoke all these words:
- a) These words were spoken audibly, in a way all the Israelites could hear them.
 - b) The point of this verse is God (as opposed to man) spoke all these words.
6. **20:2** I, the Lord, am your God, who brought you from the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.
- a) Notice it does not say, I am the Lord your God *who created heaven and earth*.
 - b) Nor does it say I am the Lord your God *who will take care of all your needs*.

- c) Not that these things are not true. The emphasis is that you have been redeemed. God has “purchased” us. To accept Christ means turning your life over to God. It is accepting that Jesus is paying the price for your sins. It also means that God is now in control of your life. If He is in control, He gives the orders!
7. Commandment #1: **20:3** You shall have no other gods before me.
- a) The Israelites lived in Egypt. A land of multiple gods. They were going to the Promised Land. The people who live there serve multiple gods. Each god is for different purposes, as we studied in Egypt.
 - b) Today, the emphasis is either on 1) no god (atheist), 2) don't care (agnostic) 3) multiple gods (e.g. new age movement) 4) false gods (cults, and the worshipping of other things (be it material blessings, pleasure, etc.)
 - i) God wants to be priority #1 in your life. Before your family, before your wife or husband or even your children!
 - ii) Jesus said” “Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; (Matthew 10:37 NIV).
 - iii) The interesting thing though, is that if you love God *more* than your family, you *will* love your family more than they need. The Bible commands us to love our wife as Christ loves the church (Ephesians 5:25). How much love is that?
 - c) “The idea behind no other gods before me is not that it is permissible to have other gods, as long as they line up behind the true God; the idea is that there are to be no other gods before the sight of the true God in our life. Before Me is literally, "to My face" “ David Guzik.
 - d) The reason why this commandment is first, is that all other commandments stem from this one.
 - i) If you truly love God, all other acts of obedience stem from this principal.
 - ii) There is a saying that goes:
 - a) “Love your God with all your might and do whatever you want!”
 - b) If you love God with all your might, the rest should logically follow.
8. Commandment #2: **20:4** You shall not make for yourself a carved image or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on earth under it, or that is in the water below.
- a) First let me make a technical point. In the Catholic version of the 10 commandments, this commandment is combined with #1, and the final commandment is split in two.
 - i) The Protestant viewpoint is that the Catholic Church combined these because of all the statues/painting of saints and popes in the Vatican/Catholic Churches.
 - ii) I don't know the particular Catholic response to their particular combination of the 10 commandments. Catholics do not believe that those statues are idols, but simply visual reminders to ask others to intercede on their behalf.
 - iii) I always enjoy asking Catholics why do you pray to the Virgin Mary or a particular saint when you can simply pray directly to God? The usual answer is that it never occurred to them that one could pray directly to God, or that others can intercede on their behalf. The Bible does not support this view.
 - a) Catholicism (in my opinion) does not emphasize God's personal relationship with the believers, but focuses on God's holiness. (I'm speaking as one who grew up Catholic). OK, off my soapbox. ☺
 - b) Why would this command be second? Personally, I would put murder & stealing above this one. Why would false-images be second?
 - i) Because it takes away from Commandment #1, which is to love your God *alone* and supremely. By making an “image” of another deity, you are leading yourself into temptation to worship something other than the true God.

- c) The danger of making an “image” of God is that it limits our understanding of God. I believe it was C.S. Lewis who said “A god we can comprehend is not a god big enough we can worship”.
 - i) By creating an image of God, you are putting God in “a box” and limiting your understanding of his power. That is the main point here.
 - ii) Jesus (in a sense) commented on this: “God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:24 NIV)
 - d) This verse is about false gods as well as images of the true God. It specifies anything in heaven (be it the sky or as we think of heaven), the ground or the sea. Remember the Egyptian culture believed the gods inhabited living and non-living things. These objects were then worshipped as they represented the gods.
9. Commandment #2 continued: **20:5** 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 on the children to the third and fourth generations to those who hate me, **20:6** but showing faithful love to thousands belonging to those who love me and to those who keep my commandments.
