



THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

GOD'S PERFECT LAW OF LIBERTY

DR. PETER HAMMOND

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- God's Perfect Law of Liberty

Peter Hammond



**LIVINGSTONE
FELLOWSHIP**

**Livingstone Fellowship
Cape Town**

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- God's Perfect Law of Liberty

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my youngest son,
Calvin Peter Hammond,
who has demonstrated extraordinary initiative
in using God's Law in Evangelism.
By age five Calvin was presenting *Evangelism Explosion*
Gospel presentations to large audiences.
From age seven Calvin proved to be an invaluable
member of numerous Frontline mission teams,
engaging in Evangelism
as far afield as Zululand and Zambia.
From age eight Calvin was training school assemblies
in *Way of the Master* Evangelism,
using the Ten Commandments
"as the schoolmaster to lead us to Christ."
May God continue to bless, guide, protect
and use you for the extension of His Kingdom.

Appreciation

A heartfelt Thank You to **Colin Newman**, our hard working
Mission Manager for all the Desk Top Publishing, typesetting
and shaping of this book; and to **Marion Newman** for typing
up all these sermons in the first place. Also to my Daughter
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and most of the posters at the back of the book. My son,
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The Ten Commandments Audio MP3 and Data boxset.

Thank you also to **Lenora, Margaret Stephens**
and **Penney May** for careful
proof reading of the book.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

- **God's Perfect Law of Liberty**

by Peter Hammond

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***“But he who looks into
the perfect Law of Liberty
and continues in it
and is not a forgetful hearer
but a doer of the work,
this one will be blessed
in what he does.” James 1:25***

Forewords

As I listened to this series of messages at Livingstone Fellowship, I kept thinking how practical, down to earth and relevant these eternal truths are for us today. Each Sunday, after the message, I thanked the LORD for how He spoke to my heart through His Word and longed that Dr. Hammond might have a wider audience. I rejoice now to see the entire series in this one book.

The Ten Commandments are God's meterstick by which He measures us and whereby we realize how far short we have fallen of His glory. It is God's "*plumb line*" to measure our moral straightness. As our young people would say, "*The Ten Commandments are God's 'text message' to keep us in line.*"

In today's man-centered culture, God (when He is considered at all) has become our "*Buddy*;" an eternal "*Blessing Machine*," to be called on whenever we're in trouble or need a Friend. "***One who turns away his ear from hearing the Law, even his prayer is an abomination.***" Proverbs 28:9

Many today worship before the idolatrous altar of pluralism, multiculturalism and the inter-faith movement. These false gods are skilfully exposed in this hard-hitting, practical and easy-to-read volume. These gods must go.

The new thoughts and inspiration from the Fifth Commandment were a special blessing to me. You'll find a whole treasure-trove of them yourself between the covers of this modest tome.

The Eighth Commandment brilliantly exposes Muhammad's support of theft. "*Jihad is one of the most meritorious acts in the eyes of Islam and it is the best source of earnings.*" (Mishkat II, Page 340). Muhammad saw theft as a win-win situation. If you won the battle you got the booty. If you lost the battle you got *paradise* and all those virgins. Muhammad: desert bandit, robber, thief, murderer and paedophile, was a breaker of all Ten Commandments. These are undisputed, well-documented attributes of the founder of the world's second largest religion as measured by God's Laws.

Most everyone has heard of and many have read, the Ten Commandments in the Bible. Having read them many times, I thought I knew just about everything God's Law requires of believers. This book brings each Commandment to life and makes them relevant to our contemporary culture. Each chapter is a wellspring of delightful surprises with useful information, spiritual inspiration and Christian challenge.

The Ten Commandments

There are some who say, “*Oh the Ten Commandments were just for Old Testament times, they’re not applicable to us today.*” This book is written from God’s perspective and has some eye-opening responses to that assertion. Jesus said, “**Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil.**” Matthew 5:17

The candour of the author in sharing his testimony of when and where he has failed to obey and how the Lord dealt with him is richly refreshing. It is also very reassuring to know that our Heavenly Father is in the business of restoration. This book will give you an expanded appreciation of His grace and of the awful price He paid for our sins as we, who are truly guilty, have broken most, if not all, of the Ten Commandments.

Rev. Bill Bathman

*Chairman of the Board, Frontline Fellowship (2002 - 2016)
Founder of NETWORK, PIONEERS and ITMI*

Never before in Church history has there been such a need to return to the basics of Biblical Evangelism. Our churches are filled with false converts, simply because we have abandoned doing what Jesus did when it comes to reaching out to the lost. The disease must be diagnosed before the cure is offered to the patient, or it will, understandably, never be appreciated or appropriated.

I thank God for my friend Peter Hammond, and pray that God’s blessing will be on his book, ***The Ten Commandments - God’s Perfect Law of Liberty.***

Ray Comfort

The Way of the Master

To those who would argue that God does not exist, read this book and each page will reveal that God not only exists, but He knows you better than you do.

Can a single book change a person and an entire nation? This one can!!

Todd Friel

Wretched Radio and TV

INTRODUCTION

The LAW of GOD

“Therefore the Law is holy and the commandment holy and just and good.” Romans 7:12

God spoke the Ten Commandments with His own voice. He wrote them with His own finger upon tablets of stone. It was after the Lord God had delivered the children of Israel from slavery in Egypt. They had seen the incredible power of God poured out in the Ten Plagues upon Egypt. They had watched in awe as God rolled back the waters of the Red Sea to allow them to cross through on dry land. On the other side of the Red Sea they had seen the Lord close the waters over the pursuing Egyptian charioteers.

They had tasted the manna that God had sent from Heaven to feed them in the desert. They had quenched their thirst with water that had flowed from the rock at His command. They had seen the mighty power of God to save and to heal. They had also seen His power to punish, to judge, to kill and to destroy.

Now, as they stood before the mountain of God, it was covered with smoke as the Lord descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace and the whole mountain trembled violently.

This was the context in which God revealed His Ten Commandments.

The Law’s remarkable origin reveals its Holy character. The Ten Commandments flow directly from the Eternal character of our Holy Creator and Eternal Judge. They are the standard by which the world will be judged. The Ten Commandments provide a permanent rule of life for all people. The Law defines sin (“***...sin is lawlessness.***” 1 John 3:4).

CONVERTING THE SOUL

“The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” Psalm 19:7

The Law of God convicts of sin (Romans 7:7-11). The Law condemns transgression (Romans 4:15; James 2:10; Galatians 3:10; Deuteronomy 11:26-28). ***“But he who looks into the perfect Law of liberty and continues in it and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”*** James 1:25

The Law restrains evil (***“But we know that the Law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the Law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate, for the ungodly and for sinners,***

for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and for murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers and if there is any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine, according to the glorious Gospel of the blessed God which was committed to my trust.” 1 Timothy 1:8-11; **“Your Word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not sin against You.”** Psalm 119:11).

The Law brings people to Christ. (**“Therefore the Law was our Tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by Faith.”** Galatians 3:24; **“The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.”** Psalm 19:7).

The Law of God guides our sanctification. (**“That the righteous requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.”** Romans 8:4).

A NEW COVENANT - WITH RENEWED MINDS AND REGENERATE HEARTS

The Law of God lies at the very heart of the new Covenant. (**“Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new Covenant with the House of Israel...I will put My Law in their minds and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be My people.”** Jeremiah 31:31-33).

THE LAW OF GOD REMAINS IN FORCE

Our Lord Jesus Christ expressly affirmed the eternal validity of God’s Law. (**“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil. For assuredly, I say to you, till Heaven and Earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the Law until all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these Commandments and teaches men so, shall be called least in the Kingdom of Heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and the pharisees, you will by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven.”** Matthew 5:17-20)

Throughout the Gospels, Christ emphatically taught the relevance of the Law (Matthew 22:36-40; Matthew 23:23; Mark 7:1-13). Christ Jesus upheld the civil function of the Law to restrain evil (Matthew 15:3-6). Christ Himself perfectly obeyed the Law during His life and ministry on earth (Psalm 40:7-8; Matthew 8:4; 17:24-27; Mark 11:16-17; John 8:46; John 15:10; 1 John 2:4-6).

Christ Jesus saved us in terms of the Law. (**“But when the fullness of the**

time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive adoption as sons.” Galatians 4:4-5; **“And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all trespasses, having wiped out the handwriting of requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the Cross.”** Colossians 2:13-14.)

While the Ten Commandments are binding on all mankind, they are especially relevant to Christians. They reflect the character of God and keep their full authority today. **“You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am Holy.”** Leviticus 19:2.

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.” 2 Timothy 3:16-17

OUR FIRST PRIORITY

When pioneer missionary, John Eliot, first translated the Scriptures into the Algonquin language of the Indians in Massachusetts he started with the Ten Commandments. His first sermons to them were also on the Ten Commandments. Of course, John Eliot did not think that the Indians could be saved by the Ten Commandments. However they needed to understand the Law of God before they could understand their need of salvation in Christ.

In the same way, John Paton, missionary to the cannibals in the South Pacific, began his ministry by teaching the Ten Commandments. The sharp needle of the Law needs to make way for the scarlet thread of the Gospel. Until people understand the Law of God they will not be able to understand the holiness of God. Until people understand the holiness of God, they will not understand their own sinfulness and their need for Salvation in and through Christ Jesus our Lord and Saviour.

THE FRUIT OF FAITH

Also, whereas Justification by Faith deals with how sin is pardoned, sanctification deals with how sin is subdued in our lives. Robert Murray M'Cheyne explained: *“It is a holy-making Gospel. Without holy fruits all evidences are vain. Dear Friends, you have awakenings, enlightenings, experiences and many due signs; but if you lack holiness, you shall never see the Lord. A real desire after complete holiness is the truest mark of being born again ... unregenerate men cannot bear this testimony.”*

REGENERATION AND REPENTANCE

Teaching and preaching the Ten Commandments helps put Repentance back into the Evangelistic message. Many self - deceived church members give no Biblical evidence of being born again by the Holy Spirit – despite having responded to evangelistic appeals, walked the aisles, signed decision cards, prayed sinners prayers, gone through the waters of Baptism, had their names entered on church memberships rolls and having attended numerous church activities.

JUSTIFICATION AND SANCTIFICATION

Teaching on the Ten Commandments should help demolish the theory that one may receive Jesus as one's "*personal Saviour*," without submitting to Him as Lord. The notion that obedience to the commands of Christ are an optional extra for any true Christian will be exposed for the falsehood that it is by any exposition of the Scriptures. The cleansing of our sins by the Blood of Christ and the working of God's Holy Spirit in our hearts here on earth, are inseparably joined together in God's great work of Salvation. Justification and Sanctification go together.

DELIGHT IN GOD'S COMMANDMENTS

King David, the writer of most of the Psalms and one who was described as "*a man after God's own heart*" wrote: "***Make me walk in the path of your Commandments, for I delight in it.***" Psalm 119:35; "***Indignation has taken hold of me because of the wicked, who forsake Your Law.***" Psalm 119:53; "***Oh, how I love Your Law! It is my meditation all the day.***" Psalm 119:97; "***I hate the double - minded, but I love Your Law.***" Psalm 119:113; "***It is time for You to act, O Lord, for they have regarded Your Law as void. Therefore I love Your Commandments more than gold, yes, than fine gold!***" Psalm 119:126-127

The Apostle John declared: "***He who says, 'I know Him,' and does not keep His commandments, is a liar and the Truth is not in him.***" 1 John 2:4

The Apostle Paul taught: "***Do we then make void the Law through Faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the Law.***" Romans 3:31; "***Therefore the Law is Holy and the Commandment Holy and just and good.***" Romans 7:12; "***For I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man.***" Romans 7:22

FIRST DUTY

Martin Luther declared: "*The first duty of the Gospel preacher is to declare God's Law and show the nature of sin.*"

John Bunyan said: "*The man who does not know the nature of the Law cannot know the nature of sin.*"

THOSE WHO WAGE WAR AGAINST GOD WILL LOSE

In one sense, you cannot break the Law of God, you can only break yourself upon God's Law. Countless individuals and nations have violated God's commands and sought to wage war against the Law of God. The gutters and slums, hospitals and asylums, pubs and prisons and battlefields and graveyards are filled with the results of man's rebellion against God.

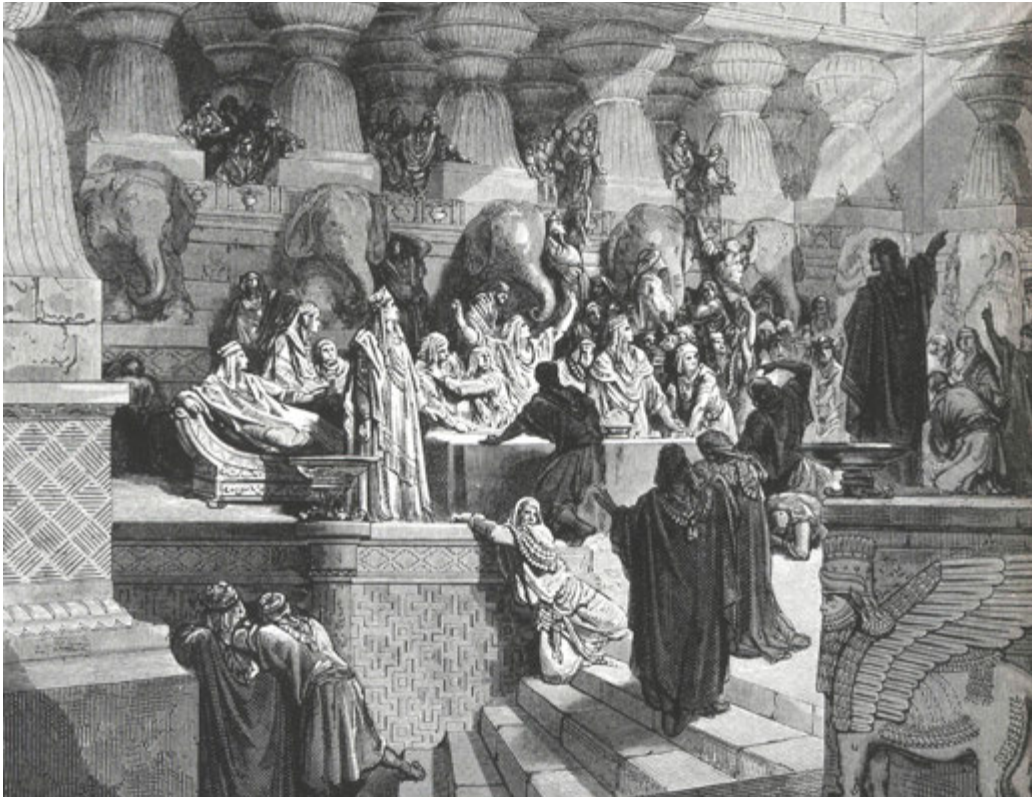
LOVE AND LAW

“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our Faith.” 1 John 5:2-4

“Therefore the Law was our Tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by Faith.” Galatians 3:24



Dr. Peter Hammond
Livingstone Fellowship, Cape Town



“Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting.” Daniel 5:27

Exodus 20:1-17

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.
4. “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—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;
5. you shall not bow down to them nor 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 generations of those who hate Me,
6. but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.
7. “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.
8. “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
9. Six days you shall labour and do all your work,
10. but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates.
11. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.
12. “Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.
13. “You shall not murder.
14. “You shall not commit adultery.
15. “You shall not steal.
16. “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.
17. “You shall not covet your neighbour's house; you shall not covet your neighbour's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbour's.”

Chapter 1

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT PUTTING GOD FIRST

“...that in all things He may have the preeminence.” Colossians 1:18

A group of Theological students were given an assignment to rearrange the Ten Commandments in order of priority. There was general consensus that the most important commandment should be: **“You shall not murder.”** They also agreed that the second most important would be: **“You shall not steal.”** The third most important commandment was: **“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour.”**

However, there was a division as to which was the least important commandment. Half of the students felt that the least important commandment was: **“You shall not commit adultery.”** The other half selected **“You shall have no other gods before Me”** as the least significant. After some further discussion the class agreed to put the **“You shall have no other gods before Me”** as the least important of the Ten Commandments.

That is an interesting commentary on the perspective of those theological students. When the Lord Jesus Christ was asked which is the greatest Commandment in the Law, He replied: **“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and great Commandment.”** Matthew 22:37-38

ANTINOMIAN HOSTILITY TO GOD’S LAW

At a Christian conference a discussion ensued over the Ten Commandments. One delegate commented that he did not find the Ten Commandments very challenging or useful for his personal sanctification, because they mainly dealt with extreme sins like idolatry, adultery, stealing and murder. He was puzzled over the lack of mention of more serious sins such as pride, selfishness or bad temper, which we struggle with on a regular basis. An older delegate observed that the Commandments were not specific enough. A woman delegate expressed her opinion that the Ten Commandments were *“too negative.”* She would have preferred the Ten Commandments to present positive advice on life, how we could live our lives reflecting the Beatitudes, or the Fruit of the Spirit. This would have surely been *“more relevant”* for Christians, she felt.

In this age of antinomianism, such pervasive hostility to and ignorance of the Law of God even dominates many Theological colleges and Christian conferences.

Christ Jesus expressly affirmed the Law, emphatically taught the Law, perfectly kept the Law and saved us in terms of the Law. The Ten Commandments are the source and summary of every other passage in the Bible about Holy living and they cover every conceivable sin. Each Commandment actually covers a whole family of sins. And although the Commandments are mainly expressed in negative forms, they contain implicit commands to perform the opposite positive virtues. The Ten Commandments actually present us with God's code for holiness.

RE-ALIGNING OUR PRIORITIES

Contrary to the opinion of the Theological students who assigned God's first Commandment to the last place, the first Commandment is the most important Commandment. As Almighty God, our Creator and Eternal Judge, God demands first place in our lives and it is only right that He should do so.

As our loving heavenly Father, God does not want us to waste our lives on falsehood, deception and spiritual poison. God knows what is best for His own children. He desires that we become the very best people that we can be, developing all the potential that He has placed within us to become successful sons and daughters of the living God. We will only find true peace and fulfilment when we give God His rightful place in our lives.

When God revealed The Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai He declared: **"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."** Exodus 20:2

When God declared: **"I am the Lord"** He effectively ruled out atheism, pantheism, polytheism and New Age thinking.

When God said **"I am"** He revealed that He is a person. God is not, as the pantheist teaches, *"an impersonal force."* Actually pantheism is the worst form of religion because if *"all is God,"* then there can be no distinction between good and evil. If *"everything is true"* then nothing is false. If *"nothing is false"* then everything must be true. Evangelism would be irrelevant and there would be no ultimate Truth of which anyone could be certain. If *"God is all and all is good,"* then a drunk driver running through a red light and killing an innocent child, would be morally equivalent to Florence Nightingale dedicating her life to caring for the sick and suffering.

When God called Himself **"I"**, He also exposes the inherent lie of polytheism. Polytheism believes in many gods. However, God did not say *"we are the Lord your gods,"* He declared: **"I am the Lord your God."** He is the one true God.

There is no other. Those who worship the gods and idols of the pagan world are actually bowing before demons in disguise (1 Corinthians 10:20).

God's revelation on the mountain also ruled out new-age thinking which is nothing but the old lie of the devil in the Garden of Eden when he said "... **you will be like God...**" Genesis 3:5

C.S. Lewis wrote: *"We are half-hearted creatures, fooling about with drink and sex and ambition, when infinite joy is offered to us. We are like an ignorant child who wants to keep on making mud pies in the slum, because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday by the sea. We are far too easily pleased."*

Matthew Henry, commented that the first Commandment, does not only refer to pagan idols: *"To love, to desire, to delight in, or to expect any good from any sinful indulgence is prohibited. Equally, we are not to allow any person or created thing, however valuable or excellent, to rival God in our affections. All atheism, infidelity and irreligion is opposition to God, an attempt to be independent of Him. The proud man is his own idol because he worships himself and expects others to do the same. The covetous man makes a god of his wealth, which he loves, depends on and from which he expects happiness. The sensualist by his practices worships deities as filthy as any seen in a pagan temple."*

We are commanded to **"set your affection on things above, not on things of the earth."**

Our first duty and our soul's first need, is to place God first and above all else, in our lives. Those who crowd God out of His rightful place in their lives, do so to their own detriment. If the One True God is not on the throne of your life, you will never know true, lasting peace and joy.

The Russian novelist, Leo Tolstoy, was wealthy and successful beyond imagining. He was honoured and acclaimed worldwide for his writings. Yet, despite all of his wealth and fame, he was dissatisfied and felt empty. One day, while walking in the countryside, he came across a peasant whose face beamed with joy, peace and contentment. Leo Tolstoy later testified that he immediately realised that this man, although he clearly possessed very little in this world, yet he had a joy and a peace that eluded the successful and celebrated Tolstoy.

Leo Tolstoy could not get this joyful peasant out of his mind. He concluded that the difference between himself and this peasant was that the poor man knew God, while he did not. This began the journey that ultimately led Tolstoy to Christ. He later wrote: *"To know God and to live is the one and the same thing. God is life!"* Without a relationship with God we are spiritually dead.

SINS FORBIDDEN

The Larger Catechism of the Westminster Assembly summarises the **Sins Forbidden** in the first Commandment as:

- the sin of Atheism (***“The fool has said in his heart ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they have done abominable works.”*** Psalm 14:1);
- the sin of idolatry;
- the sin of omission or neglect of any duty due to God;
- the sin of forgetting God;
- the sin of having false opinions about God (***“To whom then will you liken God? Or what likeness will you compare to Him?”*** Isaiah 40:18);
- the sin of having unworthy or wicked thoughts about God;
- the sin of curious searching into His secrets;
- the sin of hatred of God (Romans 1:30);
- the sin of self-love (2 Timothy 3:2);
- the sin of self-seeking (***“For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus”*** Philippians 2:21);
- the sin of inordinate setting of mind, will or affection upon things other than God (***“Do not love the world or things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life – is not of the Father.”*** 1 John 2:15-16);
- the sin of unbelief (***“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God”*** Hebrews 3:12);
- the sin of despair;
- the sin of hardening our hearts (***“But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart, you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous Judgement of God”*** Romans 2:5);
- the sin of pride;
- the sin of tempting God (***“You shall not tempt the Lord your God”*** Matthew 4:7);
- the sin of praying to, or worshipping saints, angels or other creatures (***“You shall worship the Lord your God and Him only shall you serve.”*** Matthew 4:10);
- the sin of consorting with the occult (***“And the person who turns to mediums and familiar spirits, to prostitute himself with them, I will set My face against that person and cut him off from his people.”*** Leviticus 20:6);
- the sin of making man the lord over our faith and conscience;
- the sin of resisting and grieving the Holy Spirit (Acts 7:51; Ephesians 4:30);
- the sin of discontent and impatience with God’s dealings.

DUTIES REQUIRED

The Westminster Assembly's Larger Catechism summarises the **Duties Required** in the first Commandment as follows: the duty to know and acknowledge God to be the one true God ("**Serve Him with a loyal heart and with a willing mind; for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intents of the thoughts. If you seek Him, He will be found by you; but if you forsake Him, He will cast you off forever.**" 1 Chronicles 28:9);

- To worship God ("**O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand.**" Psalm 95:6-7);
- To glorify God ("**Give unto the Lord the glory due to His Name; worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.**" Psalm 29:2);
- To think about God; To meditate on God;
- To remember God;
- To honour God;
- To esteem God highly;
- To believe God;
- To trust God ("**Trust in the Lord forever, for in the Lord, is everlasting strength**" Isaiah 26:4);
- To delight in God ("**Delight yourself also in the Lord and He shall give you the desires of your heart.**" Psalm 37:4);
- To rejoice in God ("**Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!**" Psalm 32:11);
- To obey God and submit to Him;
- To walk humbly before God ("**He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God?**" Micah 6:8).

The Day will come when we will have to stand before Almighty God and give an account of our lives. "**And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the Judgement.**" Hebrews 9:27

EXAMPLES FOR US

Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, proved that God was his first priority (Genesis 22:1-14).

When the people of Israel were unfaithful to the Lord by seeking to worship both the Lord and the false gods of Canaan, Elijah challenged the nation: "**How long will you falter between two opinions? If the Lord is God, follow Him; but if Baal, follow him.**" 1 Kings 18:21

Joshua challenged the people of Israel: **“Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. Whether the gods which your fathers served that were on the other side of the river, or the gods of the Amorites in whose land you dwell. But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.”**

Joshua 24:15

God revealed to Hosea that when His people sought to worship Him and the idols of the nations, that was like him having to marry a prostitute.

Daniel and his three friends, remain inspiring examples to all of us as to what it means to obey the first Commandment. When king Nebuchadnezzar set up an idol of gold and commanded everyone to bow down and worship it, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego refused to bow. When they were threatened with being thrown into the fiery furnace, they responded: **“Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace and He will deliver us from your hand, O king. But if not, let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”** Daniel 3:17-18

When king Darius of the Medo-Persian empire issued the decree that for thirty days anyone who prayed to any god other than the king was to be thrown into the lions’ den, Daniel continued to worship God alone. And God preserved Daniel in the lions’ den.

In the light of the first Commandment, we should examine our hearts.

What, or who, is first in your life?

What is of greatest importance to you?

What do you spend most of your time and money on?

What do you think about the most?

What are you most excited about and enthusiastic for?

If, after an honest examination of your own heart and mind, you realise that God does not have first place in your life, then you need to re-order your priorities in the light of Eternity.

As the Apostle Peter declared:

“We ought to obey God rather than men.” Acts 5:29



Daniel was thrown into the lions' den for praying to God rather than to the king.



Moses confronts the idolatry of those who formed the golden calf.

Chapter 2

THE SECOND COMMANDMENT IDOLS FOR DESTRUCTION

“For the wrath of God is revealed from Heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the Truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the Creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man... who exchanged the Truth of God for the lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator, Who is blessed forever. Amen.” Romans 1:18-25

THE SIN MOST CONDEMNED IN THE BIBLE

Throughout the Bible commandments and warnings against idolatry are the most repeated of all. There are more denunciations of idolatry than any other sin in the Bible. ***“You shall not make for yourself a carved image... you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.”*** Exodus 20:4-6

“Do not turn to idols, nor make for yourselves moulded gods; I am the Lord your God.” Leviticus 19:4

“Thus says the Lord God: Repent, turn away from your idols and turn your faces away from all your abominations. For anyone...who sets up his idols in his heart...I the Lord will answer him by Myself.”

Ezekiel 14:6-7

“Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries and the like...those who practice such things will not inherit the Kingdom of God.” Galatians 5:19-21

The Apostle John beseeches us: ***“Little children, keep yourselves from idols.”*** 1 John 5:21

PROHIBITING POLYTHEISM

Of course, the second commandment prohibits the idolatry of polytheistic religions such as Hinduism. Idols of Kali before whom devotees used to offer human sacrifices, Shiva, Krishna and Vishnu are all obviously idols forbidden by the second commandment.

The Apostle Paul taught: ***“Rather, that the things which the gentiles sacrifice they sacrifice to demons and not to God and I do not want you to have fellowship with demons. You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot partake of the Lord’s Table and of the table of demons. Or do we provoke the Lord to jealousy? Are we stronger than He?”*** 1 Corinthians 10:20-22

Moses wrote: ***“They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods; with abominations they provoked Him to anger. They sacrificed to demons, not to God...”*** Deuteronomy 32:16-20

The Law of God demands: ***“But you shall destroy their altars, break their sacred pillars and cut down their wooden images (for you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose Name is Jealous, is a jealous God).”*** Exodus 34:13-14

PROVOKING THE WRATH OF GOD

The Prophet Jeremiah wrote: ***“The children gather wood, the fathers kindle the fire and the women knead dough, to make cakes for the queen of heaven; and they pour out drink offerings to other gods, that they may provoke Me to anger. Do they provoke Me to anger?” says the Lord. ‘Do they not provoke themselves, to the shame of their own faces?’ Therefore thus says the Lord God: ‘Behold, My anger and My fury will be poured out on this place...and it will burn and not be quenched.’”*** Jeremiah 7:18-20

THE MISSING COMMANDMENT

It is significant that Roman Catholicism has omitted this Second Commandment not to bow down to any idols from their traditional listing of the Ten Commandments. To make up for the omission of number two, the Tenth Commandment not to covet is divided into two, with *Do not covet your neighbour’s wife* now being number nine and *Do not covet anything else that is your neighbour’s* as number ten. When I have pointed this out to people in the field quoting the Ten Commandments to me and shown them the passages in Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5, they are shocked. *“Why would our church change the Ten Commandments?”* they would ask in shock. *“Perhaps it is because they have statues and crucifixes that they bow down to,”* I have suggested.

SINS FORBIDDEN

The Westminster Larger Catechism lists under the Second Commandment the **Sins Forbidden** as:

- the sin of enticing to idolatry (***“If your brother, the son of your mother, your son or your daughter, the wife of your bosom, or your friend who is as your own soul, secretly entices you, saying ‘Let us go and serve other gods,’ ...you shall not consent to him or listen to him, nor shall your eye pity him, nor shall you spare him or conceal him.”*** Deuteronomy 13:6-8);
- The sin of approving any religious worship not instituted by God Himself (***“Take heed to yourself that you are not ensnared to follow them...and that you do not enquire after their gods, saying, How did these nations serve their gods? I also will do likewise. You shall not worship the Lord your God in that way; for every abomination to the Lord which He hates they have done to their gods; for they burn even their sons and daughters in the fire to their gods. Whatever I command you, be careful to observe it; you shall not add to it nor take away from it.”*** Deuteronomy 12:30-32);
- The sin of tolerating false religion (***“It shall be in that day, says the Lord of Hosts, that I will cut off the names of the idols from the land and they shall no longer be remembered. I will also cause the prophets and the unclean spirit to depart from the land. It shall come to pass that if anyone still prophesies, then his father and mother who begot him will say to him, You shall not live, because you have spoken lies in the Name of the Lord?”*** Zechariah 13:2-3; ***“I know your works, your labour, your patience and that you cannot bear those who are evil. And you have tested those who say they are Apostles and are not and have found them liars... but I have a few things against you, because you have there those who hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to put a stumbling block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed to idols and to commit sexual immorality. Thus you also have those who hold to the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate...”*** Revelation 2:2, 14-15, 20);
- The sin of making any representation of God (***“Take careful heed to yourselves, for you saw no form when the Lord spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure;...take heed lest you lift your eyes to Heaven and when you see the sun, the moon and the stars, all the hosts of Heaven, you feel driven to worship them and serve them, which the Lord your God has given to all the peoples under the whole heaven as a***

- heritage.”** Deuteronomy 4:15-19; **“We ought not to think that the Divine Nature is like gold or silver or stone, something shaped by art and man’s devising.”** Acts 17:29);
- The sin of worshipping images (**“Let it be known to you, O king, that we do not serve your gods, nor will we worship the gold image which you have set up.”** Daniel 3:18; **“You served those which by nature are not gods.”** Galatians 4:8);
 - The sin of making representations of imagined deities (**“They have turned aside quickly out of the way which I commanded them. They have made themselves a moulded calf and worshipped it and sacrificed to it and said, This is your god, O Israel, that brought you out of the land of Egypt?”** Exodus 32:8);
 - The sin of superstition (**“Do not touch, do not taste, do not handle... according to the commandments and doctrines of men. These things indeed have an appearance of wisdom in self-imposed religion, false humility and neglect of the body, but are of no value against the indulgence of the flesh.”** Colossians 2:21-23);
 - The sin of corrupting the worship of God (**“You offer defiled food on My altar...you offer the blind as a sacrifice...you offer the lame and sick... offer it then to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you favourably? says the Lord of Hosts.”** Malachi 1:7-8);
 - The sin of adding to, or taking away from, the worship of God (**“You shall not add to the Word which I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you.”** Deuteronomy 4:2; **“And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”** Matthew 15:9);
 - The sin of simony (**“And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the Apostles’ hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money.”** Acts 8:18);
 - The sin of despising the worship and ordinances of God (**“But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business.”** Matthew 22:5; **“You also say, Oh, what a weariness! And you sneer at it...”** Malachi 1:13);
 - The sin of hindering and opposing the worship and ordinances of God (**“But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.”** Matthew 23:13)

DUTIES REQUIRED

Under **Duties Required** the Westminster Larger Catechism lists:

“The receiving, observing and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances as God hath instituted in His Word; particularly prayer and thanksgiving in the Name of Christ.” (**“Set your hearts on all the Words... which you shall command your children to be careful to observe – all the Words of this Law...it is your life and by this Word you shall prolong your days.”** Deuteronomy 32:46-47; **“Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you.”** Matthew 28:20; **“And they continued steadfastly in the Apostles’ doctrine and fellowship...”** Acts 2:42; **“Keep this commandment without spot, blameless until our Lord Jesus Christ’s appearing.”** 1 Timothy 6:14

Other Duties Required by the Second Commandment include:

- the duty to read the Word of God (Deuteronomy 17:18- 19);
- the duty to hear the Word of God (James 1:21-22);
- the duty to administer and receive the Sacraments (Matthew 28:19; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26);
- the duty of church government and discipline (Matthew 18:15-17; Matthew 16:19);
- the duty to receive and maintain the ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12; 1 Timothy 5:17-18);
- the duty of religious fasting (Joel 2:12);
- the duty to disapprove of, detest and oppose all false worship (“Now while Paul waited for them at Athens, his spirit was provoked within when he saw that the city was given over to idols.” Acts 17:16).

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES

The Commandment against idol worship was broken before the Words burned into the tablets of stone by the finger of God had even cooled. The Israelites fashioned a graven image of a golden calf, right beneath the mountain of God.

How could God’s chosen people bow down before a cold, lifeless image of a golden calf when they had just witnessed the ten plagues of the Living God expose as powerless the false gods of Egypt?

How could they have been so unfaithful to the God who had delivered them out of slavery in Egypt, carrying them on eagles’ wings, the One who had led them through the Red Sea with walls of water on each side? How could they have lowered themselves to worshipping an idol when they had been fed with manna in the desert and satisfied with water from the Rock, following the Pillar of Cloud by day and the Pillar of Fire by night?

ATTEMPTS TO EXCUSE THE INEXCUSABLE

When Moses confronted his brother, Aaron's attempts to excuse this abomination seemed embarrassingly like our feeble attempts to justify disobedience to the clearly expressed Word of God. Aaron claimed that they threw all their gold into the fire and out came the golden calf! Earlier Aaron had even claimed that the feast before the golden calf would be held in honour of the Lord! (Exodus 32:5).

After King Solomon, many of the Israelites turned to the sin of idolatry. Jeroboam had other golden calves fashioned for worship in Dan and Bethel. All over Israel, on countless hills and amidst clumps of trees, altars were erected to the false gods of the Canaanites: Baal, Ashteroth, Kronos and Molech. The consequence of this idolatry was judgement.

DEFEATED AND EXILED FOR IDOLATRY

God sent the Assyrians to destroy the Northern Kingdom of Israel and drive His people into exile. The Southern Kingdom of Judah was later conquered under Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. It took the furnace of affliction and slavery in Babylon to purge the dregs of idolatry from the hearts of God's people. First under the ministry of great prophets such as Ezekiel and Daniel and then after the return from Exile under Ezra and Nehemiah, the people resolved never again to compromise with idolatry.

THE IDOLATROUS ALTAR OF MULTICULTURALISM AND INTERFAITH

Christianity cannot worship before the idolatrous altar of pluralism, multiculturalism and the interfaith movement. Jesus Christ is "***the Way, the Truth and the Life, no one comes to the Father***" except through Him (John 14:6).

HATRED OF GOD

The Second Commandment is the only commandment where God implies that those who break it hate Him. To worship a false god, any sort of image, or to attempt to worship God through some kind of statue or image, was defined in the second commandment as hating God.

ACCEPTABLE AND UNACCEPTABLE ART

We should also note that the Second Commandment does not forbid artistry. The Second Commandment forbids idolatry. On the same day that God gave Moses the Ten Commandments, He gave Moses detailed instructions for the building of the Tabernacle which included numerous visual arts. Exodus 25 and 26 include details for the Tabernacle, the curtains, the Ark of the Covenant and even for the statues of the angels over the Ark of the Covenant.

There are three functions of art. Two are acceptable, the third is forbidden by the second commandment.

DECORATION

Art may be used for decoration, or as a teaching tool, but not for Devotional purposes. God is a God of beauty. He is the great Artist whose creativity and love of beauty is seen in so much of His magnificent creation, sunsets and sunrises, mountains, trees, plants, flowers, the ocean and the sky itself. God intends that we exercise the talents He entrusts us with to beautify His world further.

TEACHING

Art can also be used to teach and instruct and it is perfectly acceptable to produce and use pictures of Noah, The Ark and the animals, Moses parting the Red Sea, David defeating Goliath, Elijah challenging the Prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel and so many other great Bible stories.

DEVOTION

What the Second Commandment is forbidding is the Devotional use of art. God Himself is greater than His Creation and everything in it. The Heidelberg Catechism of 1563 asks: *“Must we, then, not make any images at all? Answer: God cannot and may not be imaged in any way...but may not images be tolerated in churches as books of the laity? Answer: No, for we should not be wiser than God, who will not have His people taught by dumb idols, but by the lively preaching of His Word.”*

GOD IS SPIRIT - WORSHIP MUST BE IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

God is infinite, eternal and perfect. How can anyone depict that artistically? How can any artist depict holiness and unlimited wisdom and power? God forbids any representation of Himself because His nature is too great to be drawn or depicted. This Commandment requires that our worship be simple and Spiritual, free of elaborate human gimmicks and ornamentation. God has designed a way of worship through intelligent, sincere, wholehearted words - said and sung. God is Spirit and we who worship Him must worship Him in Spirit and Truth. We must prepare our hearts, humble ourselves, confess our sins, be grateful for His many blessings and rejoice in the Lord with all our hearts.

A FALSE VISION OF CHRIST

I regularly see the unfortunate effects of idolatrous images of the Lord Jesus. One young man who came to join us for our Great Commission Course, arrived with long hair and a scruffy beard. I asked him if he was serious about missions. When he said that yes, he was, I told him to have a haircut and smarten and clean up. He was somewhat indignant: *“But Jesus had long hair!”* I handed him a Bible and asked him to please show me where the Bible tells us that.

“Well, I don’t know where, but did not Jesus have long hair?” No, I assured him that there was no passage anywhere in the Bible that describes Jesus as having long hair. In fact, there is nothing in the Scriptures that describes His features, His hair, His eye colour, or even the expressions on His face. We are informed that His face was marred more than any man and he had no form or comeliness about Him (Isaiah 52:14 and 53:2). It is hard to argue from silence. However the Apostle Paul did say that long hair on a man is a disgrace (1 Corinthians 11:14).

Unfortunately, because of imaginative Renaissance depictions of Jesus having long hair, that image has stuck. Although we do know that the Hebrew people did not typically have long hair. In fact almost every film on the life of Christ depicts the disciples as having short hair and the actor playing the role of Jesus stands out by having the longest hair on the set! (Although, it is interesting that in more recent films actors depicting the Lord Jesus have tended to have much shorter hair than has been traditionally depicted.)

It is worth noting that Samson stood out for having long hair, this identified him as a Nazerite. If it was typical for Hebrews to have long hair, it would have been of no significance to distinguish Samson. We need to repent of having idolatrous images of the Lord Jesus, whether as some delicate Renaissance figure with surgeon’s fingers, or a Californian hippie or surfer.

As the Lord worked as a carpenter, He would have had to be physically strong to chop down the trees, carry the logs, craft the wood into furniture and to carry and to deliver it. Considering how long the Lord survived while fasting in the desert, how he endured such cruel flogging and abuse at the hands of the Roman soldiers and the fact the Lord could walk through a murderous mob intent on stoning him or throwing Him off the cliff, without anyone daring to touch Him, indicates that He must have had quite a different physical appearance to how He is typically depicted in Renaissance art.

MODERN IDOLS

There seems to be some understanding of how this Second Commandment still applies to us today, in that the popular vocabulary identifies “*sports idols*”, “*Hollywood idols*”, “*sex idols*” and musicians who are described as “*idols*”.

POLITICAL IDOLS

There is also no doubt that people make idols of their favourite political party. The Soviet Union made a god of “*The Party*” and instituted idolatrous pilgrimages to Lenin’s tomb. Abraham Lincoln’s monument in Washington DC is described as a “*temple*” to “*enshrine*” the memory of this president “*forever*”. All very rebellious words. There is no doubt that Michael King (known as Martin Luther King Junior) is a national idol in America, just as Nelson Mandela is an idol in South Africa.

HOLLYWOOD IDOLS

Hollywood has attempted to make the world idolise those whom they term “stars”.

DOUBLE STANDARDS

Friends of mine who minister on a university campus related how one individual was incensed that the President of South Africa at that time had been referred to by his bare surname. **“THAT IS PRESIDENT THABO MBEKI TO YOU!”** he shouted. Shortly after that this same individual cursed and blasphemed - opening himself up to the response: *“That is the Lord Jesus Christ to you!”*

IDOLATRY IN THE MIND

What comes into our minds when we think of God, is the most important thing about us. All too often people betray the idolatry within in their minds in how they speak of God. Bishop Desmond Tutu was quoted on the front page of daily newspapers in South Africa as declaring that *“my God isn’t homophobic,”* that *“I could never worship a God who is against homosexuals.”* Tutu even declared that if homosexuals do not go to Heaven, then he did not want to go there!

A FIGMENT OF YOUR IMAGINATION

When people talk like this, they reveal that they have fashioned a god in the factory of their mind. Of course, their god would never be harsh and judgemental, he would never condemn anyone to hell, because his or her god does not exist. It is a figment of his or her imagination. What people have done when they speak like this is to invent a god to suit their own purposes. This is the essence of idolatry.

THE ONE TRUE GOD

The fact is that the God of the Bible is not only a God of Love, but a God of light. God is not only gracious and merciful, but He is Holy and Just. God is not only a Saviour, but He is the Eternal Judge. The God of the Bible, the one true God who made Heaven and Earth, gave us His Ten Commandments. He sent plagues upon Egypt. He destroyed the pursuing Egyptian army in the Red Sea. He sent fire and sulphur upon the wicked inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrah.

YOU HAVE AN APPOINTMENT WITH GOD

The Day will come when each one of us will have to stand before His Judgement Seat and give an account of our lives.

WHAT IS YOUR HIGHEST PRIORITY?

What is most important to you? Anything more important to us than God is an idol. To many people the idol in their life is fame, fortune, fun, fashion, success,

their fancy car, or home, their i-Phone, their computer, prestige, popularity, possessions or a certain relationship. Nothing must be more important in our lives than Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, the Creator and Eternal Judge.

THE FRUIT OF TRUE REPENTANCE

It is noteworthy throughout the Bible that whenever God's Word is proclaimed, the response of repentant people has been to destroy their idols. When the Apostle Paul proclaimed the Gospel in Ephesus, people brought their occultic materials and burned them. ***"...and fear fell on them all and the Name of the Lord Jesus was magnified... so the Word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed."*** Acts 19:17-20

THE STATUE AND THE STONE

In Lubyanka Square, in Moscow, about 900m North East of Red Square, a huge statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky, the founder of the *Cheka*, which later became the KGB, was erected in 1958. This statue was directly in front of the Lubyanka, the notorious Headquarters of the KGB, wherein many Christians were interrogated, tortured and murdered. In 1991, the statue of Dzerzhinsky was removed and a simple stone from the Solovki Monastery from Solovetski Island, which had been the first prototype Concentration Camp of the Soviet Union, was placed in the square where the statue of Dzerzhinsky had once stood. The symbolism of the Victory of Christ over Communism is striking. The Lord Jesus Christ declared: ***"The Stone which the builders rejected has become the chief Cornerstone. Whoever falls on that Stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder."*** Luke 20:17-18 (Matthew 21:44)

"But there is a God in heaven who reveals secrets... This great image, whose splendour was excellent, stood... a Stone was cut out without hands, which struck the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces... And the Stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth... And in the days of these kings the God of Heaven will set up a Kingdom which shall never be destroyed; and the Kingdom shall not be left to other people; it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand forever." Daniel 2:28-44

DESTROY IDOLS IN YOUR LIFE

We need to repent of idolatry in our hearts, minds and lives. Where there is a physical idol, we should break, burn or bury it. **Boycott hell - Repent!**

"Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted Word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the work and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves."

James 1:21-22

Chapter 3

THE THIRD COMMANDMENT HONOUR THE LORD'S NAME

“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.” Exodus 20:7

“...a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give an account of it in the Day of Judgment. For by your words you will be justified and by your words you will be condemned.”

Matthew 12:33-37

Words are very important. ***“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.”*** John 1:1

The first petition of the Lord's Prayer is: ***“Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be Your Name.”*** Matthew 6:9

WRITING GOD'S NAME WORTHILY

God's people in the Old Testament understood what it meant to show reverence to God by honouring His Name. The scribes who copied the Scriptures by hand had many complex rules that enabled them to copy the Scriptures very carefully and accurately. They had word counts and letter counts at the end of each page to ensure that they had not added or left out anything that they were responsible to copy. Whenever a scribe came to one of the secondary Names of God such as Elohim, or El-Shaddai, they stopped and put down their pens. They took up new pens and carefully wrote that Name. However, when they came to the principal Name that God had used to reveal Himself in the Burning Bush to Moses, Jehovah or Yahweh, for which they used the four letters JHWH, they were to rise from their seats, go and wash themselves and clothe themselves with new, clean garments, dedicated for this purpose. Then they were to pray and confess their sins, take up a new pen and fresh ink, in order to write those four letters JHWH – for Yahweh.

We do not do that today. However, in our mission, it has always been one of our principles to ensure that every word referring to the Lord is capitalised, including the personal pronoun Him or His and when referring to the Lord, Saviour, Scripture, Gospel, Bible, or His Word.

It is disturbing how today so many ministries, even some Bible societies, are decapitalising references to the Lord and His Word. It is even more disturbing when we notice that many of those same publications and writers will capitalise the government and the state!

FAILING TO FEAR GOD IS FOOLISH

The Bible teaches that “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” (Psalm 111:10). Evidently many people lack wisdom. What was once illegal and unthinkable is now broadcast on television, on the radio, in films, printed in news media and magazines. We are being literally bombarded by profanity. “...**the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His Name in vain.**” Exodus 20:7

BLASPHEMERS IN THE BARRACKS

I was shocked when I was called up for my military service at how many would brazenly take the Lord’s Name in vain. However, I noticed that many would feel awkward when having done so in the presence of a Christian. They would turn and apologise to me. It does hurt and offend a Christian to hear God’s Name taken in vain. However, as I often had to remind these individuals: *“It is not to me that you need to apologise. It is Almighty God, our Creator and your Eternal Judge that you will have to stand before and give an account for every idle word ever spoken.”*

I was so distressed over this abuse of God’s Name, particularly by non-commissioned officers, that I requested to see the Officer Commanding. As I was marched into the Commandant’s office he asked me: *“Well, rifleman, what is on your mind?”*

“Sir,” I asked, *“Is it against the law to blaspheme the Name of the Lord our God?”*

“Yes, son, it most certainly is,” he answered, *“Why do you ask? Is the Lord’s Name being blasphemed in this unit?”*

“Yes, sir. I am sorry to have to report to you that many corporals and sergeants are blaspheming the Lord’s Name daily.”

The Commandant’s face darkened. *“I’m sorry to hear that, son. I will deal with this.”* He dismissed me.

DEALING WITH BLASPHEMY

Sure enough, at the very next Battalion Parade on Friday, the Commandant addressed the unit: *“The Lord Jesus Christ is the Commander-in-Chief of this Army. He is the One who determines whether we live or die. Victory or defeat is in His hands. Your lives are in His hands. Any man that takes the Name of the*

Lord our God in vain is a traitor and he will be treated as such. I will not tolerate blasphemy in this unit!"

Indeed, he did not. Some NCOs were charged for taking the Lord's Name in vain and some lost their rank.

EVERY IDLE WORD

We also saw the Lord deal with blasphemers in the ranks. On one occasion a new convert rebuked a notorious blasphemer for taking the Lord's Name in vain: *"The Lord will judge you!"* he warned.

The blasphemer cursed again, picked up his coke tin and was stung on his tongue by a bee that he had not noticed sitting on the tin. As his tongue swelled up, the rest of the platoon could not help but burst into laughter. This foul - mouthed blasphemer was not able to speak a word for days.

THE STIFF-NECKED

Another foul-mouthed pagan in our unit was warned by one of our Bible study fellowship that *"God will judge the stiff-necked!"* Shortly after this, this lance corporal injured his neck so severely in an obstacle course that he had to wear a neck brace for several weeks thereafter. Wherever he went other pagans were laughing at him, pointing and repeating those words that God had judged the *"stiff-necked!"*

DIVINE WRATH

In the Book of Acts we read how God struck Ananias and Sapphira dead for lying to the Holy Spirit and dishonouring God's Name. ***"So great fear came upon all the Church and upon all who heard these things."*** Acts 5:1-11

THE BLASPHEMOUS 'LAST TEMPTATION'

When plans were made to bring the blasphemous *Last Temptation of Christ* to South Africa, our mission mobilised nationwide protest against this film. We were later informed by the Publications Control Board that literally mail sacks of protest letters were received. South Africa was one of the few countries in the world that had the integrity to outlaw this blasphemous film.

However, after president F.W. De Klerk's infamous *"Red Friday"* when he announced the government's intention to *"liberalise"* the abortion laws and publications control, along with unbanning the ANC, releasing terrorists from prison, etc, the University of Witwatersrand organised for an *"academic"* screening of *The Last Temptation of Christ*. Not that they made any mention of this when they invited me to come and debate *"censorship"* on the university campus. However, contacts of ours informed us that the

Publications Control Board had granted a temporary provisional exemption for Wits University to screen *The Last Temptation of Christ* in an academic environment, on condition that they first had a public debate on the merits and demerits of the film - including a minister who would oppose the film. So when the invitation came, we knew the circumstances.

BATTLE AT THE UNIVERSITY

I immediately phoned Rev. Kjell Olsen of Christians for Truth who mobilised members of CFT from KwaZulu/Natal and from the Transvaal to support me in the debate. I flew up to Johannesburg and, with many CFT and ACA members in the audience supporting my position, articulated the case against blasphemy and pornography and particularly against the "*Last Temptation of Christ*" in honour of the Lord's Name.

MENTAL GYMNASTICS

Opposing me was a so-called "*dominee*" who was at that time running the SATV programme *Kruis en Kroniek*. His position was incredible: "*The only thing that should be censored is censorship itself! All censorship censors the image of God! As God has made the world in His image, anything that censors that image is blasphemy!*" Just in case I had misunderstood his position, I questioned him and he reiterated that all forms of pornography and profanity should be allowed as free speech, but that the only thing that should be outlawed was censorship! While blasphemy should not be illegal, censorship should! "***Woe to those who call evil good and good evil; who put darkness for light and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes ...***" Isaiah 5:20-21

After the debate, which evidently these blasphemers were only enduring because of the legal requirement to do so, they sneeringly announced that they would now screen the film. "***Woe to you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites!... therefore you will receive greater condemnation.***" Matthew 23:14

CONFRONTATION

Rev. Fano Sibisi of Christians for Truth came up in front of the stage and announced to everyone in the auditorium that this was not acceptable and as Christians we intended to stand for the honour of the Lord's Name by blocking the screen and refusing to move. The smirks and sneers of our hosts quickly disappeared and a look of panic came over their faces. They threatened to mobilise "*the angry youth of Soweto*" against us! We looked on with amusement as a group of toyi-toying youngsters danced into the theatre in an aggressive manner shouting and singing threats against us. However, as they saw us with the determined Afrikaners and Zulus, standing resolute shoulder to shoulder, they fled.

STAND UP FOR JESUS

There was more confusion. Then our hosts came back and threatened to call the police to have us removed by force. “*Go ahead,*” Rev. Sibisi challenged them. We sang Hymns of Faith and prayed and every pagan fled the auditorium.

FIGHT THE GOOD FIGHT

The police did not rush to get there. It was after midnight when they came and politely asked us if we would be kind enough to leave. The officer in charge told us that he fully agreed with our position and that is why they had ensured that they arrived after midnight. The exemption for Wits University to screen the *Last Temptation* expired at midnight! The police joined us in prayer as we gathered outside on the steps of the auditorium.

TAKING GOD'S NAME IN VAIN

The president of South Africa at that time, F.W. De Klerk, had created much excitement when on being sworn into office, he had chosen to alter the traditional Oath of Office, swearing “*in the Name of the Triune God*” to uphold all the laws of this land. However, it soon appeared that he was taking the Lord's Name in vain. For, far from upholding the Constitution and all the laws of the land, F.W. De Klerk instructed the police not to enforce many of the laws of the land, including the Lord's Day ordinances, the suppression of Communism Act and the Internal Security Act.

SOCIAL AND POLITICAL REVOLUTION

Soon shops and cinemas were open on Sundays, violent revolutionaries were released from prison and previously banned terrorist organisations, like the ANC and the South African Communist Party were freely organising public meetings and riots throughout the country. Previously outlawed pornography was now tolerated and every week *Scope* magazine seemed to push the boundaries even further. In one particular week, while the Publications Control Board banned 65 publications, the Appeal Board unbanned 62 of them!

BLATANT REBELLION TOWARDS ALMIGHTY GOD

The National Party, which had always portrayed itself as a Christian Party, hired witchdoctors to design a new corporate image for the NP. The General Secretary of the National Party, Roelf Meyer, was photographed at a witchcraft ceremony in Soweto where witchdoctors, employed by the National Party, “*dedicated*” the new NP offices in Soweto to the ancestral spirits! A goat was sacrificed and blood and entrails were sprinkled over this

General Secretary of the NP, who apparently was a church member. The fact that the once powerful National Party disappeared into oblivion shortly after this, again illustrated the point that “...***the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His Name in vain.***”

GOD’S GARBAGE DUMP

The Westminster Catechism teaches us that “*the chief end of man is to glorify God.*” If we profane His Name we are violating the very purpose of our existence. If some electronic item fails to work, where does it end up? On the trash heap! The Lord Jesus described eternal hell as Gehenna, the burning rubbish heap of Jerusalem. Just as the smoke continually ascended from the ongoing fire burning the rubbish of the city, the Lord described Eternal Judgement as God’s garbage dump. Those who do not glorify God will not enjoy Him forever. They will end up separated from Him forever on the burning rubbish heap of hell.

When the existence of the Life-Giver is held in contempt, then the lives of God’s creatures are also held in contempt. If God is degraded, we, His creatures, become worthless.

DISCRIMINATING PROFANITY

Dr. Billy Graham was horrified when the Oval Office tapes of president Richard Nixon were released. The transcripts which were quoted from and printed in newspapers worldwide revealed that every second sentence included some blasphemy or profanity. Billy Graham, who had known Richard Nixon for almost 30 years, declared that he had never once heard any profane or blasphemous word come out of Nixon’s mouth. This disproves a common excuse that many blasphemers claim: “*Oh, I’m sorry, I did not even realise I was doing it.*” How then could a blasphemer like Richard Nixon be so discriminating as never to have blasphemed in public and yet continually blasphemed in private? The Oval Office tapes revealed that he knew exactly what he was doing, when he was doing it and who was around when he did it.

WORSHIP AND THE WORK PLACE

When the great architect Sir Christopher Wren was building St. Paul’s Cathedral in London he ordered signs to be placed throughout the construction site declaring: “*Due to the heinous custom of labourers taking the Name of the Lord God in vain, each person is hereby placed on notice that it shall be sufficient cause for immediate dismissal if the Name of God is heard taken in vain in this place.*”

DUTIES REQUIRED

The Westminster Larger Catechism teaches that the Third Commandment requires *“That the Name of God, His titles, attributes, ordinances, Word, sacraments, prayer, oaths, vows, lots, His works and whatsoever else there is whereby He makes Himself known, be holily and reverently used in thought, meditation, word and writing; by an holy profession and answerable conversation, to the glory of God and the good of ourselves and of others.”* (Question 112).

Under the **Duties Required** the Westminster Larger Catechism includes: The duty to use God's Name holily and reverently in thought and meditation (**“For those who fear the Lord and who meditate on His Name”** Malachi 3:16 **“How excellent is Your Name in all the earth!”** Psalm 8:9);

In Word (**“And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.”** Colossians 3:17);

In writing (**“This will be written for the generations to come, that a people yet to be created may praise the Lord.”** Psalm 102:18);

In holy profession and conversation (**“But sanctify the Lord God in your heart and be ready to give a defence to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear.”** 1 Peter 3:15

“We will walk in the Name of the Lord our God for ever and ever.” Micah 4:5
“Only let your conduct be worthy of the Gospel of Christ...stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the Faith of the Gospel.”
Philippians 1:27).