- a) How can it be said that God is a jealous God? "God's jealousy is love in action. He refuses to share the human heart with any rival, not because He is selfish and wants us all for Himself, but because He knows that upon that loyalty to Him depends our very moral life. ... God is not jealous of us: He is jealous for us." (Redpath)
 - b) This verse does not mean God directly punishes children and grandchildren for the sins of their parents. It does mean that the *effect* of sin in one's life has an *affect* on those living in the household.
 - c) "This necessarily implies - IF the children walk in the steps of their fathers; for no man can be condemned by Divine justice for a crime of which he was never guilty". (Clarke)
 - d) In Verse 6, some translations say “faithful in love to a thousand *generations*”. The better Bibles have “generation” *highlighted*. That means it is not in the original text, and the authors of that translation are trying to assist you with its meaning.
 - i) We tend to make the mistake in the 10 the commandments in thinking that it is just personal. Remember that God also judges us as nations. I think the implication of “generations” is that if a nation continues to hold up a “Godly standard”, God himself will continue to let that nation exist.
 - ii) I personally don't like the word “generation” here, as it can imply that we have 30,000 years to go before Jesus comes back. (The math is 30 years per generation times 1,000 generations. That is not what the text says!)
 - a) Years ago I had a conversation with head-Hebrew translator of the New King James Version of the Bible. We discussed the “thousand generation” reference, as it occurs three times in many translations. He assured me it is not to be taken literally. It is like a mom saying to a child “I told you a thousand times not to put your hand in the cookie jar”.
 - e) I believe the meaning is simply the *positive* affect of loving God becomes a witness to many people around you and can/has affects thousands. One can see the work of just about anyone in the ministry having an affect on thousands.
10. Commandment #3: **20:7** You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold guiltless whoever takes his name in vain.
- a) We can break the third commandment through profanity (using the name of God in blasphemy and cursing), frivolity (using the name of God in a superficial, stupid way), and hypocrisy (claiming the name of God but acting in a way that disgraces Him)

- b) Probably the most important thing to remember about this commandment is that we are God's ambassadors!
 - i) People look at us to judge Christianity. If we don't take our relationship with God seriously, why would anyone else consider becoming a Christian?
 - c) One of the greatest simple ways to show your faith is to *gently* tell people how offensive this is to you. I personally cringe in situations when I hear people talking that way. Sometimes I say something, other times I don't.
 - i) The most important principal is being a good witness, not putting people in their place for saying the wrong words. Remember we are dealing with *condemned* people, who need the Gospel far more than someone telling them what words to say and not say! Again, we are ambassadors for Christ. People will remember your actions far more than the words coming out of your mouth.
 - d) What is the opposite of taking God's name in vain? Holding it in high esteem! Consider this you next worship service!
11. Commandment #4: **20:8** Remember the sabbath day to sanctify it. **20:9** For six days you may labor and do all your work,
- a) First, let's get right to the point. Jesus said, "the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath."
 - i) (Matthew 12:8, Mark 2:28, Luke 6:5)
 - ii) What does that mean? In practical terms, Jesus himself decides what is right and wrong for Sabbath observations.
 - iii) When you read the Gospels, you notice Jesus deliberately going out of his way to perform his miracles on the Sabbath. Why?
 - a) First, to show the religious leaders what the Sabbath is all about. It is a time for healing. A time for rest. The Jewish religious leaders saw the Sabbath as a set of nit-picky do & don't regulations to be followed.
 - b) Second, to describe that our "rest" is in Jesus. Living the Christian life comes with a sense of joy and peace *through* all your trials. This sense is a "bonus-gift" (via the Holy Spirit) for putting your trust in God.
 - (1) "There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his." (Hebrews 4:9-10, NIV)
 - b) The 7th day is unusual from man's perspective. The year follows the solar cycle. The month roughly follows the lunar cycle. There is no logical rhyme or reason to the weekly cycle, other than it being ordained by God. Because it stands out (and if we observe it properly!) it is a testimony of our worship and loyalty to our God.