SINS FORBIDDEN

Under the Sins Forbidden in the Third Commandment *the Westminster Larger Catechism* includes:

The sin of using God's Name in an ignorant way;

The sin of using God's Name in a vain, irreverent or profane way;

The sin of using God's Name in a superstitious and presumptuous way (1 Samuel 4:3-5);

The sin of mentioning His titles, attributes or ordinances blasphemously (**“For they speak against You wickedly; Your enemies take Your Name in vain”** Psalm 139:20 **“But to the wicked God says: ‘What right have you to declare My statutes or take My Covenant in your mouth, seeing you hate instruction and cast My Words behind you?’”** Psalm 50:16-17);

The sin of wicked cursing, vows and oaths (**“How shall I pardon you for this? Your children have forsaken Me and sworn by those that are not gods.”** Jeremiah 5:7); The sin of misapplying God's decrees and providences (Ecclesiastes 8:11; 9:3);

The sin of misinterpreting, misapplying, or in any way perverting, the Word of God (***“Because with lies you have made the hearts of the righteous sad...and you have strengthened the hands of the wicked, so that he does turn from his wicked way to save his life”*** Ezekiel 13:22; ***“...untaught and unstable people twist to their own destruction, as they do the rest of the Scriptures”*** 2 Peter 3:16; Matthew 22:24-30);

The sin of making profession of religion in hypocrisy, or for underhand ends (***“Having a form of godliness but denying its power...”*** 2 Timothy 3:5

“Woe to you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widow’s houses and for a pretence make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation.” Matthew 23:14

“For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward...” Matthew 6:5).

PRAYING AND SINGING IN VAIN

Perhaps you may never consider breaking the Third Commandment directly, but do you sometimes pray prayers, or sing Hymns, using the Name of God in a thoughtless or mechanical way? When we fall into cold and indifferent worship, we are actually breaking the Third Commandment.

Through His Name we may approach God in worship, love and prayer. We dare not use such a great Name lightly. We dare not pray to or praise Him, or sing to Him, in such a way that His Name registers no meaning to our souls. In all our singing, praying and preaching we must be sincere, wholehearted and enthusiastic. ***“Hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy about you, saying: ‘these people draw near to Me with their mouths and honour Me with their lips, but their hearts are far from Me. And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.’”*** Matthew 15:7-9

WORLDLY WORSHIP

Meaningless worship is the inevitable result of a worldly spirit. In many church buildings people can be seen lounging in a lazy manner, peering around, sizing up other people, whispering to one another and making no apparent effort to focus heart and mind on worshipping the Lord.

There are some who do not even attempt to try to sing the Hymns.

Many ministers encourage this halfhearted entertainment mentality by their over-casual dress and use of flippant, shallow language and inappropriate jokes. None of this helps encourage a sense of awe and reverence in worshipping the Lord in the beauty of holiness.

“So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people and they hear Your Words, but they do not do them, for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain. Indeed You are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear Your Words, but they do not do them.” Ezekiel 33:31-32

Hypocrisy in worship is frequently the result of refusing to obey the Lord's commands. **“But why do you call Me Lord, Lord and not do the things which I say?”** Luke 6:46

WHOLEHEARTED WORSHIP

To say the Name of the Lord with real meaning and sincerity must include wholehearted love and obedience. Those who spurn the Bible and the foundational doctrines of Christianity cannot possibly be serious when they use the Lord's Name, for they have no respect for God's authority. Such are laws unto themselves, picking and choosing what portions of God's Word they will accept and mingling them with the philosophies and politics of men. **“In vain do they worship Me...”**

The Third Commandment forbids all insincerity, thoughtlessness and shallowness in our worship. It condemns hypocrisy, rebellion and disobedience by those who claim to serve the Lord.

The positive virtues required by the Third Commandment are thoughtfulness, sincerity and wholehearted devotion to the attributes of our Lord and Saviour, the eternal, all mighty, all knowing and everpresent Creator and Eternal Judge.

The chief end of man is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

“Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.” Matthew 12:34

“His Name shall endure forever; His Name shall continue as long as the sun. And men shall be blessed in Him; All nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who only does wondrous things! And blessed be His glorious Name forever! And let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen and Amen.” Psalm 72:17-19

“Our Father, which art in Heaven, hallowed be Thy Name...”



On the first day of the week the women were told: Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here. He has risen from the dead!

Chapter 4

THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT HONOUR THE LORD'S DAY

“Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy, six days you shall labour and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea and all that is in them and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath Day and hallowed it.” Exodus 20:8-11

FRENZIED AND FRANTIC

It would appear that never before in history have so many people been so busy. No other generation has had so many labour-saving and time-saving devices and yet it would appear that our generation is one of the most rushed and frantic generations in all of history.

One would have thought that with electricity and plumbing, refrigerators, stoves, kettles, microwaves, dishwashing machines, clothes washing machines, vacuum cleaners, drive-through car washes, personal computers, laptops, Tablets, i-Phones, cell phones and every other kind of labour and time-saving device, that we would be less rushed and have more free time!

But no! No other generation in history seems to have been so determined to cram every minute full of frenzied activity. Studies indicate that every year Western people spend less and less time with their spouses, their children, their neighbours and with God.

RAT RACE GRAND PRIX

There is a pervasive sense of dissatisfaction. In the materialistic rat race there is a constant frantic striving for more: more possessions, nicer homes, better cars, more clothes and more shoes. There is an obsessive accumulation of things and a desperate desire to fill empty lives with noise and stimulation: films, television programmes, DVDs, music, magazines, newspapers, the Internet, playstation, X box, walkmans, MP3 players, i-Phones, tablets, SMS, Mix-it, Facebook and Whatsapp. In a frenzied rush for more fun and friends, more social contacts and events, lives are being flooded and swamped by a tsunami of stimulation, distraction, noise and temptations.

WORN OUT

Time and again one hears the complaint: *"I'm so tired!"*. People are continually complaining of being emotionally drained, physically fatigued, seriously stressed and spiritually empty. Burned out!

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS - READ THE MANUFACTURER'S HANDBOOK

Generally, when an electrical appliance, a vehicle or a computer malfunctions, we turn to the manufacturer's handbook to read the instructions. In the same way it would be wise for us to re-read the Creator's Manual. In His Ten Commandments we will find the solution to most of our problems. If we would only do what God has already commanded, we would save ourselves much grief.

"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on My holy Days and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy Day of the Lord honourable and shall honour Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words, then you shall delight yourself in the Lord; and I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your father. The mouth of the Lord has spoken." Isaiah 58:13-14

A QUESTION OF TIME

We are all given 52 weeks a year, seven days a week and 24 hours in each day. The question is: what are you doing with the time that God has given you? Are you expending and investing it in the way that He wants you to?

MISSING OUT

Anyone who violates the Fourth Commandment is really missing out on tremendous blessings and refreshment in the Lord. Great joy comes from taking time each week to devote to searching and studying the Scriptures, focusing on God in prayer and worship, enjoying fellowship with other Christians. ***"Surely My Sabbaths you shall keep, for it is a sign between Me and you throughout your generations, that you may know that I am the Lord that sanctifies you."*** Exodus 31:13

FIRST THINGS FIRST

The Puritans described the Lord's Day as *"The market day of the soul."*

Sir Winston Churchill declared: *"Sunday is a Divine and priceless institution, the necessary pause in the national life. It is the birthright of every British subject, our responsibility, privilege and duty to hand on to posterity."*

US President Theodore Roosevelt wrote: *"Experience shows that the Day of Rest is essential to mankind – that it is demanded by civilisation as well as Christianity."*

English Member of Parliament and ardent Abolitionist, William Wilberforce, declared: *"There is nothing in which I would recommend you to be more strictly resolute than in keeping the Sabbath holy; and by this I mean, not only abstaining that Day from all unbecoming sports and common business, but from time consuming and frivolous conversation, which often leads to a sad waste of this precious Day."*

The 19th Century Prime Minister of Great Britain, Benjamin Disraeli, declared: *"I hold the Day of Rest to be the most valuable blessing ever conceded to man. It is the cornerstone of civilisation."*

Reformer John Calvin wrote: *"The city will be safe if God be truly and devoutly worshipped and this is attested by the sanctification of the Sabbath..."*

Puritan writer John Bunyan, the author of *Pilgrim's Progress*, wrote: *"A man shall show his heart and life, what they are, more by one Lord's Day than by all the days of the week besides. To delight ourselves in God's service upon His holy Day gives better proof of a sanctified nature than to grudge at the coming of such days."*

The famous Puritan Bible commentator Matthew Henry wrote: *"The Sabbath is a sacred and Divine institution; but we must receive and embrace it as a privilege and a benefit, not as a task and a drudgery. First, God never designed it to be an imposition upon us, therefore we must not make it so to ourselves...Secondly, God did design it to be an advantage to us and so we must make and improve it...He had some regard to our bodies in the institution that they might rest...He had much more regard for our souls. The Sabbath was made a Day of Rest, only in order to it being a Day of holy work, a Day of communion with God, a Day of praise and thanksgiving; and rest from worldly business is therefore necessary, that we may closely apply ourselves to this work and spend the whole time in it, in public and private...See here what a good Master we serve, all whose institutions are for our own benefit!"*

Puritan pastor Thomas Watson taught: *"The reason why God instituted the old Sabbath was to be a memorial of the Creation; but He has now brought the first day of the week in its place in memory of a more glorious work than Creation, which is Redemption. Great was the work of Creation, but greater was the work of Redemption....The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former (Haggai 2:9). So the Glory of the Redemption was greater than the glory of Creation. Great wisdom was seen in making us, but more miraculous wisdom in saving us. Great power was seen in bringing us out of nothing, greater power in helping us when we were worse than nothing. It cost more to redeem than to create us. In Creation it was but speaking a Word, in redeeming there was*

shedding of Blood. Creation was the work of God's fingers. Redemption was the work of His arm. In Creation God gave us ourselves, in Redemption He gave us Himself. By Creation we have life in Adam. By Redemption we have life in Christ. By Creation we had a right to an earthly paradise. By Redemption we have a title to the Heavenly Kingdom. Christ might well change the seventh day of the week into the first, as it puts us in mind of our Redemption, which is a more glorious work than Creation."

CALL THE SABBATH A DELIGHT

Antinomians may hate the Fourth Commandment. Legalists may make it unpleasant. However, a dedicated Christian should delight in the Lord's Day. The Fourth Commandment is pastoral and protective. It is an eternal moral Law. A gift from God at Creation, which was later made a Commandment from God as well. This Day of Rest and refreshment was to benefit servants, visitors and animals as well (Exodus 20:8-11). This Day of rest was given as a reminder that God is the Creator and the Redeemer.

RELAXATION, REFLECTION AND RESTORATION

Setting aside the first day of the week as a special day is good for our spirit, mind and body. We need time set aside for relaxation, reflection and restoration. It is a matter of rhythm and routine, but also a matter of revelation and remembrance of the Lord's great works of Creation (Exodus 20:8-11) and Salvation (Deuteronomy 5:12-15). ***"Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another..."*** Hebrews 10:24-25

JESUS CHRIST IS LORD

By ordering our week to set apart the Lord's Day as a special day for the family to rest and to worship the Lord – we proclaim to the world that Jesus Christ has risen from the dead and He is Lord of our lives.

SPIRITUAL, EMOTIONAL, PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC HEALTH

Resting one day in seven is also healthy – spiritually, emotionally, physically and economically. It is good for business, good for families and good for any country. God has given us this commandment, like all of His other Commandments, for our benefit. Not only of Christians, but of society in general.

SEEDS OF DECAY

As Christians, we should repent for allowing the Lord's Day to become so encroached upon and desecrated by shopping, sports and worldly entertainment.

D.L. Moody observed: “*No nation has ever prospered that has trampled the Sabbath in the dust. Show me a nation who has done this and I will show you a nation that has got in it the seeds of ruin and decay. I believe that Sabbath desecration will carry a nation down quicker than anything else.*”

TO KILL CHRISTIANITY

The French revolutionary, Voltaire, declared: “*If you want to kill Christianity, you must abolish Sunday!*”

In fact, the Revolutionary Convention, during the French Revolution, attempted to abolish the Christian calendar and introduce a ten-day work week, counting the years from the establishment of their ‘*republic*,’ beginning 1792.

A TESTIMONY TO CREATION

It hardly needs to be pointed out that they failed, but why does our week consist of seven days? Why not make it ten or twelve for that matter? The seven-day week came from Old Testament sources and spread through the Christian influence. The seven-day week is a powerful testimony to the fact that God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh.

A TESTIMONY TO CHRIST'S RESURRECTION

The fact that Sunday, the first day of the week, is our Day of Rest, instead of the Hebrew Saturday, is a weekly reminder that Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week.

SATURDAY OR SUNDAY?

Some claim that we are not observing the true Sabbath unless we are observing it on Saturday. Instead of being concerned about the ‘*why*’ of the Lord's Day, they are more obsessed with the ‘*when*.’ Some even claim that the Emperor Constantine is the one who changed the Sabbath from Saturday and the reason we observe it now on Sunday is because this Caesar of Rome established the tradition at the Council of Nicea in A.D. 325.

THE AUTHORITY OF CHRIST AND THE FIRST DAY SABBATH

Actually, the institution of the Sabbath was changed to the Lord's Day on the first day of the week by Christ and His Apostles. Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the first day of the week. The Holy Spirit was poured out on the Apostles, on the Day of Pentecost, on the first day of the week. We read that the Disciples gathered to celebrate the Lord's Supper on the first day of the week (Acts 20:7). The Apostle Paul told Christians to set aside their tithes and offerings on the first day of the week (1 Corinthians 16:2). The Apostle John received his Revelation from Christ while worshipping on the first day of the week – which he described as “*the Lord's Day*” (Revelation 1:10).

CELEBRATING THE VICTORY OF CHRIST

Whereas in the Old Testament the Hebrew believers observed the last day of the week as the Sabbath in commemoration of the Lord's work of Creation, Christians celebrate the Resurrection of Christ Jesus from the dead and His work of re-creation, looking forward to the new heaven and the new earth - the everlasting Kingdom of God brought about by Christ's victory over death, hell and the grave - in His Resurrection.

CHRIST IS RISEN!

The early church fathers, long before Constantine, taught that Christians were to set aside the first day of the week as the Lord's Day. These included Barnabas and Polycarp. Justin Martyr, in A.D. 150, wrote: "*Sunday is the day on which we all hold our communion assembly, because Jesus Christ, our Saviour, on the same day arose from the dead.*"

Clement of Alexandria wrote in A.D. 194 that: "*Believers (in fulfilment of the precepts according to the Gospels), keep the Lord's Day.*"

Tertullian in the second century wrote that on the first day of the week, "*on the Lord's Day, Christians should, in honour of the Resurrection of the Lord, defer all worldly business.*"

The Lord's Day is an opportunity for us to stop, turn away from all the things of this world and regain spiritual perspective by focusing on God, His Word and His will. "**And upon the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread...**" Acts 20:7

AN APPOINTMENT WITH GOD

The Lord's Day Sabbath rest is crucial for the health of our souls and a vital part of our Christian witness. We are commanded to remember the Sabbath Day and to keep it...The Hebrew word for *keep* means more than to retain or maintain it, but also to honour an appointment.

AN APPOINTMENT WITH THE ALMIGHTY

The story is told of James Garfield, who went on to become President of the United States. At one point when he had been appointed President of a large business corporation he was informed of a very important meeting the next day. He replied: "*I'm sorry, I won't be able to be there.*" His aides insisted that this was a very important matter, a crisis that must be resolved. However James Garfield shook his head and re-iterated: "*I'm sorry, but I have a previous appointment. I cannot make it.*" When they pressed him to understand what appointment could be more important than this, he explained: "*I have an appointment with the Lord God Almighty tomorrow at 10:30, in His house, at His table and I will be there.*"

A HIGHER PRIORITY

Another very busy businessman who had his priorities straight was J.C. Penny, whose name is still prominent in the USA in the stores he established. J.C. Penny said this: *"If a man's business require so much of his time that he cannot attend the Sunday morning and the evening services and mid-week prayer meeting of his church, then that man has more business than God intended him to have."*

THE NECESSARY PAUSE IN THE NATIONAL LIFE

It has frequently been said that *"as goes the Sabbath, so goes the nation."* Many may wonder how a day of rest could possibly be that important. The Lord's Day promotes an awareness that God, His ways and His Laws are important to all of us. *"The necessary pause in the national life."*

THE TESTIMONY OF ERIC LIDDELL

Eric Liddell, the famous Olympic gold medallist whose refusal to run on a Sunday for the Olympic race he had trained for was the subject of the film *Chariots of Fire*, observed: *"There are many people today who think of those who honour Sunday in the old fashioned way as killjoys. They feel that during the years of youth they ought to have a chance to have their 'fling'. Give me the Day of the Rest, when all that savours of organised games can be put to one side and all of life's joys will be greater because of it. To me, personally, it is a time of communion and fellowship with God – a time of quiet, in fact a time of recreation and fellowship with God. I believe that Sunday, as we have had it in the past, is one of the greatest helps in a young man's life to keep all that is noblest, truest and best. That is why I say: 'young person, stand for the Lord's Day, for by losing it you will lose far more than the Day, you will lose the spirit that it stands for'".* Eric Liddell went on to win an Olympic gold medal for a race for which he had not specifically trained and then became a successful Missionary to China, courageously dying in a Japanese concentration camp during World War II.

CHRIST IS RISEN INDEED!

When we get up, get dressed and go to Sunday morning worship, we are joining hundreds of millions of people all over the world in testifying to the fact that Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Nothing else could explain the move from the Hebrew seventh day Sabbath to the Christian Lord's Day on the first day of the week. Nothing other than the victorious Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead would explain the unique institution of Sunday as a Day of Rest.

WORKS OF MERCY AND NECESSITY

Of course, our Lord Jesus taught that it is good and right to do works of mercy and necessity on the Sabbath (Matthew 12:11-12). Christians have

always recognised that. There are necessary emergency services such as those that are performed by fire-fighters, paramedics, doctors, nurses, policemen and soldiers. However, we do not abandon speed restrictions on the roads simply because the police and emergency services need to go faster. We make laws that will be good for society in general and then discuss the necessary exceptions.

KEEP SUNDAY SPECIAL

The point is – the Lord’s Day should be a special day without any commercial activities. We are to make every effort to ensure that the minimum number of people are forced to work on Sundays. Many Christians have lost jobs, or failed to obtain jobs, or been denied promotions, for their principled stand on not being willing to work on the Lord’s Day. Nobody should be forced by legislation to go to church on Sunday, but it would be right for governments to make legislation to keep people free from commercial obligations on Sunday. Just as there is legislation such as compulsory wearing of seat belts for motorists and crash helmets for motorcyclists, against drug abuse and other protections, it would be appropriate for the state to pass legislation allowing people the freedom not to work on Sundays, although no government may tell people what to do with their free time.

The pioneer inventors of aircraft, the Wright brothers, had this to say: “*We were brought up to have respect for the Lord’s Day...we would never fly on a Sunday.*”

DUTIES REQUIRED

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* lists under the Duties Required in the Fourth Commandment (Question 116): the duty of resting from employment which would be lawful on other days and the duty of public and private worship.

“In those days I saw people in Judea treading wine presses on the Sabbath and bringing in sheaves and loading donkeys with wine, grapes, figs and all kinds of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath Day. And I warned them about the Day on which they were selling provisions. Men of Tyre dwelt there also, who brought in fish and all kinds of goods and sold them on the Sabbath to the children of Judah and in Jerusalem. Then I contended with the nobles of Judea and said to them, what evil thing is this that you do, by which you profane the Sabbath Day? Did not your fathers do thus and did not our God bring all this disaster on us and on this city? Yet you bring added wrath on Israel by profaning the Sabbath. So it was, at the gates of Jerusalem, as it

began to be dark before the Sabbath, that I commanded the gates to be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the Sabbath. Then I posted some of my servants at the gates, that no burdens would be brought in on the Sabbath Day.” Nehemiah 13:15-19

“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And as His custom was, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath Day...”

Luke 4:16

SINS FORBIDDEN

Under the Sins Forbidden in the Fourth Commandment, the *Westminster Larger Catechism* includes:

The sin of omitting duties (***“Her priests have violated My Law and profaned My holy things. They have not distinguished between the holy and unholy, nor have they made known the difference between the unclean and the clean; and they have hidden their eyes from My Sabbaths, so that I am profaned among them.”*** Ezekiel 22:26).

The sin of careless, negligent, unprofitable performing of duties (***“For with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain”*** Ezekiel 33:32; ***“You also say, ‘Oh what weariness!’ And you sneer at it...should I accept this from your hand? says the Lord”*** Malachi 1:13).

The sin of profaning the day by idleness and doing what is in itself sinful (***“Moreover they have done this to Me; they have defiled My sanctuary on the same Day and profaned My Sabbath.”*** Ezekiel 23:38).

HAPPIER AND HEALTHIER

The Lord's Day offers us a regular opportunity for gratitude and worship; to be challenged by the Word of God; stirred, inspired and moved in our hearts; drawn closer to the Lord; amazed and thrilled by the Word of God; built up in our understanding and doctrine. It is a Day for Spiritual growth, a Day to help us establish our priorities and to demonstrate our obedience to the Lord. It is a dramatic and significant Day of testimony, helping us to show commitment to the Lord. It proves the sincerity of believers to neighbours, relatives and doubting children. Obedience is more eloquent than any words.

A WATERSHED ISSUE

Neglect of the Lord's Day includes a whole family of offences, including lack of commitment, unspiritual priorities, neglect of Devotions, disobedience to practical duties for Christian living. The Lord's Day leads the way in establishing the believers' attitude to all these matters.

BLESSING OF OBEDIENCE

Those who honour the Lord's Day will live longer, be happier, enjoy better health and their relationship with the Lord will be vastly deepened and strengthened.

Jesus invites us: ***“Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavily laden and I will give you rest.”*** Matthew 11:28



“Saul, Saul! Why do you persecute Me?”

Chapter 5

THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

HONOUR YOUR PARENTS

“Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.” Exodus 20:12

The first four Commandments deal with our duty to God. The last six Commandments deal with our duty to others, to God’s creatures.

Our Lord Jesus Christ summarised the two tablets of the Law when He answered the question concerning which is the greatest Commandment. Jesus said: ***“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and great Commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two Commandments hang all the Law and the prophets.’”*** Matthew 22:36-40

WHAT WE SOW THAT SHALL WE REAP

Grimm’s Fairy Tales include this story:

Once there was an old man whose eyes blinked continually and whose hands trembled uncontrollably. As he had no place to live, he moved in with his son’s family. His daughter-in-law hated it when at the dinner table he constantly rattled his silverware and spilled his drinks. In anger and exasperation she insisted he eat his meals alone in the corner, separated from the rest of the family. He began to eat alone, looking occasionally at the family sitting at the table. Then, one day, when his hands were shaking so much that he knocked his bowl onto the floor, his meal spilt onto the carpet. The daughter-in-law screamed: *“If you are going to eat like a pig we’ll feed you like a pig!”* She placed a wooden trough on the floor and told him that he would have to eat out of the trough like an animal. This he did.

Some days later the woman’s young son came into the house excited to show her something he had made: *“Look Mommy! I have made a trough to feed you and Daddy out of when I get big.”*

The woman began to cry as she realised of what a terrible evil she was guilty. From that day forward the old man ate his meals at the table with the rest of the family and the daughter-in-law did everything she could to make up for the cruel way that she had treated her father-in-law.

ABANDONING THE ELDERLY

Today, in so many ways, we see cruel disrespect for elderly parents who are frequently abandoned in old age homes and neglected. One of the first ministries I had was preaching in Old Age Homes. Many complained to me how they “*never*” had visits from their children. “**Listen to your father who begot you and do not despise your mother when she is old.**” Proverbs 23:22

FIVE CATEGORIES OF PARENTS

Thomas Watson articulated the Puritan tradition in his exposition of the Fifth Commandment, by distinguishing between five categories of parents that we need to honour: political fathers, ancient fathers, spiritual fathers, domestic fathers and natural fathers.

1. By *political fathers* he meant kings and princes, governors and mayors, municipal, provincial and national leaders.
2. By *ancient fathers* he meant our fathers in the Faith, either of Biblical times or in Church history. (This would include: Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, David, Elijah, the prophets and Apostles Peter and John; the Early Church fathers: Polycarp, Origen, Tertullian, Augustine; The missionaries: Patrick, Columba, Boniface, William Carey and David Livingstone; and the Reformers: John Wycliffe, Jan Hus, Martin Luther, William Tyndale, Ulrich Zwingli, William Farel, John Calvin, John Knox and Heinrich Bullinger. The Evangelist George Whitefield, the pastors Jonathan Edwards, Andrew Murray and Charles Spurgeon).
3. By *spiritual fathers* he meant the pastors, teachers or mission and ministry leaders to whom we are answerable. (In my life this has included Rev. ‘Doc’ Watson, Francis Grim, Dr. Fritz Haus, Rev. Erlo Stegen and Rev. Bill Bathman.)
4. By *domestic fathers* he meant employers, our teachers, coach, or our boss. (In the military this would be your Sergeant Major and Commanding Officer).
5. And by natural fathers he means of course our own parents and grandparents.

BUT WHAT ABOUT BAD PARENTS?

Some people will inevitably say: “But surely this Commandment cannot apply to me? My parents were horrible and abused me while I was growing up. Surely God cannot expect me to honour evil parents?”

Actually, Yes, God does require us to honour our parents no matter how badly they may have behaved.

Genesis 8 to 9 gives an example of men who honoured a parent who was behaving badly. Soon after the Flood, Noah planted a vineyard. When the grapes were ready, Noah made wine and got so drunk that he passed out in his tent. He was in a shameful condition when one of his three sons, Ham, saw him. The Bible tells us that Ham immediately went out and told his two brothers. But Shem and Japheth honoured Noah by taking a blanket and walking backwards into their father's tent to cover him up.

The Scripture informs us that Ham and his descendants were cursed for failing to honour his father, even though Noah's behaviour at this time was clearly dishonourable. The relatives of Shem and Japheth were blessed by God because of how they had honoured their father.

Those children of famous people who write "tell all" books which put their parents in a bad light disgrace themselves and displease God.

HONOURING THOSE IN AUTHORITY

Parents are commanded to teach their children to honour all lawful authority, starting with their own parents. Children who are not disciplined and taught to honour their parents while they are young, will probably not honour them when they are older.

Matthew Henry's Commentary teaches that the Fifth Commandment:

"Includes:

- 1. A decent respect to their persons, an inward esteem of them outwardly expressed upon all occasions in our conduct.*
- 2. Obedience to their lawful commands...Ephesians 6:1-3 'Children obey your parents,'...*
- 3. Submission to their rebukes, instructions and corrections; not only to the good and gentle, but also the harsh, out of conscience towards God. Endeavouring in everything, to be the comfort of their parents and to make their old age easy to them, maintaining them if they stand in need of support, which our Saviour makes to be particularly intended in this Commandment (Matthew 15:4-6)...that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."*

LEARNING FROM HISTORY

Commenting on the Fifth Commandment, Dr. James Kennedy observed that in his decades of ministry he had seen numerous people fired, but "poor job performance was very rarely the reason. In most cases, the problem was one of

attitude, a rebellion against authority. Why? Because they never learned respect for authority at home. 'Why has my life been so miserable?' they ask. 'Why do I have so much trouble in so many different areas?' Because they never learned to honour their father and mother. They have no respect for any type of authority, they are not thankful for anything they have been given and ultimately they will bring the entire nation to ruin. There are many historical examples:

"Persia became the second of the great world empires because Persians trained their children to be obedient. But eventually things changed, because the Persians had grown wealthy, which brought about a relaxed discipline, which led, in turn, to sin and then to the downfall of the nation.

"Then came the Greeks whose discipline was legendary. The Spartans, for example were so strict that when a young man entered the army he was given a shield and told: 'Come back with it or on it, but don't drop it and flee and don't surrender. Either fight till you die or gain the victory.'" Thus it was that just 300 Spartan soldiers were able to hold the line against hundreds of thousands of the Persian enemy at the Battle of Thermopylae.

"But the Greeks became self-satisfied; they failed to teach their children the importance of honouring their parents and thereby faded into history.

"The Roman Empire was the next to rise, due principally to the Patria Potestas – the absolute total rule of the father over the son – which was enforced as long as the father and son should live....that iron discipline enabled the Romans to conquer the entire known world. But then, like the Persians and Greeks before them they forgot all about the importance of honour and respect for parents and produced such monsters as Nero. Nero who murdered his own mother. Rome was swallowed up by God's judgement in history."

A SHAMEFUL FAILURE

Shamefully, the first sin I committed after surrendering my life to Christ was to dishonour my parents. It was 3 April 1977. I had attended an Evangelistic rally at a cinema in Pinelands. As the preacher proclaimed what Christ had done for me he asked the question: *"What have you ever done for Christ?"*

I was stunned and ashamed. I had never done anything for God. My family was secular. We never attended church services. Sunday School had never been part of my life.

We did not even pray before meals. Like my father, I described myself as an *"Agnostic."*

Now, all of the arguments I had picked up over the years against God and

Christianity seemed awfully puny as I bowed before the Creator of the universe. I realised that I was lost and there was nothing I could say in my defence. I knew that if I died that night I would go into an eternity separated from God – in hell. I was a selfish, self-centred, ungrateful creature. I had never even so much as thanked God for the life He had given me and for His many evidences of grace in my and in my family's life.

There was no way I could possibly deserve God's love, but I felt this absolutely overwhelming compulsion to stand up, go forward and make a public commitment of my life to Christ. The very least I could do was to thank God for all that He had done in Christ for me.

They were singing "*Just as I am without one plea but that Thy blood was shed for me*" as I walked down the aisle and bowed down in prayer at the front of that cinema in Pinelands. It was the most exhilarating experience. There could be no doubt whatsoever. God was reaching down and putting life within me. I had been deaf, dumb, blind and dead in my trespasses and sins. For the first time my spiritual eyes were being opened. For the first time I could consciously sense the presence of God. In fact I was absolutely overwhelmed with a sense of the presence of God, His love and His mercy. I trembled before His holiness and power even as I revelled in the joy of knowing that my sins were forgiven. I was a new creature in Christ!

I wanted to jump, leap, shout and proclaim what God had done. This was a completely new experience for me. With a German mother and an English father, we Anglo-Saxons did not particularly go much into expressing emotion about anything. But as I walked and skipped on the way home from that cinema that night, all kinds of emotions were bubbling up within me. What was I to say at home? I could not wait to tell my parents what God had done.

However, as I opened the door, I saw that someone had beaten me to it. A friend of the family, who had also been at the rally, had rushed over to inform my incredulous parents that their son had gone forward at one of these "*Billy Graham things!*" Jeers and scorn greeted me.

"*So, you have become a born-again Baptist like Jimmy Carter!*" That really stung. As a patriotic Rhodesian, I despised everything that Jimmy Carter was doing in betraying our and so many other countries into the hands of Marxist revolutionaries. To us Jimmy Carter was the epitome of a hypocrite and a traitor. Shamefully I lashed back with razor-sharp tongue defending my conversion and disassociating from everything for which Jimmy Carter stood. Like my parents I was an argumentative type and rose to the challenge with characteristic verbal aggression.

Later that night, as for the first time in my life I bowed in prayer at the side of my bed, I was ashamed that the very first witness I had given to my parents had been to dishonour them and argue. I despaired at the sinful desire to justify myself rising so quickly out of the heart of one who had, at that very hour, given his life to Christ. I did not yet have a Bible. But I knew that I had sinned against the Lord in my attitude and in my words and actions towards my parents that night.

AT WAR WITH THE PASTOR

Equally shamefully within a year of my conversion I was dishonouring and criticizing the pastor, Rev. 'Doc' Watson, under whom I had been converted and discipled. When, approximately a year after my conversion, I testified of being filled with the Holy Spirit, the pastor and deacons warned the congregation about the danger of "*Pentecostalism*." I was bewildered. I had no idea what Pentecostalism was. I had read in the Book of Acts of disciples being filled with the Holy Spirit and I had experienced an overwhelming, exhilarating, overflowing of God's Holy Spirit and had testified of it. At that stage I had never attended any other church. I did not even know of any Pentecostals and had never anticipated the controversy that my testimony would engender.

Soon I found myself part of a clique of highly critical youth who came together to criticise the church leadership. We would literally listen to the sermons of Rev. 'Doc' Watson in order to find something about which to complain. We even convinced ourselves that our pastor had committed "*the unforgivable sin*" in blaspheming the Holy Spirit! After months of disgraceful back-biting, the Lord brought great conviction of sin upon me. As I realised the evil of which I was guilty, I went to 'Doc' Watson, confessed and committed myself to be in submission to his leadership and obey his instructions. Soon it became clear to me that there was nothing wrong with 'Doc' Watson, the problem was within my heart and soul.

SUBMITTING TO THE SHEPHERD

From these very unpromising beginnings, 'Doc' Watson became my mentor. And shortly after founding Frontline Fellowship, he became Chairman of the Board of our Mission. From 1985 through to his death in 2002, Doc Watson always took a keen interest in our Mission. He applied his critical mind to our work and many were the constructive criticisms from which I and our Mission benefited. I will always be grateful for the time and energy which 'Doc' invested in discipling me and guiding our Mission, particularly in its formative years. He was a great and effective evangelist and pastor. I regularly remember the self-deception that blinded

me to this. And when I took seriously the command in Hebrews 13:17 **“Obey those who rule over you and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.”** I came to realise what tremendous blessing I was denying to myself by failing to honour this Command.

HONOURING MY PARENTS

By God’s grace I had the opportunity to honour and support my parents for many years. Only once did I miss Christmas with my parents. It was December 1983 and I was on a mission to Mozambique and Zimbabwe. I later felt convicted that I should have rearranged my mission schedule to ensure that I was with my parents over Christmas. After that I never again missed celebrating the incarnation of Christ with my parents. After my father died in 1986 I endeavoured to visit my mother as often as possible and to have her around to my home for Sunday lunch as frequently as she was willing. When my mother lost her leg and was invalided, Lenora and I gladly took her into our home and built a cottage at the back of our property to house her. It was a joy and privilege to have my mother for the last three and a half years of her life staying in our home, being involved in the education of our children and joining us for family Devotions and Sunday worship.

HONOURING SPIRITUAL FATHERS

The Lord also revealed to me ways in which I could honour my spiritual fathers. I wrote letters of appreciation to Francis Grim of International Hospital Christian Fellowship, thanking him for the example he was and what he had invested in training me for Missions. As my first mission, to Mozambique, had been under his leadership while I was part of Hospital Christian Fellowship, I dedicated the book *In the Killing Fields of Mozambique* to him.

As Dr. Fritz Haus had first introduced me to the doctrines of the Reformation while I was a Theological student at Baptist Theological College, I requested him to write a Foreword for *The Greatest Century of Reformation* book and to be an honoured guest speaker at its launch. I invited Dr. Fritz Haus to be an Honorary Member on the Board of Frontline Fellowship and to minister at various of our Biblical Worldview Summits and at our mission house. The *Old Testament Survey* is dedicated to Dr. Fritz Haus.

As Rev. Erlo Stegen has been a spiritual father and example to me, I requested him to write the Foreword to the *Biblical Principles for Africa* book and dedicated *Putting Feet to Your Faith* to him.

It was also a privilege to dedicate the first edition of my book *Faith Under Fire in Sudan* to Rev. Bill and Harriett Bathman and to arrange special fifty years in Marriage and Ministry celebrations for them in South Africa and even to take Bill Bathman to Sudan in 2001. In 2002 Rev. Bill Bathman became the Chairman of the Board of Frontline Fellowship.

HONOURING A POLITICAL FATHER

Over the years I have had several occasions to honour my political father, Ian Smith, who was Prime Minister of Rhodesia when I was growing up. Whenever he came under attack in the media, no matter what my deadlines and time pressures were, I always pushed them to one side in order to write letters in defence of Ian Smith and to counter the slander and disinformation in the media. To get more of his message out, I interviewed him on Radio Tygerberg and wrote articles that would place in context his courageous stand against communism in the Cold War. When Ian Smith died in 2007, I wrote articles and tributes in honour of him and published one of these in Frontline Fellowship News.

FATHERS OF THE FAITH

Shamefully, as a new Christian, I picked up a hostility to Reformer John Calvin and ignorantly repeated some outrageous accusations that I had heard others say. However, as I learned more of our church history, I realised that I had been taking part in the dishonouring of a spiritual father. Since then I have had numerous opportunities to put the record straight and to honour the accomplishments and integrity of John Calvin, including initiating and promoting **CALVIN 500** - as a major international event to celebrate the life and legacy of John Calvin on 9 July 2009 the 500th anniversary of his birth. Lenora and I named our youngest son after Calvin and I have written numerous articles and produced and presented different PowerPoint lectures on the life and teachings of John Calvin.

THE FATHER OF MODERN MISSIONS

Our William Carey Bible Institute correspondence programme is named after the Father of Modern Missions, William Carey.

THE BEST FRIEND AFRICA EVER HAD

Our mission headquarters is named Livingstone House after the great Scottish pioneer Missionary David Livingstone who opened up Africa for the Gospel and exposed the Islamic Slave Trade. Livingstone Fellowship - which we launched in 2006 is named after the best friend Africa ever had: Dr David Livingstone. In 2013 we launched **Livingstone 200** to mark the 200th anniversary of his birth, 19 March 1813. We sent out a Livingstone 200 Overland Mission to the 12 countries he ministered in and hosted the

Livingstone 200 Missions Conference in the city of Livingstone at Victoria Falls, which he discovered, mapped and named, camped on the banks of the Zambezi River. We also launched the Livingstone 200 website and Dr. David Livingstone social media site.

EXAMPLES OF EXCELLENCE

It was to honour our fathers in the Faith that I wrote *The Greatest Century of Missions, The Greatest Century of Reformation, Victorious Christians Who Changed the World* and *Sketches from South African History*. The Reformation Society was launched in 2005 in order to honour the courage, integrity and achievements of our ancient Fathers in the Faith.

AS GOES THE FAMILY SO GOES THE NATION

The health of the individual family hinges on obedience to the Fifth Commandment. However, much more is at stake here. *“As goes the family, so goes the nation.”* I have seen children shout at their parents, hit their mother and kick their father! If children do not learn to respect their own parents, they are not likely to respect any other kind of authority later in life. Those who do not learn to respect their parents at home are not likely to respect teachers at school and when such people leave school, they are unlikely to respect the law.

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN HONOURING AND OBEYING

This Commandment does not require us to always **obey** our parents, but we must always **honour** them. This speaks of our tone of voice and attitude of heart which should communicate respect and honour. The Bible warns of serious judgement on those who dishonour their parents: ***“The eye that mocks his father and scorns obedience to his mother, the ravens of the valley will pick it out and the young eagles will eat it.”*** Proverbs 30:17

Honouring parents (especially unreasonable, unbelieving parents) does not involve giving in to all their various schemes to draw their offspring away from dedication to God. If parents are overly possessive, overbearing and domineering, their adult children are not obligated to invest undue time and energy pandering to their dictates and manipulations. Our first and primary duty is to honour our Heavenly Father, the Lord God, our Creator and Eternal Judge. Our responsibility to honour our parents comes second to our duty to God. Devotion and honour to our parents must not in any way undermine our devotion to God.

PROTECTIONS AND STABILITY

The Fifth Commandment protects young people from pride and arrogance by calling for respect for elders and preventing the young from doing just as they want. The Fifth Commandment offers protection against the

anarchy and instability of youth. The Fifth Commandment gives stability by protecting us from impulsiveness, rashness and inexperience. Obeying this Commandment is a pathway to blessing.

“The Lord said...Be holy because I, the Lord your God am holy. Each of you must respect his mother and father...I am the Lord.” Leviticus 19:1-3

DUTIES REQUIRED

According to the *Westminster Larger Catechism* the Duties Required in the Fifth Commandment are defined as *“the performance of those duties which we mutually owe in our several relations, as inferiors, superiors or equals”* (Question 126). There are people to whom we are inferior, people to whom we are superior and people to whom we are equal. The Westminster Catechism carefully distinguishes between our duties and responsibilities in each of these relationships.

These Duties Required include: The duty of honour to superiors (*“The honour which inferiors owe to their superiors is all due reverence in heart, word and behaviour”* Q127).

“You shall rise before the grey-headed and honour the presence of an old man and fear your God: I am the Lord.” Leviticus 19:32

The duty to pray and give thanks for superiors: (***“Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications and prayers, intercessions and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceful life in all godliness and honesty.”*** 1 Timothy 2: 1-2)

The duty to imitate their virtues and graces (***“Remember those who rule over you who have spoken the Word of God to you, whose faith follow, considering the outcome of their conduct.”*** Hebrews 13:7)

The duty of willing obedience to the lawful commands of our superiors (***“Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Honour your father and mother which is the First Commandment with promise... bond servants, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in sincerity of heart, as to Christ; not with eye service, as men pleasers, but as bond servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart, with good will doing service, as to the Lord and not to men.”*** Ephesians 6:1-7

“Obey those who rule over you and be submissive, for they watch out for your souls as those who must give account. Let them do so with joy and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable for you.” Hebrews 13:17

“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. For this is commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. For what credit is it if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this is commendable before God.” 1 Peter 2:18-20)

The duty of due submission to correction (**“Furthermore, we have had human fathers who corrected us and we paid them respect. Shall we not much more readily be in subjection to the Father of Spirits and live?”** Hebrews 12:9)

The duty of faithfulness to superiors (**“Exhort bond servants to be obedient to their own masters, to be well pleasing in all things, not answering back, not pilfering, but showing all good fidelity, that they may adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.”** Titus 2:9-10 **“You therefore must endure hardship as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. No one engaged in warfare entangles himself with the affairs of this (civilian) life, that he may please him who enlisted him (his commanding officer) as a soldier.”** 2 Timothy 2:3-4)

The duty to defend superiors (**“So David said to Abner, are you not a man?... as the Lord lives you deserve to die, because you have not guarded your master.”** 1 Samuel 26:15-16)

The duty of bearing with the infirmities of the superiors, covering them with love (**“Servants, be submissive to your masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh.”** 1 Peter 2:18)

The duty of superiors to love, pray for and bless inferiors (**“Husbands, love your wives and do not be bitter toward them.”** Colossians 3:19; **“That they (older women) admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children.”** Titus 2:4

“Moreover, as for me, far be it for me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; but I will teach you the good and the right way.” 1 Samuel 12: 23)

The duty of superiors to instruct inferiors (**“And these Words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you rise up.”** Deuteronomy 6:6-7

“And you, fathers, do not provoke your children to wrath, but bring them up in the training and admonition of the Lord.” Ephesians 6:4)

The duty of superiors to reward inferiors when they do well ("**Then the king said: 'what honour or dignity has been bestowed on Mordecai for this?'**")
Esther 6:3)

The duty of superiors to reprove and chastise inferiors ("**The rod and rebuke give wisdom, but a child left to himself brings shame to his mother.**")
Proverbs 29:15)

The duty of superiors to give a good example to inferiors ("**The older women likewise, that they be reverent in behaviour, not slanderous, not given to much wine, teachers of good things – that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, home makers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the Word of God may not be blasphemed.**") Titus 2:3-5)

SINS FORBIDDEN

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* lists under the Sins Forbidden in the Fifth Commandment:

The sin of neglecting the duties required of inferiors ("**For God commanded, saying, 'honour your father and mother'; and, 'he who curses father or mother, let him be put to death.'** But you say, whoever says to his father or mother, 'whatever profit you might have received from me is a gift to God' – then he need not honour his father or mother. Thus you have made the Commandment of God of no effect by your tradition." Matthew 15:4-6
"**But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents; for this is good and acceptable before God.**" 1 Timothy 5:4)

The sin of rebelling against superiors ("**If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother and who, when they have chastened him, will not heed them, then his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him out to the elders of the city...and they shall say to the elders of the city, 'this son of ours is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice; he is a glutton and a drunkard.'** Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones so that you shall put away the evil from among you and all Israel shall hear and fear." Deuteronomy 21:8-21;
"**...and elders were not respected.**" Lamentations 5:12 "**Do not rebuke an older man, but exhort him as a father.**" 1 Timothy 5:1)

The sin of cursing or mocking superiors ("**Cursed is the one who treats his father or his mother with contempt.**" Deuteronomy 27:16; "**The people will**")

be oppressed...The child will be insolent toward the elder. And base toward the honourable.” Isaiah 3:5; ***“There is a generation who curses its father and does not bless its mother...the eye that mocks his father and scorns obedience to his mother, the ravens of the valleys will pick it out and the young eagles will eat it.”*** Proverbs 30:11, 17 ***“Whoever curses his father or his mother, his lamp will be put out in deep darkness.”*** Proverbs 20:20).

The sin of neglecting the duties required of superiors (***“Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed their flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost, but with force and cruelty you have ruled them.”*** Ezekiel 34:2-4).

The sin of superiors who commit unlawful actions (are seen for example in king Nebuchadnezzar setting up a gold image for all to bow down and worship. Daniel 3:4-6; and the Sanhedrin commanding the disciples not to speak in the Name of Jesus - Acts 4:17-18).



Jesus chases corrupt moneylenders out of the Temple.



Herod's murder of the innocents in Bethlehem.

Chapter 6

THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT YOU SHALL NOT MURDER

“Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.” Genesis 9:6

If there is one Commandment which the majority of people think they have never transgressed, it is the Sixth Commandment. **“You shall not murder.”** Exodus 20:13. Murder is considered to be a minority crime. Yet as Christ taught us in the Sermon on the Mount, hatred is also a breach of this Commandment. In fact as one considers the fullest implications of the Sixth Commandment and the family of offences that it covers, this is a most relevant Commandment for this murderous age.

There are so many ways in which this Commandment is violated on a daily basis.

CONFRONTING AN ABORTIONIST

During “*Human Rights Day*,” I took part in the Africa Christian Action Pro-Life protest outside an abortionist’s home in Pinelands. When the “*doctor*” drove up in her Volvo she demanded “*What are you doing outside my home? Are you the people who have been distributing these leaflets?*” she waved one of the **You Can Stop Abortions in Pinelands!** leaflets. “*Well, I want you to stop. You are embarrassing me in my neighbourhood. I don’t want my neighbours to know what I do.*”

“*If what you are doing is right, why would you be embarrassed about your neighbours knowing your occupation?*” I asked.

“*Because it’s controversial. Not everyone approves of abortion. You are embarrassing me.*”

“*You are killing babies.*” I told her.

“*No, I don’t kill babies. The mothers do*”, she responded.

“*Well, the mothers may pay you to kill their babies, but you are the one who actually does the procedure.*”

“*But it’s their choice. They sign the life of their baby away. I’m just providing a service.*” She responded.

“*So, you are like a hit man, who takes money to kill people?*”

“You could describe it like that,” she smiled. “I’m providing a service. It’s the mothers’ choice.”

“You are concerned about what your neighbours, today, think,” I responded. “But you should be more concerned about what Almighty God will say to you on the Day of Judgement. You do believe in God don’t you?”

“Yes, I believe in God.” She answered. But she denied that she was a Christian.

“Well, you have an appointment. **‘It is appointed unto man once to die and after that the Judgement.’** One day you will have to stand before Almighty God and give an account of everything you have done.”

“Maybe,” she responded with a shrug, “but you are speaking to the wrong person. You need to be involved in sex education in schools. I have to do abortions for twelve year olds. You won’t believe how many young girls come to me for help. It’s a dirty job, but somebody has to do it. There’s a tremendous demand for what I am doing and very few willing to do it.”

“Well, of course we do go to schools; and groups like True Love Waits are involved in vigorous sex-education in the schools. We do believe that education is our highest priority. I have worked in the Fire Brigade and the Army. Those are often dirty jobs. Firemen and soldiers can say they are saving lives. Abortionists cannot say that. You are not saving lives, you are ending lives. The fact still remains that life begins at conception and abortion is murder.”

The abortionist responded: “That’s your opinion.”

“No, that is a scientific fact. Surely you as a doctor know that life begins at conception?”

“That’s not the point.”

“Yes, that is exactly the point. Make no mistake, the day will come when future generations will look back on abortion in our time the same way we now look back on the slave trade and the Rwandan holocaust.”

“Maybe,” she said, “but we won’t be around then, so it won’t matter to us.”

“Do you not believe in the immortality of the soul? It will most certainly matter to you in eternity. There is a God in Heaven, a Day of Judgement. Heaven and hell are very real. It will most certainly affect you after you have died and throughout all of eternity.”

It was remarkable that this abortionist spoke so freely about “the mother” and “the baby.” Normally abortionists try to dehumanize their victims

by speaking of “*the patient*”, “*the product of conception*”, or “*the foetus*”, “*performing a TOP*” (Termination of Pregnancy). However, this abortionist had no problem consistently referring to “*the mothers*,” who “*sign their baby’s life away*.” At no time did she question the facts that life begins at conception and that abortion is the killing of an innocent baby. Her justification was merely that it is legal and she is doing what the mothers are asking (and paying her) to do.

ACCESSORIES TO MURDER

We cannot only single out the abortionists for the prevalent crime of abortion. It is also the politicians who have legalised the killing of children in the womb and those voters who continually vote for Pro-Abortion parties that enable this abortion holocaust to continue. They truly are accessories to murder.

THE SANCTITY OF LIFE

In Matthew Henry’s Commentary the Sixth Commandment is defined as concerning: “*Our own and our neighbour’s life: ‘Thou shalt not kill’; thou shalt not do anything hurtful or injurious to the health, ease and life, of thy own body, or any other person’s, unjustly. It does not forbid killing in lawful war, or in our own necessary defence, but forbids all malice and hatred to the person of any (for ‘he that hateth his brother is a murderer’) and all personal revenge arising therefrom; also all rash anger upon sudden provocations, or hurt said or done, or aimed to be done, in passion: of this our Saviour expounds this Commandment. Matthew 5:22*”

There are numerous ways in which the Sixth Commandment is violated:

1. Murder can be committed with the hands. “***There are six things the Lord hates, yes, seven are an abomination to Him:...hands that shed innocent blood...***” Proverbs 6:16-17
2. Murder can be committed with the mind. Malice is mental murder. (Matthew 5:22). “***Whoever hates his brother is a murderer and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.***” 1 John 3:15
3. We can murder with the tongue. “***Even so the tongue is a little member and boasts great things. See how great a forest a little fire kindles! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. The tongue is so set among our members that it defiles the whole body and sets on fire the course of nature and it is set on fire by hell....it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison...with it we curse men who have been made in the similitude of God...but if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your heart do not boast and lie against the truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic.***” James 3:5-15

4. We can also murder with the pen. King David condemned Uriah the Hittite to death by writing to his commander Joab: **“And he wrote in the letter saying, set Uriah in the forefront of the hottest battle and retreat from him, that he may be struck down and die.”** 2 Samuel 11:15
5. We are guilty of violating the Sixth Commandment when we consent to an innocent person’s death. Saul of Tarsus consented to the stoning to death of the deacon Stephen. He recognised that this made him a murderer (Acts 22:4).
6. We commit murder by not defending another when it is within our power to do so. **“Deliver those who are drawn toward death and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter. If you say ‘surely we did not know this,’ does not He who weighs the heart consider it? He who keeps your soul, does He not know it? And will He not render to each man according to his deeds?”** Proverbs 24:11-12
7. Those who take part in a conspiracy to destroy the life of another are also guilty of murder. **“My son, if sinners entice you, do not consent. If they say, ‘come with us, let us lie in wait to shed blood; let us lurk secretly for the innocent without cause’...My son, do not walk in the way with them, keep your foot from their path.”** Proverbs 1:10-15
8. Failure to execute capital punishment upon murderers is also a breach of the Sixth Commandment **“Bloodshed pollutes the land and atonement cannot be made for the land on which blood has been shed, except by the blood of the one who shed it.”** Numbers 35:33

“Anyone who kills with the sword, must himself be killed by the sword.”
Revelation 13:10

“If anyone takes the life of a human being, he must be put to death... whoever kills a man must be put to death...I am the Lord your God.”
Leviticus 24:17-22

“Anyone who strikes a man and kills him shall surely be put to death...If a man schemes and kills another man deliberately, take him away from My altar and put him to death...Anyone who kidnaps...must be put to death.” Exodus 21:12-16

THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT

The Bible is very clear that God has instituted civil government as **“an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrong-doer.”** Romans 13:4. Civil government is called to be a minister of God’s justice: **“To punish those who do wrong.”** 1 Peter 2:14

The primary duties and responsibilities of civil government are the protection of law-abiding citizens and the punishment of law-breaking criminals. Psalm 101 reminds us that the duty of God-honouring rulers is to destroy the wicked, to root out evil and to protect the law-abiding.

In the Bible the question is asked: ***“Why do people commit crimes so readily? Because crime is not punished quickly enough.”*** Ecclesiastes 8:11

During parliamentary hearings in 1996 over proposed changes to our abortion laws, I was challenged to provide just one verse from the Bible that forbids abortion. I quoted Exodus 20:13 ***“You shall not murder.”***

Every year over 20,000 people are murdered in South Africa. And roughly 80,000 babies are killed through abortion. It is not only those directly involved in these crimes of murder that are guilty of violating the Sixth Commandment. The guilt is shared by all those politicians who abolished the death penalty for murder, while instituting the death penalty for babies through abortion. Also guilty of being accessories before, during and after, the fact are the journalists who promoted abortion and who cover up the facts in order to ensure that the holocaust against the unborn continues. Those pastors who fail to expound the Scriptures faithfully on when life begins and that a Christian’s responsibility is to speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, are also accessories to murder. And of course, all those voters who continue to vote for pro-abortion parties are also accessories to murder.

“Open your mouth for the speechless, in the cause of all who are appointed to die. Open your mouth, judge righteously and plead the cause of the poor and needy.” Proverbs 31:8-9

PROTECTING THE INNOCENT

The Sixth Commandment positively requires the preservation of our own and our neighbour’s, life and safety. This is done by rendering prompt assistance to others, or by protecting them from injuries in the spirit of mercy and good neighbourliness.

RELATED TO A MURDERER

Tracing one’s ancestry is very popular. Many people spend days, weeks and months tracking down sources on the Internet and poring over records in archives to search for their family history. One is often pleasantly surprised to discover some prestigious relative perched on a branch of the family tree. It is most encouraging to find some relative whose life and accomplishments left some positive legacy for generations to follow. On the other hand, most

family trees also include individuals whom we would rather forget about – relatives who did not live good lives, even some who were thieves, pirates or murderers. Each one of us can be sure of one thing. No matter who you are, you have at least one relative in your family lineage who was a murderer. In fact, did you realise that you are related to the very first murderer? The very first person to be born on the planet, Cain, murdered his brother Abel. The second person to be born on planet earth, Abel, was the first victim of murder.

The situation deteriorated so badly that **“the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the earth and He was grieved in His heart.”** Genesis 6:5-6

JUDGEMENT

And so God sent a Flood upon the earth to destroy the vast majority of people, providing for the salvation of only eight human beings (Noah, his wife, their three sons and three daughters-in-law) and many thousands of animals. God determined to cleanse the earth of man’s violence and decadence and start all over again. He preserved the family of one righteous man, Noah and when the waters receded, God issued foundational Commandments for civilization including: **“Whoever sheds man’s blood, by man his blood shall be shed; for in the image of God He made man.”** Genesis 9:6

CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

This is a universal Law. And for those who hold the Word of God as authoritative, capital punishment is not a matter of choice, or opinion poll, or even of court or parliamentary decree. It is God’s clear command. God instituted capital punishment long before the enactment of Mosaic Law. In fact, capital punishment was declared not only for Noah’s time, but **“for all generations to come.”** Genesis 9:12. Those who show contempt for the right to life of others forfeit their own lives. Like the amputation of a diseased limb to save the rest of the body, society needs to cut off murderers.

This is the primary purpose of government. **“For rulers hold no terror for those who do right, but for those who do wrong...for He is God’s servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for He does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God’s servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrong doer.”** Romans 13:3-4

By obeying God’s Law and punishing murderers with the death penalty, a nation can cleanse itself from the guilt of innocent blood. On the other hand, a nation that refuses to avenge the taking of innocent human life, must share the guilt of the murderer (Deuteronomy 21:1-9).

IS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT CONSISTENT WITH BEING PRO-LIFE?

However, inevitably, as we stand for the right to life we are accused by pro-abortionists of not being consistent. How can we support capital punishment if we claim to be “Pro- Life”?

To this we need to challenge them on their consistency: “*Do you believe in abortion?*”

“*Oh yes, of course, we are pro-choice!*”

To which we must then ask: “*Do you believe in capital punishment for murderers?*”

“*No! Absolutely not!*” they respond in horror at the thought.

Then we can respond: “*It would appear that the difference between our positions is quite simple: We believe in protecting the right to life of the innocent and judiciously taking the life of guilty murderers. Whereas you believe in killing the innocent babies, but sparing the guilty murderers! The Bible declares that God hates ‘the hands that shed innocent blood.’ Proverbs 6:17 and ‘Woe unto him that calls evil good and good evil’ Isaiah 5:20.*”

A MODERN EQUIVALENT OF CHILD SACRIFICE

Abortion is a modern equivalent of child sacrifice. Just as God’s people opposed Pharaoh’s decree to murder newborn boys in Egypt (Exodus 1:15-22) so we need to protect pre-born babies from abortion today. Just as King Herod sought to kill babies in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:16), so abortionists are attempting to butcher babies today.