 - c) This law implies all sorts of things about work itself. "Six days you shall work". This is a command against laziness (a non-productive member of society).
 - d) One of the great debate questions among Christians is should we worship on the "Sabbath". The "Sabbath" is the 7th day of the week, or Saturday, by our calendar. This is why Saturday is on the right, and Sunday is on the left, on a weekly calendar!
 - e) So, what about the big question: Are Christian required to keep the Sabbath?
 - i) Officially no. In the Book of Acts, Chapter 16, the church leaders *specifically* state which commandments the Gentile (i.e. non-Jewish) churches is to keep.
 - a) The only Mosaic requirements for the Gentile churches were to abstain from food dedicated to idols (essentially idolatry), from sexual immorality and from eating blood.
 - ii) The reason Christians worship on Sundays is because that was the pattern set by the early church for Christians to gather. (See Acts 20:18, 1 Cor. 16:2, Sunday was the day of the week that Jesus rose from the dead. On that particular Sabbath (Saturday), Jesus was dead. It is better to remember "resurrection day".

- f) There is one particular denomination, “The 7th Day Adventist”, who believe Christians should worship on Saturdays. (Also, Jewish-Christian churches, a.k.a. “Messianic Christians” also have Saturday services.)
 - i) Some 7th Day Adventist members are obsessed by this practice. They will argue that God requires Saturday worship.
 - a) No where in the New Testament does God require the Non-Jewish Christians to worship on Saturdays.
 - b) Paul said it best: “Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.” (Colossians 2:17 NIV)
 - ii) Do you wish to go to church on Saturdays? Fine. Just don’t get obsessed with making it a doctrine. Same with Sundays.
 - a) Let’s quote Paul again: “One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.” (Romans 14:5 NIV)
- 12. Commandment #4 continued: 20:10 but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; on it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, or your male servant, or your female servant, or your cattle, or your resident foreigner who is in your gates.
 - a) The Hebrew nation came from a world where adult men were in charge, and everybody else (women, servants, etc.) were not much more than property.
 - i) Therefore, for God to command that your *household, your wives, your kids, your servants* and foreigners (people you are witnessing too!) to obey the Sabbath as well is a sign of equality for all, as well as one for witnessing to others.
 - b) It sounds funny to us “city-folk” that God commanded the animals to have a Sabbath’s day rest. It simply means not to work the animals.
 - c) I’ve talked about Christians not being required to keep the Sabbath in a legal-sense.
 - i) What about in a practical sense? What about my “happiness” premise?
 - ii) I do believe in the principal of one day of rest. Part of the day is dedicated to worshipping God. Worshipping is not just going to service. It involves reading the Bible, prayer, etc. Working on Bible studies like this is a part of worship.
 - a) I also don’t have a problem with napping on Sundays! Rest is rest.
 - b) Part of this depends upon what one does for a living. The old joke is “Pastor, can I mow the lawn on Sunday? Answer: It depends upon whether or not you make a living as a gardener!”
 - iii) There are times in my life where I do have to work on Sundays. I happen to be self-employed. I make commitments to my clients, including deadlines. I have to honor those deadlines. My commitment to my word is greater than my commitment to keeping the Sabbath. (Hopefully, I learn from my commitment so I’ll give a more realistic commitment time on next project!)
 - iv) Further, I don’t have problems with policemen, fireman, doctors, etc. working on Sundays.
 - a) Jesus himself commented on this principal: “If any of you has a sheep and it falls into a pit on the Sabbath, will you not take hold of it and lift it out? How much more valuable is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath.” (Mat 12:11b-12 NIV)

13. Wrapping up the Sabbath: **20:11** For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth and the sea and all that is in them, and he rested on the seventh day; therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and sanctified it.
 - a) The principal of 6 days of work and 1 day of rest was modeled for us in the creation account of Genesis.
 - i) God could have made the world in one split second as opposed to six days. Time was not the factor. It was designed this way as a model.