LIFE BEGINS AT CONCEPTION

The sanctity of human life is an essential article of the Christian Faith. The Bible makes it clear that life begins at conception (Psalm 139:13-16; Isaiah 44:2; Jeremiah 1:5; Luke 1:41). The unborn baby is then genetically, physiologically and organically a distinct person. At that moment life begins. At about three weeks after conception, the baby’s heartbeat can be detected. Six weeks after conception the baby has it’s own lifelong brainwave. If the absence of a brainwave is considered a sign of death, why then is the presence of this brainwave not accepted as confirmation of life? Birth is not a magical act that turns a non-human into a person. Birth is only a change in environment for a life that began many months before. Every abortion stops a beating heart. Every abortion ends a brainwave. Every abortion is the murder of a helpless and innocent person. If we do not stand up and oppose abortion then the blood of innocent babies will be upon our heads (Ezekiel 33:1-6). As Christians we must love our neighbour – and this includes our pre-born neighbours.

SELF DEFENCE

During a missions presentation in a church in America, the pastor objected to pictures of Christians, even pastors, in Sudan carrying weapons and asked how Sudanese Christians could justify taking up arms against the Sudan government. *“Christians may not kill!”* he declared.

I asked him what Americans celebrate on the 4th July? He seemed somewhat confused, so I reminded him that the founding fathers of his country had unilaterally declared Independence from Great Britain on 4 July 1776. The British called this a rebellion. The American colonists took up arms against the Crown because the British parliament had failed to rule the Americans in accordance with Magna Carta of 1215 and the English Declaration of Rights of 1689. King George III had violated his Coronation oath. The American founding fathers maintained that the British government was no longer *“an authority”* deserving submission to, but a tyrannical *“power”* to be resisted. How then could Americans object to Christians in Sudan doing what they had done in 1776?

I then pointed out that in the entrance way to their own church building they had a framed colour picture on the wall of early Americans settlers walking to church, carrying their rifles with their Bibles. I reminded him that many churches in America in the 17th Century fined men if they came to church without a rifle! 1 Timothy 5:8 requires men to make provision for their family and declares that any who fail to do so deny the Faith and are worse than an infidel! Churches penalised members who showed such irresponsibility as to fail to carry a weapon for the defence of their family members.

I then had to point out that Sudan - with slave raiders kidnapping children, burning crops, looting cattle, poisoning wells, destroying churches and crucifying pastors - is far more dangerous than America in the 1600s!

FAITH AND FIREARMS

The 39 Articles, the foundational statement of the Church of England, clearly states in Article 37: *“It is lawful for Christian men to carry weapons.”* The *Westminster Larger Catechism*, considered the finest expression of Biblical teaching, states under the Sixth Commandment that the prohibition against murder requires as our Duty: *“All careful studies and lawful endeavours, to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting by just defence against violence, protecting and defending the innocent.”* (Q.135).

Under Sins Forbidden, the *Westminster Standards* include: *“The Sins Forbidden in the Sixth Commandment are: all taking away the life of ourselves, or of others, except in the case of public justice, lawful, or necessary defence; the neglecting, or withdrawing the lawful necessary means of preservation of life; and whatever*

else tends to the destruction of the life of any." (Q. 136). In other words, God's Law forbids any government restrictions or interference in the right and duty of self-defence. Furthermore it also forbids our neglecting these means for protecting the innocent.

The Common Law has always recognised this. From the *Dooms* of King Alfred, the Laws of Cnut, the English Declaration of Rights of 1689, all the way through to the US Bill of Rights, all these recognised the inalienable right of all free men to keep and bear weapons for self-defence.

The first President of America, George Washington, declared: "*Firearms stand next in importance to the Constitution itself. They are the American people's liberty teeth and keystone under Independence. To secure peace, security and happiness, the rifle and the pistol are equally indispensable. The very atmosphere of firearms everywhere restrains evil interference. They deserve a place of honour with all that is good.*"

Pioneer missionary William Carey, whose landmark book, "*An Inquiry into the Obligation of Christians to use Means for the Conversion of the Heathen*" launched the modern missionary movement, listed in the final chapter as essential equipment for any missionary: "*Knives, powder and shot.*"

Mary Slessor, the pioneer missionary to Calabar in Nigeria, included Maxim machine guns in her checklist to a mission team coming to a very violent, slave trade ravaged area of Nigeria.

David Livingstone, the pioneer missionary and explorer who opened up Africa to the Gospel, was well-equipped with some of the most advanced weapons then available, including a six-barrelled revolver and a double-barrelled rifle. For the 1840s this was most advanced. On occasion Livingstone was compelled to use weapons for protection against wild beasts and to persuade slave traders to set the captives free. At one point, when criticized, Livingstone responded: "*I love peace as much as any mortal man. In fact, I go quite beyond you, for I love it so much I would fight for it.*" Blessed are the peacemakers – not the pacifists. To make peace requires resolution, courage and action.

Bishop MacKenzie of the Church Missionary Society, was involved in several fire fights against slave traders in the Shiri Valley (present day Malawi) and set many captives free.

When world famous cricketer turned pioneer missionary, C.T. Studd, undertook the first baptisms in a river in the Congo, he needed to warn off the crocodiles with a revolver in one hand while baptising the new converts with the other!

PACIFISM IS UNBIBLICAL

Pacifism is an unbiblical position. Although being able to appeal to superficial arguments of conscience and quote the odd verse out of context – the whole spirit and thrust of pacifism is anti-Christian. Pacifists may be sincere – but they are sincerely wrong. A Christian, by definition, must be active – with his, or her, sleeves rolled up, being willing to get his hands dirty protecting the innocent, defending the defenceless and saving lives from unprovoked aggression. Christian love is not mere words and sentiment. True love shows itself in action (1 John 3:18).

If all the people with a conscience refuse to fight, then it will leave the battlefields in the hands of people without a conscience.

Pacifism finds its roots in humanism. It does not seem to understand the Biblical teaching of the depravity of man. In common with humanism, pacifism shares a false idea of man. It sees man as basically good. Pacifists also often display more concern for the aggressor than the defender, more sympathy for the criminal than for his victim. Pacifism also has a false idea of God. It fails to understand the holiness and justice of God. It ignores the wrath of Almighty God against sin.

GOD IS NOT A PACIFIST

The Creator of all life ***“determines whether you live or die”*** Daniel 5:23. God destroyed the Egyptian army in the Red Sea (Exodus 14:15); the Lord opened up the earth to swallow Korah and those who were rebelling against Moses (Numbers 16); God killed 180,000 Assyrian soldiers who were attacking Jerusalem (2 Kings 19:32-35). God killed Annanias and Sapphira because of their lying (Acts 5:1-11) and Herod because of his pride (Acts 12:23). God continues to use His ***“four dreadful judgements”*** – sword and famine and wild beasts and plague (Ezekiel 14:21) in order to lead sinful people to repent. ***“Now see that I, even I, am He and there is no God beside Me; I kill and I make alive, I wound and I heal; nor is there any who can deliver from My hand.”*** Deuteronomy 32:29

PACIFISM FAILS TO FACE REALITY

If all Christians became pacifists, would all the Muslims, Atheists and Communists also become pacifists? It is useless for the sheep to pass resolutions in favour of vegetarianism – while the wolf remains of a different opinion.

TO DEFEND AND PROTECT

Much of the Bible is written by soldiers and for soldiers. Joshua was a mighty man of God, a mighty soldier commanding the Israelite army in battle with the Amalekites (Exodus 17) and in the conquest of the promised land.

King David was **“a man after God’s own heart”** and the writer of many of the Psalms. David was able to write: **“Blessed be the Lord my rock, who trains my hands for war and my fingers for battle – my loving kindness and my fortress, my high tower and my Deliverer, my shield and the One in whom I take refuge, who subdues the people under me.”** Psalm 144:1-2

Throughout the Bible the work and calling of soldiers are frequently mentioned, yet never with any suggestion that a military career could be dishonourable or un-Christian. When John the Baptist was asked by the soldiers what they should do, he never suggested that they leave the army. John the Baptist commanded them not to extort money, not to accuse anyone falsely and to be content with their pay (Luke 3:14). He told them how to be good soldiers. The four centurions (Roman officers) mentioned in the New Testament are all commended in one way or another (Luke 7:9; 23:47; Acts 10:1-48; 27:43). The centurion at Capernaum was praised for his faith. Cornelius and the Italian regiment had the great honour of being the first gentiles to be baptised by the Holy Spirit into the Body of Christ (Acts 10:1-48).

War can be horrible. And most wars have been fought without any righteous justification. However, the Christian Church has always maintained that there is such a thing as *“A just war.”* Just as there is no guilt for killing an intruder in one’s home (Exodus 22:2), from the principle of self-defence, a nation is responsible to protect its citizens from aggression.

Aggression is condemned in the Scripture, but defensive killing is accepted as necessary and right.

The Good Samaritan was obeying the Sixth Commandment when he stopped and cared for the man who had been brutally attacked by robbers and left to die along the side of the road. The priest and the Levite who walked by on the other side of the road violated the Sixth Commandment by failing to give the aid necessary to this stranger in distress (Luke 10:27-37). If we are determined to obey the Sixth Commandment in a positive way, we must ensure that we do not neglect to care for people who are suffering, either physically or spiritually.

However, are we not like the priest and the Levite when day after day we pass by people who have been beaten and bloodied by satan and sin? When people’s lives are in ruins and they are in jeopardy of dying in their sins and coming unredeemed before the Judgment seat of God, do not we who have the Spirit of Christ within us have the obligation to offer the Living Waters of Jesus Christ and the Oil of the Holy Spirit, to those who are perishing in sin all around us? Will you continue to pass by people who are rushing into eternity without Christ, without God and without hope?

DUTIES REQUIRED

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* lists under the Duties Required in the Sixth Commandment:

The duty to preserve our own life (Ephesians 5:28-29); the duty to preserve the life of others (1Kings 18:4); and the duty to resist all thoughts and purposes, and subdue all passions, which tend to the unjust taking away of anyone's life (Jeremiah 26:15-16; Acts 23:27) **"Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil."** Ephesians 4:26-27 (Proverbs 1:10-15; Genesis 37:21).

The Sixth Commandment also requires the duty of just defence against violence (Proverbs 24:11-12) **"Deliver the poor and needy; free them from the hand of the wicked."** Psalm 82:4

"So the people rescued Jonathan and he did not die." 1 Samuel 14:35

The duty to comfort the distressed and to protect and defend the innocent (1 Thessalonians 5:14; Matthew 25:35; Proverbs 31:8-9).

SINS FORBIDDEN

Under the Sins Forbidden in the Sixth Commandment the *Westminster Larger Catechism* identifies:

The sin of neglecting, or withholding, the lawful and necessary means for the preservation of life (Matthew 25:42-43; James 2:15-16; Ecclesiastes 6:1-2).

The sin of unjustified anger (Matthew 5:22).

The sin of hatred **"Whoever hates his brother is a murderer and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him."** 1 John 3:15

The sin of envy **"Envy is rottenness to the bones."** Proverbs 14:30

The sin of desiring revenge **"Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to God's wrath; for it is written 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay', says the Lord."** Romans 12:19

And it covers the sins of quarrelling, striking and wounding (Galatians 5:15; Proverbs 23:29; Numbers 35:16-18).

The Sixth Commandment **"You shall not murder"** is a very broad Commandment, requiring many duties and forbidding many sins. Negatively it forbids every unlawful injury inflicted upon our own, or our neighbour's, person. Our neighbour may be injured by our neglecting him, or by our not assisting him, according to our abilities. Again, we may injure our neighbour by external force or violence, or we may also break this Commandment internally by anger, hatred or desire for revenge.

PROTECTING LIFE AND LIBERTY

Obviously, we must avoid the Sins Forbidden in the Sixth Commandment by having nothing to do with suicide, euthanasia, abortion and murder. But we must also endeavour to fulfil the positive side of the Sixth Commandment: To seek to do everything we can by *“all careful studies and lawful endeavour, to preserve the life of ourselves and others by resisting by just defence against violence, protecting and defending the innocent.”*

CHANNELS OF LIFE

We need to be channels of spiritual life by proclaiming the Word of God, being His witnesses and leading people to the foot of the Cross. The opposite of murder is to love our neighbours, to love strangers, to even love our enemies and to minister to their needs, both physical and spiritual.

THE WORST MURDER IN HISTORY

We also need to consider the most heinous, most vicious murder ever committed in history. At Calvary's Cross, mankind's sin resulted in the murder of the most innocent victim of all time: God's own Son, Jesus Christ. He submitted willingly and became a victim of this heinous violation of justice so that we – the very people responsible for his suffering and death – might in turn find life and joy forever.

Have you repented of your complicity in the death of our Lord Jesus Christ?

Have you found life in Christ?

Are you pointing people to the Saviour day by day?



Cain murdered Abel. "Your brother's blood cries out to Me from the ground."

Doi

Chapter 7

THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY

Jesus said: ***“You have heard that it was said to those of old, you shall not commit adultery. But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”***

Matthew 5:27-28

AN ADULTEROUS AGE

We are living in an adulterous age. Spiritual adultery. Intellectual adultery. Political adultery. Cultural adultery. Religious adultery predominates.

AN IMMORAL AGE

What do you think of this social analysis? *“Sexual anarchy is here. It has assumed extreme forms and spread throughout a large part of the population, side by side with an increase of sexual perversions; a shameless sexual promiscuity has also increased...adultery, rape and prostitution have greatly increased. Homosexuality has entered the mores of the population and contemporary authors sadistically seem to enjoy the enumeration of a variety of...sexual perversions.”*

When do you think that social commentary was written? Would you suppose it was written by Dr. James Dobson? Or in a recent Focus on the Family bulletin? Could this have perhaps been written by Errol Naidoo to describe contemporary South Africa? No, the writer of this particular article lived 4,500 years ago, approximately 2,500 BC, in ancient Egypt!

PROMISCUITY IS NOT PROGRESS

Perversion and immorality are not new. Those who assume that everything used to be more moral and tends to get less moral with time, are ignorant of history. Sexual immorality is as old as sin. There is nothing modern about it. Those people who are promoting promiscuity, pornography and perversion as progress are lying. There is no progress in it. It is regression. It is returning to pre-Christian paganism.

Fidelity, (faithfulness) and chastity are fruit of Christianity. The sexual revolution is extremely old news. **True Love Waits** is the real revolution and that is news!

The sexual revolution promoting promiscuity, pornography and perversion is revolting in more ways than one. It is an uprising against God Himself. It is a rebellion against His sovereign authority, a rejection of the Law of God.

As Randy Alcorn so sardonically put it in *Restoring Sexual Sanity*: “*The moral ice age is over. Exit the dogmatic dinosaurs of sexual repression. Enter the sensuous sirens of sexual expression. We live in the age of sexual enlightenment, presumably but a few years from sexual utopia.*”

LIES THAT ENSLAVE AND DESTROY

The so-called new morality is neither moral nor new. Satan is a liar and the father of lies (John 8:44). If we buy into his lies, we will find that they poison our minds, pollute our hearts and damn our souls. Take the lie that “*This is a private matter between two consenting adults. What I do in private is nobody else’s business. Nobody gets hurt.*”

THE PUBLIC COSTS OF PRIVATE SINS

Actually sexual ethics are not that private at all. Everyone ends up paying for the private affairs of the immoral. Many people are hurt by what others do in private. Sexual immorality has brought about the birth of literally millions of illegitimate children. Mothers without husbands and children without fathers, living on social welfare cost taxpayers many billions of Rands, Dollars, Euros and Pounds every year. Many of the children who grow up without fathers end up in inner city gangs. A vast amount of the crimes that are committed in this city, are carried out by youngsters who do not even know who their fathers are.

Senior police officers have informed me that most of the young men in the gangs on the Cape Flats come from single parent and broken homes. They are just some of the products of the sexual revolution. These gang members are full of anger at a world that has ignored them and abandoned them. Much of the graffiti, litter, pollution, vandalism, housebreakings, muggings, violence and armed robberies are committed by products of broken homes, irresponsible parents, absentee fathers and a result of the prevalence of sexual immorality.

All of us continually pay for the immoral and irresponsible decisions of those who refuse to accept responsibility for their actions.

CATASTROPHIC CONSEQUENCES

Not only are there catastrophic social consequences to sexual immorality, but pervasive psychological ones too. As Dr. Braceland, Editor of the *American Journal of Psychiatry* observed: “*A more lenient attitude on campus about premarital sex experience has imposed stresses on some college women severe enough to cause emotional breakdown.*”

Dr. Francis Braceland is a former president of the American Psychiatric

Association. He noted that sexual permissiveness has caused mental illness to increase significantly. Furthermore, sexual problems, confusions and relational complications that result from permissiveness, homosexuality and gender confusion are now known to be primary factors that lead to suicide amongst high school and university students.

How then can anyone believe the lie that “*Nobody gets hurt!*” Those who break the Seventh Commandment can open themselves to traumatic mental, emotional and spiritual turmoil. When we break any of God’s Laws we suffer and we can cause others to suffer too.

Many studies have confirmed that sexual adventurers demonstrate “*abnormal depression, introversion, nervous activity and even some delusional thinking.*”

STATE SPONSORED PROMISCUITY AND PERVERSION

Yet, ANC government policy has been heavily to fund and promote promiscuity and perversion through “*values clarification*”, “*life skills*”, “*the gay agenda*” and the grossly over-funded “*Love Life*” campaign. In this lust-saturated society the young people of South Africa are being encouraged, by government policy, to be fornicators, adulterers, whoremongers and perverts. Everyone needs to see the Doctors for Life documentary DVD: **In Your Face**. It is not just HIV/AIDS. There are over 65 different sexually transmitted diseases, many of which are untreatable, with symptoms so terrible that I do not want to describe them here. Suffice it to say that those who buy into the lie of homosexuality being a normal, healthy, alternative lifestyle, forfeit about half of their life. The average lifespan of normal married heterosexuals is double that of the average homosexual. “***What a man sows, that shall he reap.***” Galatians 6:7. “***Those who hate God love death***” Proverbs 8:36.

THE FACTS OF HISTORY

The testimony of history is that great civilisations rise and flourish on the basis of strict discipline, self-control and strong family units. However when those societies turn to sexual promiscuity then productivity wanes, things begin to unravel and soon the society plummets to destruction. Historians have studied each of the 26 civilisations, (from the Egyptians, the Assyrians, the Babylonians, the Medes and the Persians, the Greeks, the Romans, etc.). They have found no exceptions to this pattern. No society survives long without strict laws, strong families and stringent self-discipline. Pervasive sexual immorality and perversion spell the death of any nation.

FREE SEX IS NEVER FREE

So-called “free sex” is by no means free. The price tags include: sexually transmitted diseases, syphilis, gonorrhoea, herpes, AIDS, broken homes, broken lives, crime-ridden societies and the collapse of civilisation itself.

CHASTITY

Matthew Henry’s Commentary notes on the Seventh Commandment that this “concerns our own and our neighbours’ chastity; ‘thou shalt not commit adultery’. This is put before the Sixth by our Saviour (Mark 10:19); ‘do not commit adultery, do not kill’; for our chastity should be as dear to us as our lives and we should be as much afraid of that which defiles the body as of that which destroys it.”

DUTIES REQUIRED

The Westminster Larger Catechism, under the Duties Required in the Seventh Commandment includes:

The duty to be chaste in body, mind and affections (“**That each of you should know how to possess his own vessel in sanctification and honour**” 1 Thessalonians 4:4; “**I have made a covenant with my eyes; why then should I look upon a young woman?**” Job 31:1)

The duty to be chaste in words and behaviour (“**Let your speech always be with grace, seasoned with salt...**” Colossians 4:6; “**When they observe your chaste conduct accompanied by fear...**” 1 Peter 3:2)

The duty to preserve chastity in ourselves and others (1 Corinthians 7:2, 35-36)

The duty to keep chaste company (“**To deliver you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words, who forsakes the companion of her youth and forgets the covenant of her God. For her house leads down to death and her paths to the dead; no one who goes to her returns, nor do they regain the paths of life – so you may walk in the way of goodness and keep to the paths of righteousness.**” Proverbs 2:16-20)

The duty to be modest in apparel (“**That the women adorn themselves in modest apparel...**” 1 Timothy 2:9). The duty not to withhold due affection from one’s marriage partner (“**Let the husband render to his wife the affection due her and likewise also the wife to her husband...Do not deprive one another except with mutual consent for a time...and come together again so that satan does not tempt you...**” 1 Corinthians 7:3-5)

The duty to resist temptations (“**Remove your way far from her and do not go near the door of her house.**” Proverbs 5:8)

SINS FORBIDDEN

Under the Sins Forbidden in the Seventh Commandment the *Westminster Larger Catechism* includes:

The sin of adultery and fornication (Galatians 5:19); the sin of rape and incest; the sin of sodomy and all unnatural lusts (***“Therefore God also gave them up to uncleanness and the lusts of their hearts, to dishonour their bodies among themselves...men committing what is shameful and receiving in themselves the penalty of their error which was due.”*** Romans 1:24-27); the sin of unclean imaginations, thoughts, purposes and affections (***“But I say to you that whoever looks at a woman to lust after her has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”*** Matthew 5:29; ***“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, theft, false witness, blasphemies.”*** Matthew 15:19; ***“Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and covetousness, which is idolatry.”*** Colossians 3:5); the sin of corrupt or filthy communications (***“But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you, as is fitting for saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, not coarse jesting, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.”*** Ephesians 5:3-4; ***“That they may keep you from the immoral woman, from the seductress who flatters with her words...with her enticing speech she caused him to yield, with her flattering lips she seduced him. Immediately he went after her, as an ox goes to the slaughter, or as a fool to the correction of the stocks.”*** Proverbs 7:5; 21-22)

The sin of wanton looks (***“Because the daughters of Zion are haughty and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, making a jingling with their feet...”*** Isaiah 3:16; ***“Having eyes full of adultery and that cannot cease from sin, enticing unstable souls. They have a heart trained in covetous practices and are accursed children.”*** 2 Peter 2:14)

The sin of prohibiting lawful marriages (***“Forbidding to marry...”*** 1 Timothy 4:3); the sin of disregarding unlawful marriages (***“For John had said to Herod, ‘it is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.’”*** Mark 6:18); the sin of allowing, tolerating and keeping houses of prostitution or resorting to them (***“And He banished the perverted persons from the land and removed all the idols that his fathers had made.”*** 1 Kings 15:12; ***“There shall be no harlot of the daughters of Israel, or a perverted one of the sons of Israel... for both of these are an abomination to the Lord your God.”*** Deuteronomy 23:17-18; ***“How shall I pardon you for this? Your children have forsaken Me and sworn by those who are not gods. When I fed them with food, then they committed adultery and assembled themselves by troops in the***

harlot's houses.” Jeremiah 5:7 ; **“Do not let your heart turn aside to the harlot's ways, do not stray into her paths; for she has cast down many wounded and all who were slain by her were strong men. Her house is the way to hell, descending to the chambers of death.”** Proverbs 7:24-27); the sin of having more than one spouse at the same time (Matthew 19:5); the sin of unjust divorce (**“For the Lord God of Israel says that He hates divorce... therefore take heed to your spirit, that you do not deal treacherously.”** Malachi 2:16; **“But I say to you that whoever divorces his wife for any reason except sexual immorality causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a woman who is divorced commits adultery.”** Matthew 5:32); the sin of unchaste company (**“So it was, as she spoke to Joseph day by day, that he did not heed her, to lie with her or to be with her.”** Genesis 39:10; **“Remove your way far from her and do not go near the door of her house.”** Proverbs 5:8); the sin of using words, pictures or actions which incite to uncleanness (**“Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor coarse jestings, which are not fitting, but rather giving of thanks.”** Ephesians 5:4; **“...harlotry...portrayed on the wall...images...portrayed...lusted...”** Ezekiel 23:14-16; Mark 6:22; **“Lewdness, lusts, drunkenness, revelries, drinking parties and abominable idolatries.”** 1 Peter 4:3)

MARRIAGE IS HONOURABLE

“The ordinance should be observed. Let every man have his own wife and let every woman have her own husband.” 1 Corinthians 7:2. God instituted marriage in Paradise (Genesis 2:22). He gave the man and the woman to each other in marriage. Our Lord honoured marriage with His presence at the wedding in Cana, during which He performed His first public miracle (John 2:1-11). **“Marriage is honourable and the bed undefiled.”** Hebrews 13:4

MARRIAGE IS SYMBOLIC OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH

Marriage is a type and resemblance of the mystical union between Christ and His Church. **“For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife and the two shall become one flesh. This is a great mystery, but I speak concerning Christ and the Church.”** Ephesians 5:31-32. The interfaith movement is spiritual adultery, mixing what should not be mixed, failing to be faithful to our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ.

THE PROTECTION OF FAITHFULNESS AND CHASTITY

The Seventh Commandment is protective. It can save us from being plunged into a world of misery and trauma. It can save us from throwing away priceless opportunities, from losing vital friendships, from derailing and destroying our lives and the lives of our children. The Seventh Commandment is designed to hold us safely within the bonds of faithfulness and chastity in a

stable, loving and secure marriage.

“For the commandment is a lamp and the Law a light...to keep you from the evil woman, from the flattering tongue of a seductress. Do not lust after her beauty in your heart, nor let her lure you with her eyelids. For by means of a harlot a man is reduced to a crust of bread; and an adulteress would prey upon his precious life. Can a man take fire to his bosom and his clothes not be burned? Can one walk on hot coals and his feet not be seared? So is he who goes in to his neighbour’s wife; whoever touches her shall not be innocent...whoever commits adultery with a woman lacks understanding; he who does so destroys his own soul. Wounds and dishonour he will get and his reproach will not be wiped away.” Proverbs 6:23-33

DO NOT BE DECEIVED

“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the Kingdom of God.” 1 Corinthians 6:9-10

FLEE SEXUAL IMMORALITY

“Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Shall I then take the members of Christ and make them members of a harlot? Certainly not! Or do you not know that he who is joined to a harlot is one body with her? ‘For the two’ He says ‘shall become one flesh.’ That he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him. Flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality sins against his own body. Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have from God and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit which are God’s.” Corinthians 6:15- 20

SAMSON AND DELILAH

Samson had great potential which was wasted through his lack of discipline. Samson had an eye for beautiful women. He loved to look. His roving eyes often got him into trouble with prostitutes. His weakness for women undermined his leadership for his people at a time of great crisis. Then his eyes settled upon a woman who eventually destroyed him. Her name – Delilah – has since been synonymous with beauty and treachery.

SIN BINDS, SIN BLINDS AND SIN GRINDS

Using both her body and her brains, Delilah was out to ensnare Samson. As Samson became captivated by her beauty and by his lust, he began to lose discernment and control. Finally he lost all his strength and was unable

to resist. Too late Samson realised that he had lost his freedom. Samson learned that sin binds, sin blinds and sin grinds.

Samson never achieved his potential because he refused to live a disciplined life. His character flaws and sin prevented effective leadership. All of Israel suffered as a result. Samson squandered his potential on loose women. Samson dishonoured his parents, diluted his power, disgraced his profession and dissipated his potential. Samson deliberately exposed himself to the enemy with a self-confidence that bordered on carelessness and recklessness.

WHAT WE SOW THAT SHALL WE REAP

He had power without purity, strength without self-control and because he did not know holiness he would know defeat. While Samson was strong before men, he proved weak before women. Samson strangled a lion, but he could not strangle his own lusts. He burst the bonds of his enemies, but he couldn't break his own self-destructive tendencies. He burned the crops of the Philistines, but he lost his own fruit of virtue by burning with lust for Delilah. The tragic story of Samson in Judges 14-16 teaches us that whoring leads to blindness, slavery and death. ***“Do not be deceived; God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows that he will also reap. For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption.”*** Galatians 6:7- 8

Samson did what was right in his own eyes and his eyes were gouged out. He followed the lusts of his eyes and he lost them. He visited a prostitute in Gaza and he ended up as a prisoner in Gaza. He pursued Philistine women and ended up doing their work - grinding the corn to provide food to strengthen his enemies. He refused to discipline himself and ended up a prisoner of war and a slave of the Philistines. The tragic story of Samson should serve as an object lesson and warning to each one of us. ***“Pride goes before a fall.”*** Proverbs 16:18

DEVASTATING AND DESTRUCTIVE

As in the life of Samson, so any pastor can tell you in all too many examples which he would have witnessed: adultery not only has a devastating effect on the adulterer personally, but on the families involved. Unfaithfulness devastates relationships and destroys families. ***“Let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.”*** 1 Corinthians 10:12

FOUNDATIONS FOR FAITHFULNESS

Marriage partners must love one another wholeheartedly, thank God for each other regularly, pray for one another daily and do everything possible to strengthen and serve one another. In the Bible marital love includes honour, esteem, respect, gentleness, courtesy and affection and these must be treasured, cultivated and entrenched. Faithfulness

to all our covenant duties will protect us in God's pathway of blessings, multiplying our effectiveness in ministry, resulting in great joy in our families and God's Kingdom. Rejecting your marriage partner and failing to love the one to whom you are married is a violation of the seventh Commandment.

SPIRITUAL ADULTERY

We cannot look at the Seventh Commandment without also considering the very real danger of spiritual adultery. Isaiah charged the people of Israel: ***"You sons of the sorceress, you offspring of the adulterer and harlot. Children of transgressions, offspring of falsehood, inflaming yourselves with gods under every green tree, slaying the children in the valleys..."***

Isaiah 57:3-5

Jeremiah condemned *"backslidden Israel"* for *"committing adultery"*, for being treacherous and playing *"the harlot also...she defiled the land and committed adultery with stones and trees."* Jeremiah 3:8-9

Jeremiah describes Israel's idolatry as spiritual adultery (Jeremiah 7:9). Jeremiah condemned the people of Judah as ***"all adulterers... treacherous..."*** because ***"they are not valiant for the Truth...they proceed from evil to evil and they do not know Me..."*** Jeremiah 9:2-3 Jeremiah condemned the idolatry of Judah as ***"...adulteries, lewdness, harlotry, abominations..."*** Jeremiah 13:27

The Prophet Jeremiah condemned the land of Judah for being ***"full of adulterers...a curse...evil...both prophet and priest are profane... wickedness...slippery ways...I will bring disaster on them...folly... they prophesied by Baal and caused My people Israel to err...a horrible thing....adultery and...lies...profaneness has gone out into the land."***

Jeremiah 23:10-15

The Prophet Ezekiel also charge the nation of Judah with idolatry: ***"For they have committed adultery and blood is on their hands. They have committed adultery with their idols and even sacrificed their sons..."***

Ezekiel 23:37

The Prophet Hosea condemned the spiritual adultery of Israel for looking to other gods and committing idolatry.

The Prophet Malachi condemned the ***"...abomination...committed in Israel and Jerusalem, for Judah has profaned the Lord's holy institution which he loves; he has married the daughter of a foreign god."*** Malachi 2:11

SPIRITUAL TREASON

To enter into spiritual alliances with the Lord's enemies is spiritual adultery – treachery against the Lord. ***“Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness. And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the Temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the Living God. As God has said: I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God and they shall be My people. Therefore come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord, do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the Lord Almighty.”*** 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

“Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.” James 4:4.

VANITY FAIR

How can we call lost sinners out of Vanity Fair if we ourselves are intoxicated by its delights? If we enjoy reading the books of those who offend the Lord by their compromises and un-Biblical teachings, or choose to go to Bible colleges or universities where the Word of God is not loved and respected, then we are committing spiritual adultery.

FAITHFULNESS

We are called to be faithful to the Lord and to the husband, or wife, with whom we have entered into covenant commitment. We must also be faithful in all other relationships to which God calls us. Faithfulness is to characterise every Christian in our worship, work, walk and witness.

DO NOT BE UNEQUALLY YOKED

No exposition of the 7th Commandment would be complete without also considering its prohibition against being unequally yoked.

Webster's Dictionary defines adultery as *“violation of the marriage bed; a crime or civil injury, which introduces, or may introduce, into the family, a spurious offspring...the unfaithfulness of any person to the marriage bed...all manner of lewdness or unchastity...an unnatural union.”*

Webster's Dictionary defines adulterate as *“to commit adultery, to debase by foreign mixture.”*

Adulterated is defined as: *“Corrupted; debased by mixture of something with less value.”*

Marriage is defined in Webster's Dictionary as: *"The act of uniting a man and a woman for life; wedlock ; the legal union of a man and woman for life. A marriage is a contract, both civil and religious, by which the parties engage to live together in mutual affection and fidelity, till death shall separate them. Marriage was instituted by God Himself...for promoting domestic felicity and for securing the maintenance and education of children."*

The Moabite women at Shittim enticed and seduced many of the men of Israel into sexual immorality. One man, Zimri, openly brought Cozbi, a Moabite woman, right into his home. The Scripture records that this incited the Lord's anger to burn against them and a devastating plague hit the community.

One Israelite, Phinehas, had the courage to make a stand and put a stop to the degenerate wickedness which was destroying his people. He refused to be seduced by the Moabites. He was committed to upholding the Law of God and he was angry enough about sin to do something about it (Numbers 25).

Today we have many, including so-called Christians, bringing immoral women and mates into their homes, through DVDs, DSTV, M-Net, MMS and through the Internet. The epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases bears eloquent testimony to the rampant immorality of our times.

We need more people like Phinehas today. Clean out your cupboards. Tear up and burn the pornographic posters, magazines and books. Crush the offensive videos and DVDs. Cancel that cable channel with "adult" films. Speak to your local store managers that market modern Moabites. Mobilise other church members to clean up your community. ***"Live as free men, but do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil, live as servants of God."*** 1 Peter 2:16

"Therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and covetousness which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience." Colossians 3:5-6

In the course of my missionary work I have all too often come across the disastrous and tragic consequences of Christians marrying unbelievers and across racial lines. On numerous occasions, while counselling the distraught Christian married to an unbelieving spouse, I have heard how the other partner appeared to be a Christian, claimed to be a Christian, made a public profession of faith in Christ, but later revealed that it had been a charade to secure the marriage. On numerous occasions the tearful Christian asked: *"Why did nobody warn me!"*

Considering how much the Scriptures teach concerning marriage and the many passages forbidding cross cultural and inter-racial marriages, with unbelievers and being “*unequally yoked*,” it is extraordinary that there is so little preaching and teaching on this important matter.

MARRIAGE INVOLVES FAMILIES

Marriage not only involves two individuals, but two families. We need to honour our parents and seek the guidance of our church leaders when we consider marriage. Those who become “*unequally yoked*” are being short-sighted and selfish. They are neither considering their ancestors, nor their descendants. Nor are they placing God’s Word above their own emotions.

As Rev. Fano Sibisi of KwaSizabantu Mission in Kwazulu declared: “*Those who marry outside their race are not honouring their parents, nor are they loving their neighbour as themselves, nor are they considering their children who will belong neither to the race of their father, nor mother.*”

The Bible tells us that God seeks “**...Godly offspring...**” Malachi 2:15

“And I will establish My Covenant between you and your descendants after you and their generations for an everlasting covenant...you shall keep My Covenant, you and your descendants after you throughout their generations.” Genesis 17:7-9

“Know therefore that the Lord your God is God; He is the Faithful God, keeping His Covenant of love to a thousand generations of those who love Him and keep His Commandments.” Deuteronomy 7:9

Abraham, the Father of the Faithful, commanded his servant to swear by the Lord “***that you will not take a wife for my son from the daughters of the Canaanites, among whom I dwell; but you shall go to my country and to my family and take a wife for my son Isaac.***” Genesis 24:3-4

The Bible tells of Jacob’s twin brother Esau who took Hittite wives: “***And they were a grief of mind to Isaac and Rebecca.***” Genesis 26:34-35

“Then Isaac called Jacob and blessed him and charged him and said to him: ‘you shall not take a wife from the daughters of Canaan.’” Genesis 28:1

The Law of Moses declared: “***Nor shall you make marriages with them. You shall not give your daughter to their son, nor take their daughter for your son.***” Deuteronomy 7:3

Joshua warned the children of Israel that if they intermarried with the nations around them: “***Know for certain that the Lord your God will no longer drive***

out these nations from before you. But they shall be snares and traps to you and scourges on your sides and thorns in your eyes, until you perish from this good land which the Lord your God has given you.” Joshua 23:12-13

In Ezra’s great prayer of national repentance he warned against mixed marriages with the daughters of the Canaanites, Hittites, Perusites, Jebusites, Ammonites, Moabites, Egyptians and Amorites. **“For they have taken some of their daughters as wives for themselves and their sons, so the Holy seed is mixed with the people of those lands....When I heard this thing I tore my garment and my robe and plucked out some of the hair on my head and my beard and sat down astonished....because of the transgression of those ...I fell on my knees and spread out my hands to the Lord my God. And I said: ‘Oh my God, I am too ashamed and humiliated to lift my face to You, my God; for our iniquities have risen higher than our heads and our guilt has grown up to the heavens.”** Ezra 9:2-6

“Now therefore, do not give your daughters as wives for their sons, nor take their daughters to your sons...that you may be strong and eat the good of the land and leave it as an inheritance to your children forever.” Ezra 9:12

Intermarrying with the nations around them, Ezra described as: **“our great guilt...our iniquities...these abominations...”** Ezra 9:13-14

When Nehemiah discovered that some of the believers had **“married women of Ashdod, Ammon and Moab and that many of the children could not even speak the language of Judah (but spoke according to the language of one or the other people). So I contended with them and cursed them, struck some of them and pulled out their hair and made them swear by God, saying you shall not give your daughters as wives to their sons, nor take their daughters for your sons or yourselves. Did not Solomon King of Israel, sin by these things? Yet...should we then hear of your doing all this great evil, transgressing against our God by marrying pagan women?”** Nehemiah 13:24-27

The Law of God warns believers against following what is popular: **“You shall not follow a crowd to do evil...”** Exodus 23:2

As part of the Order of Service for marriage, in the Book of Common Prayer, the minister is required to say to the persons about to be married: *“I require of you both, as you will answer on the dreadful Day of Judgement when the secrets of all shall be disclosed, that if either of you knows any reason why you may not be lawfully married you now confess it. For be assured that those who marry, other than as allowed by God’s Word, are not joined together by God and the marriage is not lawful in His sight.”*

PROTECTIONS AND BLESSINGS

God's Law is clear. Obeying it protects us from disaster and guides us to blessings. ***"So husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies..."*** Ephesians 5:28. ***"Nevertheless let each one of you in particular so love his own wife as himself and let the wife see that she respects her husband."*** Ephesians 5:33

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." James 4:6



Joshua confronts Achan over his theft which had brought the judgement of God upon them.

Chapter 8

THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT YOU SHALL NOT STEAL

“For I, the Lord, love justice; I hate robbery and iniquity.” Isaiah 61:8

The Eighth Commandment cuts across the thieving spirit of our age.

SHOCKING STATISTICS

Surveys have found that 75% of prospective employees admitted to having stolen at least once!

24% of taxpayers admit to having lied and cheated on their income tax returns.

22% of workers feel that stealing from their place of employment is *“sometimes justified.”*

33% of employees surveyed confessed to falsely phoning in sick and collecting pay for days they pretended to be sick but weren't.

86% of college students admitted that they had cheated in school. 54% believed that cheating in exams is acceptable. Only 12% of students surveyed stated that they would never cheat - because of ethics. One in six graduates were in default on a total of \$56 billion in student debt having gone at least a year without making a payment. Another 3 million borrowers, owing an approximate total of \$66 billion were behind in payments. Yet another 3 million, owing nearly \$110 billion, were in *“forbearance”* or *“deferment”*.

A survey of a number of large organisations revealed that the average employee stole six weeks per year from his employer by consistently coming in late, leaving early, taking extended lunches, spending extra time on coffee breaks and neglecting his duties. All of this amounted to over \$150 billion lost to the economy each year.

A survey of 500 products chosen at random revealed that approximately 50% of them contained less items in the packaging than advertised on the label. For example, a bottle of 100 headache tablets actually contained 60, etc!

According to a study by the American Management Association, US businesses alone annually lose over \$50 billion to employee theft; over \$4 billion to embezzlement; over \$2,5 billion to burglary; over \$17.8 billion to shop lifting; over \$1,3 billion to arson and over half a million dollars per incident of computer fraud.

According to the US Department of Commerce, approximately one third of all business failures each year can be traced to employee theft. When businesses close down, employees lose their jobs and families suffer.

Law enforcement officials estimate that almost half of all employees are guilty of stealing. Retailers in South Africa report that they lose many billions of rands each year to shop-lifting and even more to “*shrinkage*” - theft by employees.

The South African Police Services reported 67,454 cases of shoplifting registered for a single year (2016 - 2017). 16,717 car-jackings, 1,183 truck-jackings and 53,418 common robberies in the streets were reported in a single year.

The African Union has reported that 25% of the total Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Africa is stolen by government corruption.

WHY DO SO MANY STEAL?

What has caused this pandemic of stealing? Some would like to say that poverty causes theft. However some of the richest people in the world have been guilty of theft and many spoiled children from wealthy homes engage in shoplifting. By way of contrast there are many millions of poor people who never steal. Even during the Great Depression, when millions of families were destitute, God- fearing people did not steal.

The Bible gives a very straightforward answer to this question in Ecclesiastes 8:11 ***“Why do people commit crimes so readily? Because crime is not punished quickly enough.”***

One political cartoon depicted the regression in ethics with three political personalities:

The left-hand panel represented a caricature of George Washington saying: *“I cannot tell a lie.”*

In the centre was Richard Nixon saying: *“I cannot tell the truth.”*

The right-hand panel contained a picture of Bill Clinton saying: *“I cannot tell the difference.”*

The situation has deteriorated so badly that in South Africa we now have to have special campaigns and TV film series trying to teach basic principles to the general population. Heartlines billboards declare rather ambiguously: *“We believe in the value of values: Do you?”*

Some shops have felt compelled to place prominent posters declaring: *“Shoplifting is stealing!”* One would have thought that was rather obvious, but all too many people do not seem to see anything wrong with blatant theft. There are many black ministers who actually teach their congregations that to steal from white people is not theft!

MUHAMMAD'S TEACHINGS ON LOOTING

Muhammad taught his followers to steal from the “infidel.” *“The messenger of Allah said: to whichever village you go...it’s one fifth is for Allah and his messenger and the remainder is for you.”* (Mishkat II, page 412).

“...the soldiers of Islam fought tooth and nail. They would get paradise in case of death in a holy war and booty in case of conquest. Jihad is therefore the best source of all acquisitions.” (Mishkat II, Page 440).

“Jihad is one of the most meritorious acts in the eye of Islam and it is the best source of earnings.” (Mishkat II, Page 340).

“This is the best method of earning both spiritual and temporal. If victory is won, there is enormous booty and conquest of a country, which cannot be equalled to any other source of earning. If there is defeat or death, there is everlasting paradise.” (Mishkat II, Page 253).

The Quran permits housebreaking and plunder in Surah 24:29 *“There shall be no harm in your entering houses...for the supply of your needs.”*

While Muhammad decreed the chopping off of hands for theft from Muslims, he personally engaged in bandit armed robbery raids of caravans and he commanded his followers to steal the goods of infidels, to kidnap their merchants and to hold them for ransom.

HYPOCRISY AND DECEIT

Theft is saturated with pride, deceit and hypocrisy. Thieves, con-artists and perpetrators of fraud are hypocrites. They would not want anything to be stolen from them or from their children. Yet they arrogantly suspend the basic rules of civilised society and exempt themselves from these laws. They would expect their own comforts and possessions to be protected, yet they lie to, steal from and cheat others. There is no worse level of arrogance and selfishness than this.

A CALLOUS CRIME

Stealing is a callous crime because the thief does not seem to care about the effects of his crime upon the person who is deprived. The extortioner who charges excessive rent does not seem to care about the hardship that he is causing to his tenant. The person who sells a defective product does not seem to care what trouble his fraud may cause the buyer.

EXCUSES

There are many imaginative excuses that people come up with to justify their theft:

"I have worked hard and I haven't been fairly rewarded for my efforts."

"I need it more than they do." "I can't help myself."

"They don't appreciate it, I will."

"It's easier to steal something than to work for it."

"I'm jealous of them and I think I deserve their possessions more than they do!"

To all of this God responds with four words in the Eighth Commandment: **"You shall not steal."** (Exodus 20:15)

DIAL-A-PORN

When Telkom launched their 087 Dial-a-Porn, the Old Mutual reported that their phone bills went up over five million rand in one month. Now, at that time there were approximately 5,000 employees in the Old Mutual headquarters in Pinelands. Assuming that approximately half of the Old Mutual employees used the telephones at their place of employment to access 087 *Dial-a-Porn*, that would mean that the average employee ran up R2,000 of unauthorized phone bills in just one month! These people broke both the Seventh and the Eighth Commandments.

THEFT BY GOVERNMENT

Government policy also steals. When the Law of God declares: **"You shall not steal...you shall not covet..."** this entrenches private ownership of property. Socialism is legalised theft and institutionalized envy. Any taxation of ten percent or higher is defined in the Scriptures as oppression (1 Samuel 8:10-18). Any taxation of property, or of inheritance, is strictly forbidden (1 Kings 21:3). Institutions and individuals involved in the fulltime service of the Lord are not allowed to be taxed (Ezra 7:23-24). Those involved in the fulltime service of the Lord are supported by free will offerings by people who have already paid their taxes. To tax money consecrated to the Lord's service is to steal from God. Any unequal or progressive system of taxation is expressly forbidden in the Scriptures (Exodus 30:14-15; Leviticus 19:15).

THEFT BY INFLATION

Biblical economics also forbids unjust weights (unbacked currency) and measures (inflation) Leviticus 19:35-36; Proverbs 11:1; 20:10; Amos 8:5-7; Micah 6:11-12). Inflation steals from pensions and savings. It is a hidden tax. In 1971, R1000 could buy a car. In 1981, R1000 could buy a motorbike. In 2001, R1000 could buy a bicycle. In 2017 you needed R2000 to buy a good pair of running shoes.

LEGALISED THEFT

Many people violate the Eighth Commandment by voting for political parties that steal through excessive taxation, inflation and socialist policies. Governments and municipalities that increase rates and taxes without providing equal services are stealing. Rioters damaging property and disrupting business and studies are stealing in a most destructive way.

RESTITUTION

In cases of theft, arson, or malicious damage to property, the Bible decrees Restitution. Restitution is the restoration of a thing to its proper place or owner. It is reparation for injury or damage to property. The Bible requires that the Restitution goes entirely to the victim of the crime. Restitution is also required for culpable negligence. **“...he should make full restitution; if he has nothing, then he shall be sold for his theft. If the theft is certainly found alive in his hand, whether it is an ox or a donkey or sheep, he shall restore double. If a man causes a field or vineyard to be grazed and lets loose his animal and it feeds on another man’s field, he shall make restitution from the best of his own field and the best of his own vineyard. If fire breaks out and catches in thorns, so that stacked grain, standing grain, or a field is consumed, he who kindled the fire shall surely make restitution.”** Exodus 22:3-6

God’s Law is clear: The criminal is held accountable and he is required to pay for his crime. He is to work and earn, in money or kind, that which is required for the reparation of what he stole, damaged or destroyed.

DUTIES REQUIRED

The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* lists under the Duties Required in the Eighth Commandment:

The duty to be truthful, faithful and just in our contracts and commerce (**“He who walks uprightly and works righteousness and speaks the truth in his heart...in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honours those who fear the Lord; he who swears to his own hurt and does not change...”** Psalm 15:2-4

“Then the Word of the Lord of Hosts came to me saying...do not oppress the widow or the fatherless, the alien or the poor. Let none of you have evil in your heart against his brother.” Zechariah 7:4-10

“These are the things you should do: ‘Speak each man the truth to his neighbour; give judgement in your gates for truth, justice and peace; let none of you think evil in your heart against your neighbour; and do not love a false oath. For all these are things that I hate’, says the Lord.” Zechariah 8:16-17)

The duty to render to everyone his due (***“Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour.”*** Romans 13:7) Publishing without acknowledging sources, plagiarism, false claims and fraudulent claims in publications are a violation of this law.

The duty to make restitution of goods unlawfully obtained (***“If a person sins and commits trespass against the Lord by lying to his neighbour about what was delivered to him for safekeeping, or about a pledge, or about a robbery, or if he has extorted from his neighbour, or if he has found what was lost and lies concerning it and swears falsely – in any one of these things that a man may do in which he sins: then it shall be, because he has sinned and is guilty, that he shall restore what he has stolen, or the thing which he has extorted, or which was delivered to him for safekeeping, or the lost thing which he found, or all that about which he has sworn falsely. He shall restore it in full, add one fifth more to it and give it to whomever it belongs on the day of his trespass offering.”*** Leviticus 6:2-5). If you receive too much change – return it.

The duty to give and lend freely, according to our abilities and the necessities of others (***“Give to everyone who asks of you....give and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you.”*** Luke 6:30, 38).

“But whoever has this world’s goods and sees his brother in need and shuts up his heart from him, how does the love of God abide in him?” 1 John 3:17
“Therefore as we have opportunity, let us give good to all, especially to those who are of the household of Faith.” Galatians 6:10).

The duty to be frugal (***“So when they were filled, he said to His disciples, ‘Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.’”*** John 6:12

“There is desirable treasure, and oil in the dwelling of the wise, but a foolish man squanders it.” Proverbs 21:20) Recycle. Do not be wasteful.

The duty to further, by lawful means, the wealth of others, as well as our own (***“If one of your brethren becomes poor and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you.”*** Leviticus 25:35

“If you meet your enemy’s ox or his donkey going astray, you shall bring it back to him again.” Exodus 23:4

“Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.” Philippians 2:4)

SINS FORBIDDEN

Under the Sins Forbidden in the Eighth Commandment the *Westminster Larger Catechism* includes:

The sin of theft or robbery ("**Do not trust in oppression, nor vainly hope in robbery; if riches increase, do not set your heart on them.**" Psalm 62:10)

The sin of receiving anything that is stolen ("**Whoever is partner with a thief hates his own life.**" Proverbs 29:24)

The sin of using false weights and measures ("**Dishonest scales are an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is His delight.**" Proverbs 11:1 "**Diverse weights and diverse measures are both alike an abomination to the Lord.**" Proverbs 20:10)

The sin of unfaithfulness in contracts ("**The wicked borrows and does not repay.**" Psalm 37:21)

The sin of extortion ("**Woe to you, scribes and pharisees, hypocrites! For you...are full of extortion...**" Matthew 23:25 "**In you they take bribes to shed blood; you take usury and increase; you have made profit from your neighbours by extortion and have forgotten Me, says the Lord God.**" Ezekiel 22:12)

The sin of usury (Psalm 15:5). Charging interest on loans.

The sin of bribery ("**Fire will consume the tents of bribery.**" Job 15:34)

The sin of taking, or withholding, from our neighbour what belongs to him ("**For he has oppressed and forsaken the poor, he has violently seized the house which he did not build.**" Job 20:19

"Indeed the wages of the labourers who mowed your fields, which you kept back, cry out; and the cries of the reapers have reached the ears of the Lord..." James 5:4 "**Getting treasure by a lying tongue is the fleeting fantasy of those who seek death.**" Proverbs 21:6)

The sin of idleness ("**For we hear that there are some who walk among you in a disorderly manner, not working at all, but are busybodies.**" 2 Thessalonians 2:11

"He who is slothful in his work is a brother to him who is a great destroyer." Proverbs 18:9)

HAVE YOU BEEN GUILTY OF THEFT?

Have you ever stolen? Have you ever taken something that did not belong to you? Have you borrowed things that you have failed to return, for months, or years? Have you used the telephone at work, for personal and private calls

without permission? If so, that is theft. It is theft for me to use someone else's phone without his permission and run up a bill for him. That would be the same as going and taking the money out of his wallet. It is also one of the easiest ways to steal.

THEFT BY PHONE CALLS

I must confess, that, as a new Christian, at the first mission that I went to work for, I stole by using the telephone. And God later brought this to my conscience and convicted me heavily that I had rung up hundreds of rands of phone bills, without any permission and in this way I had stolen from the mission that I had gone to help. And when God convicted me of this, I had absolutely no money, my only transport was hitchhiking and I had no means of repaying the debt. I was a missionary living by faith. I could not take designated gifts for the mission to settle my personal debts. So I took on extra work, actually working at the Newlands cricket grounds for my father, who ran the Western Province Cricket Union, so that I could earn enough money to repay the mission more than double, because this was a matter of Restitution before God. Only once I had settled this debt did I feel free to return to the mission field.

ZACCHAEUS

Zacchaeus is an example in the Scriptures of one who did Restitution. ***“Then Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, ‘Look Lord, I give half of my goods to the poor; and if I have taken anything from anyone by false accusation, I restore fourfold.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘today Salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham.’”*** Luke 19:8-9

RESTORATION THROUGH REPENTANCE AND RESTITUTION

Forgiveness of sin is not a substitute for restitution, but rather a foundation of it. Forgiveness of sin is not a redefinition of sin. We are forgiven – free from the guilt and penalty of sin – in order to do what is right. Forgiveness is not a cloak for sin. It is a solution to sin.

Forgiveness does not transfer property rights to the thief. When God commanded: ***“You shall not steal...you shall not covet...”*** He ordained and blessed private ownership of property. Man has no right to abolish what God has ordained in any area – neither in the institution of marriage, nor in the institution of private property. Theft is not only a sin against the victim, theft is a sin against God. God's Law is violated.

Repentance for sin and Restitution are inseparable. If a sin involved damage to, or theft of, the property of another, then Restitution is necessary before forgiveness can be enjoyed. Grace makes true Repentance possible; it does

not eliminate the need for Restitution. Our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, loves righteousness. Theft is unrighteousness. So true Restitution is made possible by a true understanding of what true grace is.

Our Lord Jesus Christ did not die on the Cross in order to allow us to steal other people's property and get away with it. As one who has confessed that sin before you, may I challenge you to do restitution. Do not rest until you have returned what you have borrowed. Pay back for what you have damaged, or broken and pay for those telephone calls that you had no permission to make. That is Biblical. That is what the Bible requires in Restitution.

DIAMONDS

Many of you may know the testimony of Uncle George Oesche. He had worked for years in the diamond mines and succeeded in stealing a large number of those valuable gems. He had a very nice house and comfortable lifestyle. But then when he was converted and learned about the importance of Restitution he went and confessed his crimes to the authorities. Although he had not been caught and no longer worked for the mines, he began the painful process of repaying everything he had stolen. This involved a lot of sacrifice. And the Lord has mightily blessed him as a result. ***"Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright."*** Proverbs 14:9 (NIV)

REPAYING THE BANK

I also know of another brother, Lawrence Temfwe, who became the head of Prison Fellowship in Zambia. As a clerk in Standard Bank he stole a lot of money. When he was caught, he was thrown in prison. In prison he came to Christ. After he had completed his prison term, he worked to repay what he had stolen from Standard Bank. Now, he was not legally required to do so. He had done the crime and he had done the time. However, as a Christian, he understood that he had to do Restitution. Can you imagine the shock when he returned to the bank that he had defrauded and made full Restitution to them? What a tremendous testimony to the power of the Gospel.

"If the wicked restores the pledge, gives back what he has stolen and walks in the statutes of life without committing iniquity, he shall surely live; he shall not die. None of the sins which he has committed shall be remembered against him; he has done what is lawful and right; he shall surely live." Ezekiel 33:15-16

THEFT AT WORK

There are many people who steal from their employers by agreeing to work for so many hours, for so much pay, but they do not work the agreed hours. They come late, they leave early and they only work when the supervisor

is watching. They do not put the 40 hours, or whatever amount of work is required, into the given week. However, at the end of each month, they would be very unhappy if they received less than the agreed-on salary. Is that not theft? Are you taking 100% of the pay for only 40% of the work? Laziness is a form of theft. We steal from people when we do less than what we agreed upon.

Imagine what a testimony it would be if when an employer handed over a salary at the end of the month, an employee responded: *“Actually I have only earned 40% of this, you must take the other 60% back!”*

LITTERING AND LAZINESS

Littering is a serious breach of the Eighth Commandment. We are stealing from the time of other people who must take the effort to go and clean up what we have dropped. We are damaging other people’s property and God’s creation by our carelessness. If we do unto others as we want to be done unto, then we must not be litterbugs. The Eighth Commandment requires us to respect property and God’s creation.

THE MANY FACES OF THEFT

Stealing includes usury by banks, debasing of currency, government corruption, inflation, excessive taxation, defaulting on loans, failing to pay bills, cheating in tests, loafing at work, failure to pay our fair share, taking ‘sick leave’ when we are not sick, illegally downloading or copying software, violating copyrights and failing to tithe to God.

STEALING FROM GOD

The prophet Malachi wrote that when people do not bring their full tithes and offerings to God they are stealing directly from God. ***“Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, ‘in what way have we robbed You?’ In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me, even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house and try Me now in this, says the Lord of Hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of Heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it. And I will rebuke the devourer for your sakes, so that He will not destroy the fruit of your ground, nor shall the vine fail to bear fruit for you in the field, says the Lord of Hosts. And all nations will call you blessed, for you will be a delightful land, says the Lord of Hosts.”*** Malachi 3:8-12

STEALING IS SHORT SIGHTED

Theft can only benefit a thief for a very short time. In stealing thousands of farms the Zimbabwe government committed economic suicide and imploded

You Shall Not Steal

the economy and caused widespread famine. Our Creator and Eternal Judge sees everything we do. So no one can possibly get away with stealing. The punishment God hands out to unrepentant thieves will last for all eternity in the lake of fire.