 - b) One of the great debates in Christianity is the “six literal days” vs. “six eras of time.”
 - c) There are respected Christian-geologists/scientists on both sides of this debate.
 - i) I’m not going to take on this debate here, but the “literalist” like to use this verse as proof-text for the their argument.
14. Commandment #5: 20:12 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land the Lord your God is giving to you.
 - a) The first 4 commandments deal with our relationship with God.
 - i) The last six deal with our relationship with other people.
 - b) Even before murder, stealing, adultery comes honoring mom & dad. Why?
 - i) By the way, this is the only commandment with a blessing attached for obedience. God attaches that as an extra incentive!
 - ii) The family is the basic “building block” of our society. With the breakdown of the family comes chaos in society. Rebellion against parents, especially as they teach God’s law, leads to rebellion against society.
 - iii) “Honoring them,” means prizing them highly.
 - c) Paul commented on this, “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. (Ephesians 6:1, NIV)
 - i) Notice first of all, Paul was talking to *children*.
 - ii) Second Paul adds to obey your parents in the Lord.
 - a) This means that your obedience should not be over your love for the God. If your parents are acting in a way that is not godly (e.g. abuse, under the influence of a drug, crime, turning you away from God), a “higher” law” kicks in, where one should obey God over your parents.
 - b) Jesus comments on this point “If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters-- yes, even his own life-- he cannot be my disciple.” (Luke 14:26 NIV)
 - (1) Jesus is not teaching to violate this commandment. He is simply stating the Love for God takes superiority over love for parents.
15. Commandment #6: 20:13 You shall not kill.
 - a) Better translation: You shall not murder. Killing in self-defense or as capitol punishment is clearly ordained in the Bible. The key word would be “pre-mediation”.
 - b) If you want to mediate on this verse, think about the opposite;
 - i) To not kill is to respect human life, no matter what the shape, form or state!
 - c) Just when you think, “OK, I’ve never murdered anyone, Jesus makes it worse: “You have heard that it was said ... 'Do not murder...But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment.” (Matthew 5:21-22 NIV)
 - i) Jesus was saying just “thinking” about killing someone in rage is a violation of this commandment! Why so strict?
 - ii) First of all, the *intent* to murder begins with the thought.
 - iii) Second, God does not want us to live a life of stress based on hatred. Forgiveness is necessarily *not* to clear the guilty, but to be at peace and let God and the law/government take care of the crime.

16. Commandment #7: **20:14** You shall not commit adultery.
 - a) This was written to respect the marriage. God set up the marriage as a *model* of our relationship with him. For those who know the joys & trials of a long-term marriage is that: It is well worth it, but it takes work. The Hebrew language implies this verse can be used for both men and women.
 - i) In the Bible, adultery and idolatry are synonyms. Just as adultery turns one away from focusing on the marriage, so idolatry is turning one away from God.
 - b) Jesus again, makes the sin much worse than we would figure:
 - i) "But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. (Matthew 5:28 NIV)
 - ii) "(This law) prohibits us from looking at a woman to lust for her, where we commit adultery in our heart or mind, yet may not have the courage or opportunity to do the act - we aren't innocent just because we didn't have the opportunity to sin the way we wanted to!" David Guzik
17. Commandment #8: **20:15** You shall not steal.
 - a) Whenever Christians argue in favor of socialism/communism, I point to this verse.
 - i) If we can not steal, this means God ordains "personal possession" of things!
 - ii) The corollary of course, is that we should be giving and help others in need.
 - b) David said in Psalm 24:1 "The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it;"
 - i) Therefore, all the possessions we have and earn are given to us by God.
 - a) They are our responsibility to take care of them.
 - c) This verse also implies that we have a right to legally-protect what is ours. It also implies that we should not allow others to steal. By watching a theft and not reporting it, you are also guilty of this commandment!
 - d) Can we steal from God?
 - i) Yes, by failing to give to others in need, particularly your local church.