NABOTH'S VINEYARD

After king Ahab coveted Naboth's vineyard and queen Jezebel had arranged false witnesses to testify against and condemn Naboth, so that Ahab could steal Naboth's vineyard, God sent the prophet Elijah to pronounce God's judgement upon them: "... *because you have sold yourself to do evil in the sight of the Lord: behold **I will bring calamity on you...***" 1 Kings 21:20-21

THE REPENTANT THIEF

By God's grace, one of the first fruits of our Lord's Redemption was enjoyed by the thief crucified alongside our Lord. When he, in repentance, turned to the Lord and asked: "**Lord, remember me when You come into Your Kingdom.**" **Our Lord Jesus replied: "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in paradise."** Luke 23:42- 43

The Word of the Lord comes to each one of us this day: "**Let him who stole steal no longer, but rather let him labour, working with his hands what is good, that he may have something to give him who has need.**"

Ephesians 4:28



Elijah confronts king Ahab and queen Jezebel over their theft and murder.



The Confusion of Tongues at Babel.

Chapter 9

THE NINTH COMMANDMENT YOU SHALL NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS AGAINST YOUR NEIGHBOUR

God is Truth. Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. God's Word is Truth. ***"You shall know the Truth and the Truth shall set you free."*** John 8:32

St. Augustine had a sign on his desk that declared: *"Whosoever enters this office to bring an accusation against his brother will be ushered out of this room."* Augustine took the Ninth Commandment seriously. He declared *"The tongue inflicts greater wounds than the sword."*

THE GREATEST INJURY

The great Reformer, John Calvin declared: *"No greater injury can be inflicted upon men than to ruin their reputation."*

Puritan pastor Thomas Watson taught: *"The wounds of the tongue no physician can heal."*

As Mark Twain observed: *"A lie can travel halfway across the world while the truth is still getting its boots on!"* That was before the advent of e-mail. Now a lie can go several times around the world before truth gets its boots on!

As Thomas Brooks taught: *"Of all the members in the body, there is none so serviceable to satan as the tongue."*

John Calvin wrote: *"There is nothing more slippery or loose than the tongue."*

The prophet Jeremiah spoke of those who *"...attack...with the tongue..."* Jeremiah 18:18

"The tongue is also a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire and is itself set on fire by hell." James 3:6

GOSSIP AND SLANDER

All of us, at one time or another, have been guilty of gossip. Yet, it is sin. God takes gossip seriously. The Bible declares: ***"Whoever spreads slander is a fool..."*** Proverbs 10:18. We are commanded: ***"Brothers, do not slander one another..."*** James 4:11

Pastors are to ***"remind the people...to slander no one, to be peaceable and considerate and to show true humility towards all men."*** Titus 3:1-2

To spread stories that put someone else in a bad light is the very opposite of being “*peaceable and considerate*.” It is also the opposite of humility.

PRIDE AND MALICE

Pride is often the engine which drives the gossip industry. It is a desire to portray people better than us in a bad light, to lift ourselves up by pulling others down. **“Therefore, rid yourselves of all malice and deceit, hypocrisy, envy and slander of every kind.”** 1 Peter 2:1. Slander is inextricably linked with malice, deceit, hypocrisy and envy.

The Bible warns us of those who **“And besides they learn to be idle, wandering about from house to house, and not only idle but also gossips and busybodies, saying things which they ought not.”**

1 Timothy 5:13

The Law of God is clear: **“Do not go about spreading slander among your people. Do not do anything that endangers your neighbour’s life. I am the Lord.”** Leviticus 19:16

Slander can endanger people’s lives. **“Like a club or a sword or a sharp arrow is a man who gives false testimony against his neighbour.”**

Proverbs 25:18

CHARACTER ASSASSINS

Some years ago we witnessed an extraordinary campaign of hate and slander launched by disgruntled ex-members against one of the most outstanding missions in Africa. Salvos of letters, articles, e-mails and phone calls were launched against KwaSizabantu Mission. Websites dedicated to slandering this magnificent mission were set up. All manner of vindictive abuse was unleashed against this fine Christian community. I was astounded at the persistence, obsession and unconstructive malice of the antagonists. **“Mission of Hate”; “Mission of Fear”; “I Escaped from the Mission from Hell!”** screamed the newspaper and magazine headlines.

I have also discovered that many other ministries overseas have been victims of similar pathological antagonists.

As Dr. James Kennedy in his book, *Delighting God*, wrote: *“If you rise just a little bit above the common herd, if you achieve just a modicum more success than your neighbour, most surely those barbs of criticism are going to be shot your way. To avoid criticism: do nothing, say nothing, be nothing...there is no defence against reproach – except obscurity.”*

A HEALTHY ATTITUDE

Delighting God quotes one wise old man: “If I tried to read, much less answer, all the criticisms made of me and all the attacks levelled against me, this office would have to be closed to all other business. I do the best I know how, the very best I can and I mean to keep on doing this, down to the very end. If the end brings me out all wrong, ten angels swearing I had been right would make no difference. If the end brings me out all right, then what is said against me now will not amount to anything.”

SPURGEON’S COUNSEL

The greatest Baptist preacher of all time, the prince of preachers, C.H. Spurgeon warned: “Believe not half you hear; repeat not half you believe. When you hear an evil report, halve it, then quarter it and say nothing about the rest of it.”

Charles Spurgeon wrote: “The more prominent you are in Christ’s service, the more certain are you to be the butt of calumny. I have long ago said farewell to my character. I lost it in the early days of my ministry by being a little more zealous than suited a slumbering age. And I have never been able to regain it except in the sight of Him who judges all the earth and in the hearts of those who love me for my works’ sake.”

MALICE AGAINST MISSIONARIES

When researching *The Greatest Century of Missions* I was astounded at how each of the great missionaries of the past had been targeted by contemporaries for the most vindictive slander and abuse. William Carey, Samuel Marsden, Hudson Taylor, David Livingstone and so many others endured the most cruel and malicious attacks by people who claimed to be Christians.

George Whitefield, one of the greatest Evangelists of all time and a key figure in the Great Evangelical Awakening, was actually kicked out of the Church of England that he had served so faithfully. However, today, the Church of England in South Africa has named its college after George Whitefield.

REVILING THE REFORMERS

When researching for *The Greatest Century of Reformation* book I was shocked again by the hostility, not only by contemporaries, but even to this very day, against many of the greatest Christian Reformers whom God used to bring about the most powerful Spiritual Revival in history. I included some of these details not only in those books, but in the chapter: *When All Men Speak Well of You* in our *Character Assassins* book.

One historian noted concerning John Calvin: “No good man has ever had a worse press; no Christian Theologian is so often scorned; so regularly attacked.”

TARGETING THEOLOGIANS

Even America's greatest Theologian, Jonathan Edwards, the man most closely associated with the Great Evangelical Awakening, was actually dismissed by his own church as a result of slander, which was later admitted to be false by the one who bore false witness against him. In his farewell message, Edwards advised: "...avoid contention. A contentious people will be a miserable people...heat of spirit, evil speaking and things of the like...directly contrary to the spirit of Christianity...watch against a contentious spirit..."

The Scriptures implore us: "**Brothers, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against his brother or judges him, speaks against the Law and judges it.**" James 4:11

SLANDERING SPURGEON

Charles Spurgeon, was the target of vicious and slanderous attacks by the Baptist Union of his day. Now his books are textbooks of Baptist colleges and his statue stands outside the Baptist Union headquarters.

WARNINGS FROM THE WORD

The Bible warns us that: "**Envy rots the bones.**" Proverbs 14:30. "**Pride only breeds quarrels.**" Proverbs 13:10. The Apostle Paul warned about the "**...conceited...he has an unhealthy interest in controversies and arguments that result in envy, quarrelling, malicious talk, evil suspicions...**" 1 Timothy 6:4

The Word of God warns us of "**the terrible ...scornful ... all who watch for iniquity are cut off - Who make a man an offender by a word and lay a snare for him who reproveth in the gate and turn aside the just by empty words..**" Isaiah 29:20-21

In the last Book of the Bible we are given a list of 8 categories of people who will be excluded from Heaven: "**But the cowardly, unbelieving, abominable, murderers, sexually immoral, sorcerers, idolaters and all liars shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death.**" Revelation 21:8

Speaking of Heaven we are told: "**But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.**" Revelation 21:27

And just in case we had not quite received the message that liars will be condemned to hell, the very last verses of the Bible declares: "**Outside are the homosexual dogs and sorcerers and sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters and whoever loves and practices a lie.**" Revelation 22:15

THE SIN OF LISTENING TO SLANDER

Puritan preacher Thomas Watson taught: *“As it is a sin against this Commandment to raise a false report of another, so it is to receive a false report before you have examined it...he that raises a slander, carries the devil in his tongue; and he that receives it, carries the devil in his ear.”*

THE SIN OF SILENCE

Watson pointed out that a man may wrong another as much by **silence** as by slander when you know someone to be wrongly accused, yet do not speak on his behalf.

DUTIES REQUIRED

Under the Duties Required in the Ninth Commandment the *Westminster Larger Catechism* lists:

The duty of preserving and promoting truth and the good name of our neighbour (***“These are the things that you should do: speak each man the truth to his neighbour; give judgement in your gates for truth, justice and peace.”*** Zechariah 8:16

“Demetrius has a good testimony from all and from the Truth itself. And we also bear witness and you know that our testimony is true.” 3 John 12)

The duty to stand for the truth and to do so from the heart (***“Open your mouth for the speechless, in the cause of all who are appointed to die. Open your mouth, judge righteously and plead the cause of the poor and needy.”*** Proverbs 31:8-9

“He who walks uprightly and walks in righteousness and speaks the truth in his heart.” Psalm 15:2)

The duty to speak the truth and only the truth in matters of judgement and justice (***“You shall do no injustice in judgement. You shall not be partial to the poor nor honour the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbour.”*** Leviticus 19:15

“A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness will utter lies...a true witness delivers souls but a deceitful witness speaks lies.” Proverbs 14:5; 25)

The duty to speak the truth at all times (***“Therefore, putting away lying, let each one of you speak truth with his neighbour, for we are members of one another.”*** Ephesians 4:25)

The duty of rejoicing in the gifts and graces of others (***“For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth that is in you, just as you walk in the Truth. I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.”*** 3 John 3-4)

The duty to receive a good report of others (***“Love does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.”*** 1 Corinthians 13:6-7)

The duty to discourage all tale bearers, flatterers and slanderers (***“The north wind brings forth rain and backbiting an angry countenance.”*** Proverbs 25:23

“He who hates, disguises it with his lips and lays up deceit within himself; when he speaks kindly, do not believe him, for there are seven abominations in his heart.” Proverbs 26:24-25

“Whoever secretly slanders his neighbour, him I will destroy; the one who has a haughty look and a proud heart, him I will not endure.” Psalm 101:5)

The duty to keep lawful promises (***“He who swears to his own hurt and does not change.”*** Psalm 15:4)

The duty to study and practise everything true, noble, lovely and of good report (***“Finally, brethren, whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue, and if there is anything praiseworthy – meditate on these things.”*** Philippians 4:8)

SINS FORBIDDEN

Under the Sins Forbidden in the Ninth Commandment the *Westminster Larger Catechism* includes:

The sin of partiality in judging, especially in courts of law (***“You shall do no injustice in judgement. You shall not be partial to the poor, nor honour the person of the mighty. In righteousness you shall judge your neighbour.”*** Leviticus 19:15)

The sin of giving false evidence (***“A false witness will not go unpunished and he who speaks lies will not escape.”*** Proverbs 19:5

“There are six things the Lord hates, yes seven are an abomination to Him...a false witness who speaks lies and one who sows discord among brethren.” Proverbs 6:16-19)

The sin of passing an unjust sentence, calling evil good and good evil (***“He who justifies the wicked and he who condemns the just, both of them are alike an abomination to the Lord.”*** Proverbs 17:15

“Who justify the wicked for a bribe and take away justice from the righteous man.” Isaiah 5:23)

The sin of lying (***“In transgressing and lying against the Lord and departing from our God...concealing and uttering from the heart words of falsehood.”*** Isaiah 59:13 ***“The proud have forged a lie against me, but I will keep Your precepts with my whole heart.”*** Psalm 119:6-9

“You shall not steal, not deal falsely, nor lie to one another.” Leviticus 19:11
“Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds.” Colossians 3:9).

The sin of concealing the truth (**“If a person sins in hearing the utterance of an oath and is a witness, whether he has seen or known of the matter – if he does not tell it, he bears guilt.”** Leviticus 5:1

“But Peter said, Ananias, why has satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit...?” Acts 5:3)

The sin of speaking the truth unseasonably (**“A fool vents all his feelings, but a wise man holds them back.”** Proverbs 29:11)

The sin of perverting the truth to a wrong meaning (**“All day they twist My Words; all their thoughts are against Me for evil.”** Psalm 56:5).

The sin of slandering and backbiting (**“You sit and speak against your brother; you slander your own mother’s son.”** Psalm 50:20
“He who does not backbite with his tongue, nor does evil to his neighbour, nor does he take up a reproach against his friend.” Psalm 15:3).

The sin of tale-bearing (**“You shall not go about as a tale-bearer among your people.”** Leviticus 19:16).

The sin of misconstruing intentions (Nehemiah 6:6-8; 1 Samuel 1:13-15).

The sin of flattery (**“They speak idly every one with his neighbour; with flattering lips and a double heart they speak. May the Lord cut off all flattering lips and the tongue that speaks proud things.”** Psalm 12:2-3
“...flattering people to gain advantage.” Jude 16)

The sin of thinking too highly, or too meanly, of ourselves or others (**“Associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion.”** Romans 12:16; Luke 18:9-11; Exodus 4:10-14).

The sin of exaggerating minor faults (**“And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye’; and look, a plank is in your own eye? Hypocrite! First remove the plank from your own eye and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.”** Matthew 7:3-5).

The sin of hiding, or excusing, sins when called to a free confession (**“He who covers his sins, will not prosper, but whoever confesses and forsakes them will have mercy.”** Proverbs 28:13

“The serpent deceived me and I ate...” Genesis 3:12-13 **“I do not know. Am I my brother’s keeper?...”** Genesis 4:9).

The sin of raising false rumours (**“You shall not circulate a false report. Do not put your hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.”** Exodus 23:1).

The sin of groundless suspicion (**“Love...thinks no evil.”** 1 Corinthians 13:5 **“...disputes and arguments over words, from which come evil suspicions...”** 1 Timothy 6:4).

The sin of envying anyone’s deserved credit (Numbers 11:29; Matthew 26:15-16).

The sin of scornful contempt and mocking (**“But in My adversity they rejoiced and gathered together; attackers gathered against Me and I did not know it; they tore at Me and did not cease...aha, aha! Our eyes have seen it.”** Psalm 35:15,21).

PROTECTING OUR NEIGHBOUR’S GOOD NAME

Matthew Henry’s Commentary states: *“The Ninth Commandment concerns our own and our neighbour’s good name. This Commandment forbids, (1) Speaking falsely on any matter, lying, equivocating and in any way devising and designing to deceive our neighbour, (2) Speaking unjustly to our neighbour, (3) Bearing false witness against him...slandering, backbiting, tale-bearing, aggravating what is done amiss and making it worse than it is and in any way endeavouring to raise our own reputation upon the ruin of our neighbour’s.”*

DO NOT TOLERATE FALSE WITNESS

“You shall not bear false witness” means that we may not look upon, consider, pay heed to, or listen to, false witness. It can also mean to give or to communicate. This commandment not only prohibits the hearing of false testimony, but it prohibits having anything to do with false testimony. It may be paraphrased this way: You shall not invent, or give your attention to, or think about, or pass on, false witness. We must never be either a giver, or a receiver, of false witness.

IMAGINING AND EXAGGERATING FAULTS

The Ninth Commandment forbids us to carry false witness either in our head, or in our heart, or on our lips. It is a breach of this Commandment to fuel our mind with exaggerated, or imagined ideas about another person’s faults. This includes Hollywood films, school and history text books or museum displays that demonise people or nations with distortions, exaggerations, myths, lies, propaganda and stereotypes without regard for historic content.

A false witness is any dishonest version of events, or any untrue statement about historic personalities and events. It might be gossip or slander against someone or some nation, or it may be untrue information about oneself, given to impress others. This would include dishonest or distorted excuses concocted to get ourselves out of trouble, or to avoid disgrace. It includes fictionalised films which claim to be based on true events or inspired by an event in history, for example: *“This is a true story ...”*, while the events have been distorted to demonise the victims and glorify the villains.

THE SIN OF FLATTERY

Unrealistic flattery is also a lie and harmful because it gives the other person a false view of him/herself, possibly inducing pride. Many parents have ruined their children with unfounded and excessive flattery.

A MATTER OF TRUST

Lies grieve the Holy Spirit of truth. Lies also betray trust. The person to whom a lie is spoken is betrayed, for that person who has trusted in, or respected, the individual as a reliable person has been betrayed. Dishonest statements are also a hostile act. Each lie represents a shattering blow to the character. Lies begin to bludgeon the conscience into insensitivity, damaging and ultimately destroying, personal integrity.

MOTIVES BEHIND FALSE WITNESS

Every lie involves multiple sins and gives birth to other sins. There is normally a sinful motive for the lie. Pride and arrogance are behind boastful lies. Pride and cowardice lie behind dishonest excuses. Hatred, malice or jealousy lie behind vindictive gossip and character assassination. A liar who tries to give the appearance of being a Christian walking with the Lord is also guilty of hypocrisy.

Some people lie and exaggerate to show off and to attract attention to themselves. Others lie to win arguments or to obtain favours. Some people slander others in order to boost themselves by comparison. One of the more common lies that you may be guilty of includes inventive excuse making. Governments are often guilty of this in their war propaganda. When we have done something very foolish, or fail to do something important, we may be tempted to *“bend the truth.”* At this point we become a dishonest actor, a hypocrite. The problem is, like many other actors, we may tend to believe in the part that we are playing. We may even feel wronged at having been challenged, even while knowing within ourselves that the excuse is false. We generally feel wholly justified in defending ourselves. This desire to justify ourselves through dishonest excuses includes pride and possibly cowardice.

SPIRITUAL DECEPTION

Another, very common and serious, way in which Christians frequently lie is by exaggerating or even inventing spiritual guidance, Divine blessings and pretending a deeper walk with the Lord than is real. This also includes taking the Lord's Name in vain. Frequently Christians will speak about: *"The Lord told me..."* and *"the Lord told me to tell you..."* or *"I am still praying about it..."* Much of what passes for testimonies, praise, worship and intercession in numerous fellowships are actually a breach of the Third and Ninth Commandments.

ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA

A radical example of this in the early church is the case of Ananias and Sapphira. ***"A certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it and brought a certain part and laid it at the Apostles' feet. But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.' Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. A great fear came upon all those who heard these things."*** Acts 5:1-5

TWISTING SCRIPTURE

Some people have tried to twist this passage of Scripture to justify socialism, communism and even the brutal ANC necklace murders burning people alive! However, this passage is not teaching Biblical economics, but warning of the consequences of lying to God. As the Apostle Peter said: the land belonged to them. And after they sold it the money was theirs. The issue was not the property, or the funds from the sale. The issue was the pride, deception and dishonesty of Ananias and Sapphira who were claiming to have done more than they actually had. For the praise of men, they publicly claimed that they were giving to the Lord all the proceeds from their property sale. This passage reiterates the principle of private ownership of property. It is warning of the need for integrity and honesty.

MARXIST MISUSE OF SCRIPTURE

Also, in response to those liberation theologians who justified the brutal ANC and UDF necklace murders by appealing to this passage: they need to have pointed out to them that none of the Lord's disciples took the law into their own hands. God struck Ananias and Sapphira dead. The Apostles did not take the law into their own hands. So, those Marxists in religious disguise who try to abuse the Scriptures in this way are also breaking the Ninth Commandment, for they are guilty of deception and twisting of the Word of

God to justify their greed and malice. There is a world of difference between voluntary Christian generosity and compulsory communist confiscation.

DESTROYING REPUTATIONS

Slander is the most malicious way in which the Ninth Commandment is violated. Maliciously to accuse someone is most destructive. Intentionally to set out to tell falsehoods about someone is to destroy their reputation in the community, in the office or in the church. By elaborating on something we do not like about the person, or people group, or by embellishing a flaw in the person's character, friends and associates can be turned against the individual or nation targeted with ease.

A PRODUCT OF ENVY

Slander is often the product of envy. Lord Byron once observed: *"If you aspire to climb to the height of the mountain, you will look down upon the hatred of those beneath you."* Many slander others because of envy of their popularity, success or capabilities. ***"A lying tongue hates those it crushes and a flattering mouth works ruin."*** Proverbs 26:28

CAN YOU SEE THE OTHER SIDE?

Whenever Czar Peter the Great of Russia heard someone denigrating another person, he would respond: *"Ah, yes, but is there nothing good about him?"*

INVITING SLANDER

The Founder of Campus Crusade for Christ, Bill Bright, observed: *"People do not dump garbage on green lawns."* Garbage tends to be dumped on vacant lots filled with rocks and rubbish, sand and weeds. The question is: Do you invite others to dump their gossip on yourself?

The Bible warns us against having an ear eager to hear slander. Proverbs tells us: *"Do not associate with a gossip."* Proverbs 20:19. ***"An evil-doer listens to wicked lips, a liar pays attention to a destructive tongue."*** Proverbs 17:4

SPREADING STRIFE

"A worthless person, a wicked man, is the one who walks with a false mouth, who winks with his eyes, who signals with his feet, who points with his fingers; who with perversity in his heart devises evil continually, who spreads strife. Therefore his calamity will come suddenly; instantly he will be broken and there will be no healing." Proverbs 6:12-15

"He who goes about as a tale bearer reveals secrets, but he who is trustworthy conceals the matter." Proverbs 11:13

CAN YOU BE TRUSTED?

The question is: Can you be trusted to maintain confidentiality and to keep a secret? ***“By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is torn down.”*** Proverbs 11:11

One good rule of thumb is never to say anything about someone that you have not already said to that person himself. If we cannot prove that something has happened, then we have no right to an opinion about the matter and we certainly should not bear false witness about it. Never underestimate the degree to which sinful men will try to make themselves feel important by destroying the reputation of others. ***“A worthless man digs up evil, while his words are as a scorching fire. A perverse man spreads strife and a slanderer separates intimate friends.”*** Proverbs 16:27-28

“A rascally witness makes a mockery of justice and the mouth of the wicked spreads iniquity.” Proverbs 19:28

“Like a madman who throws firebrands, arrows and death, is the man who deceives his neighbour and says, I was only joking!” Proverbs 26:18-19

“Do not be a witness against your neighbour without cause and do not deceive with your lips. Do not say, thus I shall do to him as he has done to me; I will render to the man according to his work.” Proverbs 24:28-29

“There is a kind of man whose teeth are like swords and his jaw teeth like knives, to devour the afflicted from the earth and the needy from among men.” Proverbs 30:14

“A false witness will not go unpunished and he who speaks lies shall perish.” Proverbs 19:9

“The one who guards his mouth preserves his life; the one who opens wide his lips, comes to ruin.” Proverbs 13:3

“The mouth of the righteous flows with wisdom, but the perverted tongue will be cut out.” Proverbs 10:31

THE UNREPENTANT ARE UNREGENERATE

Those who gossip and slander others and do not repent, reveal that they have a wicked and unregenerate heart. Those whose hearts are actually unregenerate and wicked will not repent when they sin. People who repeatedly, wilfully slander and gossip and do not repent are evidencing rotten fruit which must come from a rotten heart. ***“A fool’s mouth is his ruin and his lips are the snare of his soul.”*** Proverbs 18:7

RESTORATION OR DESTRUCTION?

One of the ways in which we can distinguish between a fool and a wise man is in their speech. A godly man will attempt to win his brother and restore him by confronting him with his sin. The ungodly man instead will attempt to destroy his victim by speaking to others in a destructive way. ***“Wise men store up knowledge, but with the mouth of the foolish, ruin is at hand.”*** Proverbs 10:14

DOES THIS HELP OR HURT?

One of the questions we should ask to discern the difference between the godly desire to help and the ungodly desire to hurt is: Does the negative information being shared help or hurt the accused? ***“From the fruit of a man’s mouth he enjoys good, but the desire of the treacherous is violence.”*** Proverbs 13:2

HAVE YOU SPOKEN TO HIM PERSONALLY?

When people come to you with some tale-bearing you should ask them: Have you spoken to the individual concerned personally? If not, then I should not hear it. This has nothing to do with me. I recommend that you speak to this person directly. ***“The words of the wicked lie in wait for blood, but the mouth of the upright will deliver them.”*** Proverbs 12:6

BREAK THE CHAIN

If we refuse to hear or share gossip, then the destructive downward spiral will be broken. ***“The mouth of the righteous is a fountain of life...”*** Proverbs 10:11. Reject the disinformation of Hollywood and the liberal mainstream media. Refuse to be brainwashed and indoctrinated. Support trustworthy alternative media sources and home education.

PUT ON THE BELT OF TRUTH

In the great passage on spiritual warfare, in Ephesians 6:10-18, the first item of the full armour of God is the belt of truth. ***“Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armour of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil ... Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth....”*** Ephesians 6:10-14

Daniel was the victim of a campaign to destroy his reputation.
“... the governors and satraps sought to find some charge against Daniel...”
Daniel 6:4



Chapter 10

THE TENTH COMMANDMENT DO NOT COVET

“You shall not covet your neighbour’s house; you shall not covet your neighbour’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbour’s.” Exodus 20:17

COVETOUSNESS IS A ROOT SIN

Covetousness is a root sin that leads to other sins. The Bible records how King Saul was jealous of David’s success and coveted the praise and honour which David received for his victories (1 Samuel 18:6-8). As a result King Saul plotted to murder David.

King David coveted the wife of his neighbour Uriah. He committed adultery with Bathsheba and then connived to have Uriah killed to cover up his sin (2 Samuel 11:1-27).

King Ahab coveted the vineyard of Naboth. So Ahab spoke to Naboth, saying: *“Give me your vineyard, that I may have it...because it is near, next to my house; ...but Naboth said to Ahab, ‘the Lord forbid that I should give the inheritance of my fathers to you!’ So Ahab went into his house, sullen and displeased because of the word which Naboth the Jezreelite had spoken to him; for he had said, ‘I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers.’ And he lay down on his bed and turned away his face and would eat no food.”* 1 Kings 21:1-4

The Prophet Micah warned of those who: ***“Covet fields and take them by violence, also houses and seize them. So they oppress a man and his house, a man and his inheritance.”*** Micah 3:2

THE CURSE AND CATASTROPHIC CONSEQUENCES OF COVETOUSNESS

In 1993 I had been invited to conduct a Biblical Worldview Seminar in Bisho, Ciskei. When the BWS was concluded a military chaplain was transporting me to his unit for a chaplain’s service. On the way, near the Sun Casino, he stopped to give a ride to a Xhosa woman who was clearly distressed. After speaking intensely to her for some time, he dropped her off at a nearby village and we drove on to the military base. The chaplain began to relate to me why this woman was so upset.

A member of the family had died and all the relatives had entrusted her with the money required to organise everything for the funeral. On the way to the funeral parlour this woman had seen the casino and the thought took hold of

her that she could double all this money and keep the other half for herself. Perhaps she could treble it, or quadruple it! She had just gambled away everything that she had, including the many thousands of rands that had been entrusted to her by her family members for the funeral arrangements. None of their people were well off. All of this money represented substantial sacrifice. She could not see where they would now be able to get the money from in order to pay for the funeral. In her case covetousness had led to a catastrophic situation which would ruin her life and her relationships with the extended family.

THE RICH FOOL

In the parable of the rich fool our Lord Jesus Christ warned us: ***“Take heed and beware of covetousness, for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of the things he possesses.’ Then he spoke a parable to them, saying: ‘The ground of a certain rich man yielded plentifully. And he thought within himself, saying, what shall I do, since I have no room to store my crops? So he said, I will do this: I will pull down my barns and build greater and there I will store all my crops and my goods. And I will say to my soul, soul, you have many goods laid up for many years! Take your ease; eat, drink and be merry.’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul will be required of you; then whose will those things be which you have provided?’ So is he who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich towards God.”*** Luke 12:15-21

THE LOVE OF MONEY IS A ROOT OF ALL KINDS OF EVIL

“Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and harmful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the Faith in their greediness and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” 1 Timothy 6:6-10

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world – the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes and the pride of life – is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever.” 1 John 2:15-17

I WANT! I NEED! I MUST HAVE!