 - a) "Will a man rob God? Yet you rob me. "But you ask, 'How do we rob you?' "In tithes and offerings. (Malachi. 3:8 NIV)
 - ii) Remember that we are "redeemed" by God. He owns us. By not being obedience to his commands (out of love/gratitude), we are "stealing" from God!
18. Commandment #9: **20:16** You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.
 - a) Most people who have lived a while can tell stories of lives, churches and families that have been ruined by rumors. Many of which turn out to be not true.
 - b) "Slander is a lie invented and spread with intent to do harm. That is the worst form of injury a person can do to another. Compared to one who does this, a gangster is a gentleman, and a murderer is kind, because he ends life in a moment with a stroke and with little pain. But the man guilty of slander ruins a reputation which may never be regained, and causes lifelong suffering." (Redpath)
 - c) "In-appropriate silence" applies to this commandment as well as stealing.
 - i) "'How very strange that we have ever come to think that Christian maturity is shown by the ability to speak our minds, whereas it is really expressed in controlling our tongues.'" (Redpath)
19. Commandment #10: **20:17** You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that belongs to your neighbor.
 - a) This one is different from all the rest in that it is the only one listed based on thought (and not action). While Jesus interpreted other commandments based on thought, this is the only one that out-right states it as such.

- b) In this verse the “neighbor’s house” is the “inclusive super-set”. All the things that normally stay within the household are included. This includes the people inside as well as possessions.
 - c) “Literally, to covet here means “to pant after.” Covetousness works like this: the eyes look upon an object, the mind admires it, the will goes over to it, and the body moves in to possess it. Just because you have not taken the final step does not mean you are not in the process of coveting right now” David Guzik.
 - d) The reason we covet is that we get jealous of what others have and we don’t. This verse ties in with murder, stealing and adultery:
 - i) Jesus himself commented on this commandment: “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” (Luke 12:15 NIV)
 - e) Another reason we covet is simply because we don’t have these things ourselves. There are legitimate needs (food, clothing, etc.). The “sin” is to desire what someone else has as opposed to looking to God to supply all our needs.
 - i) Jesus comments on this from the Sermon on the Mount: So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. (Matthew 6:31-33 NIV, emphasis added.)
20. OK, we’ve made it through “The Big 10”. By now we should all be feeling guilty about something. That’s good. That’s the Holy Spirit doing his job. The purpose of the law is to *drive* you to God, not away from him.
- a) The late Walter Martin told a great story about this. It’s not perfectly bible-based, but it makes a good point. “There are two ways to make it into heaven. The first is to acknowledge that you are a sinful person, and accept Jesus as a substitute for your sins. The second is to live a perfect life, never disobeying any of the commandments, never thinking a bad thought. Then, once you’ve lived a full life, you can look at Jesus and say, OK, move over”.
 - i) As it is written: “There is no one righteous, not even one.” (Romans 3:10a NIV)
 - b) Remember God is perfect. A perfect God requires perfection in our lives in order to have a relationship with Him. Since we can’t be perfect, God provided a perfect-substitute for our sins. That is what being a Christian is all about. That is why the law is necessary to *show* people their failure to meet God’s standards.
 - c) But that acknowledgement is not the end, only the beginning. Once we turn our lives over to God, He *changes* us, little by little into what he wants us to be. The law is the model of what God is looking for in our lives. That is God’s model for a happy life. Solomon figured it out at the end of his life. He wrote it out for us so we wouldn’t make the same mistake of waiting too long!
21. Let’s pray: Father, we thank you for the law. Without it, we would have no idea what is it you require of us. With that knowledge, comes our conviction of our failure to keep that law. We thank you for providing us with a solution, through Jesus Christ. With that in place, change us into the image you desire for our lives. Help us to rest in that Sabbath-joy, the peace that comes from living the Christian life. Since we are your possession, guide us and bless us as you see fit for our lives. Help us not to worry about the future, but to walk forward knowing that our steps are laid out for us in advance. For we ask this in Jesus name, Amen.