Yet, our society is filled with people who are constantly striving to accumulate more toys – bigger, better, fancier cars, boats, home entertainment systems,

cell phones, ipods, tablets, computer systems and just about anything else you can name – simply because they covet what anyone else has. Advertisers play to our covetous nature declaring: “*You can have it all!*” and “*You are worth it!*”

MORE!

School children have literally been murdered for brand-name running shoes and clothing. Every day we are bombarded by all kinds of advertising designed to encourage us to covet. And if we give in, we will never be satisfied. We are always going to want just a little bit more. When someone asked billionaire John D. Rockefeller: “*How much money would be enough?*” Rockefeller famously replied: “*Just a little bit more.*”

That is the nature of covetousness. It always wants **more**.

Sometimes I have seen bumper stickers and t-shirts proclaiming: “**Born to shop.**”

There is also another one that declares: “**The one who dies with the most toys wins!**”

LOVING THINGS AND USING PEOPLE

What a tragically shortsighted, superficial, materialistic and ultimately empty goal for life. That some people really believe that their primary purpose in life is to pursue the accumulation of things is tragic. Instead of loving people and using things, all too many love things and use people.

THE HIDDEN SIN

And yet one Roman Catholic priest revealed that, although he had been listening to confessions for 50 years, he had never heard anyone confess to having broken the Tenth Commandment! Covetousness is a sin that few people discuss. Few seem to recognise its insidious nature and that could make it one of the most dangerous of all sins.

COVETOUSNESS IS IDOLATRY

The Apostle Paul wrote: “***Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died and your life is hidden with Christ in God... therefore put to death your members which are on the earth: fornication, uncleanness, passion, evil desire and covetousness, which is idolatry. Because of these things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.***” Colossians 3:2-6

If we examine the laws of Ancient Egypt, Babylon, Persia, Greece, Rome, or any other ancient society, we will find nothing that remotely resembles the Biblical prohibition against covetousness. This Commandment deals with

the heart. The heart of the problem is the problem of the heart.

A MATTER OF THE HEART

Jesus condemned the Pharisees because they cleaned the outside of the cup, but left the inside filled with all kinds of vileness and wickedness (Matthew 23:25-26). The Pharisees were meticulous about keeping the outward details of the Law. But their hearts were unclean. Jesus warned: **“For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.”** Matthew 15:19

Covetousness is a root of all kinds of evil. The Tenth Commandment is extremely important because it goes to the heart, the inner man. It is spiritual. **“For we know that the Law is Spiritual...”** Romans 7:14.

The Tenth Commandment teaches us how the other Commandments are meant to be interpreted, not only dealing with externals, but also dealing with thoughts and motivations. It has convicting power. **“What shall we say then? Is the Law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the Law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the Law had said, you shall not covet...”** Romans 7:7-8

DUTIES REQUIRED

The *Westminster Larger Catechism* teaches us that the Duties Required in the Tenth Commandment include:

The duty to be content with our own condition (**“Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you.”** Hebrews 13:5
“Now godliness with contentment is great gain.” 1 Timothy 6:6)

The duty to have a charitable attitude towards our neighbour, so that we desire his good (**“Rejoice with those who rejoice and weep with those who weep.”** Romans 12:15

“Now the purpose of the Commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience and from sincere faith.” 1 Timothy 1:5

“Love suffers long and is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks not evil; does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the Truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.” 1 Corinthians 13:4-7)

SINS FORBIDDEN

Under the Sins Forbidden in the Tenth Commandment, the *Westminster Larger Catechism* includes:

The sin of discontent with what is ours (**“So Ahab went into his house sullen and displeased because...Naboth...had said, I will not give you the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid down on his bed and turned away his face and would eat no food.”** 1 Kings 21:4

“Yet all this avails me nothing, so long as I see Mordecai the Jew sitting at the King’s gate.” Esther 5:13

“Nor complain as some of them also complained and were destroyed...” 1 Corinthians 10:10)

The sin of envying and grieving at the good of our neighbour (**“Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another.”** Galatians 5:26

“But if you have bitter envy and self-seeking in your heart, do not boast and lie against the Truth. This wisdom does not descend from above, but is earthly, sensual, demonic. For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.” James 3:14-16

“He will gnash his teeth and melt away; the desire of the wicked shall perish.” Psalm 112:9-10)

The sin of inordinate desire for anything that is our neighbour’s (**“For the commandments...are all summed up in...you shall love your neighbour as yourself.”** Romans 13:9)

THE ROOTS OF SIN

Thomas Watson summarised the issue: *“Covetousness is the root of discontent...an immoderate desire of getting...the thirst is not satisfied, therefore the heart frets through discontent and impatience. Covetousness is the root of theft. Achan’s covetous humour made him steal that wedge of gold, which served to cleave asunder his soul from God”* (Joshua 7:21).

Covetousness is the root of treason. It made Judas betray Christ. **‘What will you give me if I deliver Him unto you?’** Matthew 26:16.

Absalom’s covetousness made him attempt to pluck the crown from his father’s head. He that is a Demas will soon prove a Judas. Men shall be covetous (2 Timothy 3:2) and that follows in the next verse, traitors. Where covetousness is in the premise, treason will be in the conclusion.

Covetousness is the root of murder. Why did Ahab stone Naboth to death but to possess his vineyard? (1 Kings 21:13). Covetousness has made many swim to the crown in blood. And can the heart be pure when the hands are full of blood? (Isaiah 1:15).

Covetousness is the root of perjury. Men shall be covetous and it follows truce breakers (2 Timothy 3:2-3). For love of money men will take a false oath and break a just oath. He that lives a Midas will die a perjurer. Covetousness is the root of bribery and injustice. It makes the courts of judicia great places of robbery, as Augustine speaks. At Athens causes were bought and sold for money. It is the cause of uncleanness. The Scriptures mention the *'hire of a whore'*. For money both conscience and chastity are set to sale.

Covetousness is the root of idolatry: **'covetousness which is idolatry'** (Colossians 3:5). The covetous person...his money is his god, for he puts his trust in it. Money is his creator.

When he has an abundance of wealth, then he thinks he is made. It is his redeemer. If he be in any strait or trouble, he flies to his money and that must redeem him. It is his comforter. When he is sad he counts over his money and with this golden harp he drives away the evil spirit. When you see a covetous man, you may say: There goes **an idolater.**"

CONTENTMENT

The Tenth Commandment calls us to be content with what we have. Not to long for things that belong to others. To avoid the pursuit of happiness and joy through the accumulation of material wealth, possessions, someone else's spouse and the friends of others. We are not to allow earthly things to fill a void that only God can fill. *"Thou hast made us for Thyself and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee."* (Augustine).

NEEDS NOT GREEDS

We are to ask God to provide what we need. God promises that He will take care of our **needs** (not our greeds) if we seek Him first and not money, popularity or possessions.

"Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you." Hebrews 13:5

Jesus challenges us: ***"Therefore do not worry, saying, what shall we eat? Or what shall we drink? Or what shall we wear? For after all these things the gentiles seek. For your Heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added to you."*** Matthew 6:31-33

CONSIDER THE BIRDS

"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is

not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your Heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

Matthew 6:25-2

It was this teaching of our Lord Jesus (Luke 12:6) that inspired President Steyn of the Orange Free State to motivate the first act of the Union of South Africa - to mint half cent and later one cent coins with two sparrows marked on them, reminding us that the Lord Jesus Christ cares for the very least.

SOLI DEO GLORIA

Similarly, the message *Soli Deo Gloria* on each one rand coin should remind us that we cannot serve both God and money. The chief end of man is to worship God and to enjoy Him forever.

FUELLING DISCONTENT

Generally, the purpose of most advertising and marketing seems to be to feed on customers' discontent by appealing to a person's selfish nature. Most advertisers seem to promise people fulfilment, if they would only buy their product. Many adverts seem to suggest that when you purchase a particular item, you will be surrounded by admiring friends, a beautiful spouse and have a really great enjoyable life. These advertisers research what people covet and play on the natural tendency of people to be dissatisfied with what they have.

TRUE DISCIPLESHIP

When the rich young ruler came to Christ and asked, "***What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?***" The Lord Jesus went straight to the heart of the Tenth Commandment: "***One thing you lack: go your way, sell whatever you have and give to the poor and you will have treasure in Heaven; and come, take up the cross and follow Me.***" Mark 10:21

Covetousness is not the same thing as ambition. There is a God-given desire for us to aspire to work to be the best person we can possibly be. Covetousness by way of contrast is the inordinate desire for the things of this world. Covetousness is not concerned with needs, but **greeds**. It involves an all consuming desire for more than one needs or deserves.

GAMBLING IS BOTH A FRUIT AND A ROOT OF SIN

Gambling is both a fruit and a root of sin. It is both a result of sin and a cause for sin. A person gambles because he desires to win money which was not earned through honest work. Covetousness is a form of idolatry. The lottery is not just "*harmless entertainment*" but in many cases it is "*a desperate but*

vain attempt to survive. But the odds against winning are so cruel that the lottery turns out to be theft by consent.” (Larry Burkett, *Truth About Gambling and Lotteries*).

GAMBLING IS BAD STEWARDSHIP

Christians must be wise stewards of the resources that God has entrusted to us. To lose at gambling is bad stewardship. To gain at gambling is to benefit at the expense of many others. Gambling is a classic example of the love of money that is a root of all kinds of evil. Gambling is a major cause of the neglect of the family and the break up of families. Money that should have been spent on food, clothing, education and housing goes for gambling. Gambling has led some people to murder. Gambling often leads to laziness. The Scripture declares: “**...if a man will not work, he shall not eat.**” 2 Thessalonians 3:10

SELFISHNESS AND GREED

Enticing somebody to gain money at the certain loss of others violates virtually every principle taught by Christ. It breeds selfishness, greed and covetousness.

THE DEADLY GAME OF GAMBLING

The London School of Economics calculated that the burden of lottery spending hits the poor eight times harder than the rich. “*Gambling contributes nothing to the common good. It undermines values, mocks work, finances crimes, robs children, enslaves its addicts, subverts government and poisons whatever it touches.*” (*Gambling a Deadly Game* by Larry Braidfoot).

Gambling not only has a devastating effect on the family and society as a whole, but it also destroys the individual. Family break ups, divorce and the loss of friends are frequent. Just a few newspaper cuttings illustrate the point: A 50 year-old Roodepoort bank clerk stole R5.5 million from ABSA bank over a three-year period. A 38 year-old compulsive gambler stole R1.46 million from the Thoroughbred Breeders Association while employed as their accountant. He was jailed for eight years. Welfare organisations reported how their budgets had to be doubled and quadrupled within months after gambling was legalised in their areas to deal with destitute families of compulsive gamblers.

After the legalisation of gambling in Namibia, a Namibian official reported: “*All we have achieved is to make a few people much richer and a lot of people much poorer.*” The Namibian report also noted that because of the legalisation of gambling more jobs had been lost than actually created.

RUINED BY THE LOTTERY

Britain's national lottery was launched in 1994 as "*a dream ticket to personal wealth,*" while helping some good causes. However, it rapidly turned into a nightmare. Some of the new instant millionaires were forced into hiding by sacks of begging letters and hate campaigns. Charities complained that their donations plummeted while help groups reported a massive increase in the number of addicted gamblers they had to assist. The poorest and most vulnerable people, those who could least afford it, were the very ones who were sucked into gambling week after week. Gamblers Anonymous reported that people on all levels of society were being "*ruined by the lottery.*"

A report from Denmark revealed that almost 2 million Danish citizens (out of a population of just over 5 million) buy lottery tickets each week. The Danish report documented that legalised gambling in the country had led to alcoholism, personal economic ruin, divorce and suicides. "**He who is greedy for gain troubles his own house.**" Proverbs 15:27

CASINOS AND CRIME

In the United States of America, an analysis by *US News and World Report* documented that wherever casinos were opened, crime greatly increased. There was clear, documented evidence that with legalised gambling came a massive increase in bribery, fraud, extortion and bankruptcy, both of businesses and individuals. "*The commission on the Review of the National Policy Towards Gambling in the USA concluded that the twin principal goals of legislation, namely revenue raising and crime control are incompatible. Why? Because there is always an increase in illegal gambling which accompanies legalised gambling. There is also an increase in bankruptcy, alcoholism, child and wife abuse and other crimes which accompany gambling. This requires more police, more jails, more social workers, lawyers, judges, court cases, public prosecutors, public defence attorneys, etc. For example after Atlantic City, New Jersey, legalised gambling, crime increased 300%...gambling is destructive to society.*" (Make a Difference).

COVETOUSNESS CREATES CHAOS

In Zimbabwe the chaos, lawlessness, devastation, poverty and starvation serve as a clear warning of where the sin of covetousness can lead. "**Woe to him who covets evil gain for his house, that he may set his nest on high, that he may be delivered from the power of disaster!**" Habakkuk 2:9

SIN IS SELFISHNESS

Covetousness is selfishness. "*I want! I need! I must have! Give me!*"

DREAMING AND SCHEMING

Covetousness dedicates the heart to dreaming and scheming for the things of this world, in this life. Covetousness seeks happiness and fulfilment in material possessions. Covetousness focuses the heart and mind on popularity, prestige, esteem, status, fame, position, property, personal appearance, possessions and power.

CHOKED BY CARES

In the parable of the sower the Lord Jesus speaks of those who are choked with the cares, riches and pleasures of this life. Covetousness can sweep away all spiritual concerns. Covetousness is like the floodwaters that burst all bounds and, without direction or self-control, destroys all in its path.

People whose minds and hearts have been given over to covetousness have no energy and enthusiasm left for truly important Spiritual activities. Covetousness suffocates Spirituality. Covetousness is like an aggressive cancer rapidly overwhelming its victim, breaking down all health and effectiveness, crippling spiritual life. The link between covetousness and collapse of doctrinal integrity is clearly seen in 2 Timothy 4:3-4.

IDOLATROUS AND INFECTIOUS

Covetousness is idolatry and it is infectious. It diminishes people, preoccupying them with trivia. Covetousness requires enormous time and energy and it is the most self-justifying of sins. Covetousness is a highly subtle sin, anaesthetizing and extinguishing the conscience - as luxuries become necessities. The Apostle Paul instructed that no man should ever be appointed as an elder if he is covetous (1 Timothy 3:3).

SEPARATE YOURSELF FROM NEGATIVE COMPANY

The Apostle Paul wrote that believers were ***“not to keep company with anyone named a brother who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater...not even to eat with such a person.”*** 1 Corinthians 5:11.

FLEE TEMPTATION

We should flee temptation just as Joseph and Daniel did as though we were running from an impending catastrophe. The Scriptures are clear that: ***“Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the Kingdom of God? Do not be deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the Kingdom of God. And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.”*** 1 Corinthians 6:9-11

CULTIVATING AN ATTITUDE OF GRATITUDE

One of the first safeguards against the cancer of covetousness is to cultivate an attitude of gratitude.

CULTIVATING CONTENTMENT AND GENEROSITY

Secondly, we should cultivate contentment and generosity. It is hard to be covetous when we are giving things away. ***“...for I have learned that in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”*** Philippians 4:11-13

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS IN A NUTSHELL

Above all else love God alone.
Bow down to neither wood nor stone.
God's Name refuse to take in vain.
The Sabbath rest with care maintain.
Respect your parents all your days.
Hold sacred innocent life always.
Be loyal to your chosen mate.
Steal nothing neither small nor great.
Report, with truth, your neighbour's deed.
And rid your mind of selfish greed.

“Do not love the world or anything in the world...” 1 John 2:5

“Set your mind on things above, not on earthly things.” Colossians 3:2



"Love so amazing, so Divine, demands my soul, my life, my all."

CHAPTER 11

The LAW of GOD and The GOSPEL of CHRIST

***“Therefore the Law was our Tutor to bring us to Christ,
that we might be justified by faith.”*** Galatians 3:24

FRUSTRATION AND FAILURE

Many people today have the Law and the Gospel backwards. They think that they need to keep the Law in order to become Christians. As a result they are frustrated with failure, shame and guilt. They do not understand why the Gospel does not work in their experience. Their problem is that they are placing the proverbial cart before the horse.

LAW AND GRACE

Salvation is by the Grace of God alone, received by Faith alone. We do not keep the Law in order to be saved. We keep the Law because we are saved.

The Law condemns

– but the Gospel of Christ saves.

The Law reveals our sin

– but the Gospel reveals the Saviour.

The Law makes us guilty

– but the Gospel of Christ offers us forgiveness.

The Law demands payment

– but in the Gospel, Jesus Christ pays our debts to God the Father.

American Evangelist D.L. Moody declared: *“The Law is a mirror to show us who we are – but you cannot wash yourself with a mirror.”*

WHAT THE LAW CANNOT DO

The Law cannot make us righteous.

The Law cannot save.

The Law cannot sanctify.

However, the Law does reveal our sin and it points us to the Saviour.

***“Do we then make void the Law through faith? Certainly not!
On the contrary, we establish the Law.”*** Romans 3:31

WHAT THE LAW DOES

The Law of the Lord convicts of sin (Romans 7:7-11).

The Law condemns transgression (Romans 4:15; James 2:10).

The Ten Commandments

The Law restrains evil (1 Timothy 1:8-11; Psalm 119:11).

The Law drives people to Christ (Galatians 3:24; Psalm 19:7).

The Law of God guides our sanctification (Romans 8:4).

“...Sin is lawlessness.” 1 John 3:4

“But he who looks into the perfect Law of liberty and continues in it and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.” James 1:25

“The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.” Psalm 19:7

The Ten Commandments reflect the character of God. **“You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy.”** Leviticus 19:2

The Law of God lies at the very heart of the New Covenant. **“Behold the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a New Covenant with the House of Israel...I will put My Law in their minds and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God and they shall be My people.”** Jeremiah 31:31-33.

Do you know what it is to have the Word of God renewing your mind?

Do you know what it is to have your conscience captive to the Word of God?

DUTY AND DELIGHT

We human beings were not created autonomous – that is free to be a law unto ourselves, but Theonomous – subject to the Law of God. This is not a hardship because God has created us in such a way that grateful obedience will bring us the greatest joy. Duty and delight coincide.

King David wrote in the Psalms: **“Let me walk in the paths of Your commandments, for I delight in it.”** Psalm 119:35; **“O, how I love Your Law! It is my meditation all the day.”** Psalm 119:97; **“I love Your Law.”** Psalm 119:113; **“I love Your Commandments more than gold, yes, than fine gold!”** Psalm 119:127.

The Apostle Paul taught: **“Therefore the Law is holy and the Commandment holy and just and good.”** Romans 7:12; **“For I delight in the Law of God according to the inward man.”** Romans 7:22. Do you delight in the Law of God? Do you walk in the paths of God’s Commandments? Do you love God’s Law?

LOVE AND LAW

The Apostle John wrote: **“By this we know we are the children of God, when we love God and keep His Commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His Commandments. And His Commandments are not burdensome. And whoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that overcomes the world – our Faith.”** 1 John 5:2-4

Do you love God? Do you strive to keep His Commandments? Have you experienced victory over worldly matters?

The fallen human heart hates God's Law – both because it is Law and because it comes from God. However, those who know and love Christ, love His Law and want to keep it, both out of gratitude for God's grace and mercy and to please God. God's children also find that the Holy Spirit leads them into degrees of obedience to God's Law that they had never before been able to attain.

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

John Bunyan, in *Pilgrim's Progress*, offers us a literary vision of the relationship between Law and Grace. In this spiritual masterpiece, the main character, Christian, is brought to a large, beautiful parlour by Interpreter. The room has not been dusted, or swept, in many years. It is thick with dust and cobwebs. Interpreter calls in a man with a broom and asks him to sweep the room. As the man sweeps, the room is filled with dust causing Christian to choke, cough and gasp for breath.

Then, Interpreter calls in a lady and bids her sprinkle the room with water. After this the dust settles and the room is easily cleaned.

“What means this?” Christian asked Interpreter. He replied that the room *“is the heart of a man that was never sanctified by the sweet grace of the Gospel. The dust is his original sin and inward corruptions that have defiled the whole man. He that began to sweep at first is the Law; but she that brought water and did sprinkle it is the Gospel.”*

What John Bunyan here explains to us is it is the Law that stirs up sin until our spirits can hardly breathe. We choke with the sin that is swept up into our faces by the Law, until we are convicted and realise the utter depravity of our situation.

Those who are outside of Christ do not want to hear the Law of God, because they know they are guilty. Those who are in Christ often do not want to hear the Law of God either, because it makes them fearful when they forget the grace of God.

In *Pilgrim's Progress* we read that after Christian had struggled for a long time with the great, exhausting burden of guilt and sin strapped to his back, he made his way up the hill of Calvary. As he climbed to the top of that hill, he saw there a Cross and upon that Cross, One hanging who is the Son of God. As Pilgrim lifted his eyes to look at the Cross, suddenly the burden of his guilt broke loose and this great weight on his back rolled down the hill and disappeared into a dark sepulchre, never to be seen again.

Then three shining angels appeared to him, greeting him: "Peace be to thee!"

The first one declared to him: "Thy sins be forgiven thee."

The second angel removed from him the filthy, foul rags of his unrighteousness and clothed him with the white robe of Christ's perfect obedience that he might stand faultless before our Holy God.

The third angel gave him a sealed scroll, with the guarantee of eternal Salvation in the Paradise of God.

THE TERROR OF THE LAW

In his sermon on Galatians 3:24-25, entitled *The Stern Pedagogue* (The Strict Teacher), Charles Haddon Spurgeon declared: "The Law which is so sharp and terrible to men when it only deals with them for their good, will if you and I die without being brought to Christ, be much more terrible to us in Eternity, when it deals with us in justice for our punishment...You that have despised Him as the Saviour, will have to appear before Him as your Judge...Oil is soft, but set it on fire and see how it burns! Love is sweet, but curdle it to jealousy and see how sour it is! If you turn the Lamb of Zion into the Lion of the Tribe of Judah, Beware! For He will tear you in pieces and there shall be none to deliver...The pierced hand was outstretched with invitations of mercy, but if these are rejected, O, sirs, I am telling you solemn truth and hear it, I pray you, ere I send you away – if, from that hand that was pierced you will not take the perfect salvation which He is prepared to give to all who confess their guilt, you will have to receive from that selfsame hand the blows of the iron rod which will break you in pieces as a potter's vessel."

MERCY AND FORGIVENESS

We must be absolutely sure of this. No one can reach Heaven by keeping the Commandments. You are a guilty lawbreaker and need God's forgiveness, pardon and mercy. Any serious examination of the Ten Commandments will convince every honest person to cry out to God for mercy and forgiveness. "Lord, have mercy on me – a sinner!"

GRACE AND GUILT

There can be no grace where there is no guilt. There can be no mercy where there is no sin. If you are not a sinner, God cannot have mercy on you. Where misery is not felt, mercy will not be appreciated. No one will plead for mercy until he first admits his guilt. You cannot seek salvation until you recognise that you are a lost hell-deserving sinner.

THE LIGHT OF THE LAW

The Commandments do not make us clean; they show us that we need cleansing and prompt us to seek our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ alone for Redemption.

As we consider the Duties Required by the Ten Commandments we recognise that we have not performed these duties. When we consider the Sins Forbidden in the Ten Commandments we must admit that we are guilty. We are guilty lawbreakers and have no hope of being saved by perfectly obeying God's Ten Commandments.

To those who recognise their desperate plight, the Word of God comes: ***“Ho! Everyone who thirsts come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me and eat what is good and let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear and come to Me. Hear and your soul shall live; and I will make an everlasting Covenant with you...”*** Isaiah 55:1-3

GOOD NEWS

On the first Christmas evening angels from Heaven declared to the shepherds outside Bethlehem: ***“I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people!”*** Luke 2:10

The Gospel is Good News to those who recognise that they have broken the Laws of the living God. God sheds His grace upon those who acknowledge that they are lawbreakers and criminals who stand guilty before the Throne of our Holy God. God welcomes us, who once hated and rebelled against Him, forgives all our sins and adopts us into His family as sons and daughters. And then He commissions us as His servants and soldiers to serve His Kingdom in the fight of Faith. If we will but bow before Him and confess our crimes of rebellion then His gift of Eternal Life is ours.

ROOT AND FRUIT

No good works of man have ever been enough to cover the wickedness and rebellion of depraved man. Only the Blood sacrifice of Jesus Christ has been enough to pay for our Atonement. It is absolutely imperative that we get the order of things right. It is after we have trusted in Christ alone for our salvation that we are redeemed and adopted into the family of God. It is then and only then that we are able to obey the Commandments, not in order to be saved, but because we are saved.

In other religions, good works are done *“in order to.”* Man endeavours to reach up to and find God. However only in Christianity are good works a *“therefore.”* Religion is us reaching up to God. Christianity is God reaching down to us, in and through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Before the First Commandment was given in Exodus 20, God declared: **“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...”** Exodus 20:2-3

Salvation precedes adherence to the Law. It is only once we have experienced God’s gracious Redemption that we are able, in any meaningful way, to obey His Commandments. Once we have yielded and surrendered our lives wholeheartedly to Christ, experiencing His cleansing and transforming power then we are able to see the Law of God search our hearts, inspire our souls, direct our strength and rule our minds on the Highway of Holiness. With the Holy Spirit within us and guiding us, God’s moral Law becomes our standard, guide and protection. As we seek to love God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength trusting in His power alone, we find the truth of what Jesus taught: **“If you love Me, keep My Commandments.”** John 14:15
“Love so amazing, so Divine, demands my soul, my life, my all.”

WORDS, WORKS AND WORSHIP

In the ten short precepts of the Ten Commandments, we find all moral virtues, the full compass of our accountability to our Creator and responsibility towards creation. The essence of all God’s just decrees and statutes is distilled and summarised in the Ten Commandments. God requires the total obedience of each person to all the implications of His Law. The Westminster Larger Catechism (Q. 99) teaches: *“The Law binds the whole man...unto obedience forever”; “It is spiritual and so reaches the understanding, will, affections and all other powers of the soul as well as the words, works and gestures.” “...Where a duty is commanded, the contrary sin is forbidden; and where a sin is forbidden, the contrary duty is commanded.”* Do not bow down to idols - worship God alone - in spirit and in truth. Do not commit murder - protect innocent life. Do not steal - work hard and be generous. Do not bear false witness - stand for the truth. Do not covet - seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness.

REJECTING LEGALISM

In studying The Ten Commandments, it is also necessary for us to consider the issue of legalism. Legalism is a distortion of obedience that twists motives and purpose, seeing good deeds as a way to earn God’s favour. Legalism can produce arrogant and contemptuous adherents concealing self-seeking and pride and squeezing out all humility, kindness and compassion.

The legalists amongst the pharisees thought that, because they were descendants of Abraham, they were guaranteed approval by God. They formalized daily observance of the Law, down to the minutest details. Yet they avoided the heart of the Law. Jesus condemned the hypocrisy of the pharisees whose outward show hid inner corruption. They were a brood of

vipers, whitewashed tombs full of dead man's bones and corruption. The pharisees, whom Jesus condemned, presented themselves as faithful keepers of the Law of Moses. Yet, in emphasising minor details they neglected what mattered most. Their elaborate and misguided interpretations of the Law denied its true spirit and nature. They substituted human tradition for God's authoritative Law, binding consciences where God had left them free. They were hypocritical, condemning others and acting for human approval. (Matthew 23:23-24; Matthew 15:3-9; 23:16-24; Mark 2:16; 3:6; 7:1-8; Luke 20:45-47; Matthew 6:1-8; 23:2-7). Legalism attempts to place man's traditions on the same level as God's Law.

The Judaizers, whom Paul opposed, were legalists who taught that one could only be saved through keeping the Law. They taught Christian believers that they must first become Jews before they could become Christians. The Judaizers claimed that circumcision and Saturday Sabbath observance were essential to Salvation. The Judaizers denied the sufficiency of Christ, requiring adherence to the Jewish ceremonial law, rituals and calendar as requirements for Salvation. The Apostle Paul wrote against the heresies of the Judaizers in Galatians and Colossians, warning that their legalism corrupted the way of Salvation, bringing unbearable burdens upon God's people.

“Therefore the Law was our Tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.” Galatians 3:24

THE EASY YOKE AND LIGHT BURDEN

Our Lord Jesus Christ taught: ***“Come to Me, all you who labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly of heart and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”*** Matthew 11:28-30

HE GIVES MORE GRACE

“He gives more grace when the burdens grow greater

He sends more strength when the labours increase

To added afflictions He adds His mercy

To multiplied trials His multiplied peace.

“When we have exhausted our store of endurance,

When our strength has failed before the day is half done

When we reach the end of our hoarded resources

Our Father's full giving has only begun.

“His love has no limit, His grace has no measure,

His power no boundary known unto men

For out of His infinite riches in Jesus

He gives and gives and gives again.”

AMAZING GRACE

John Newton, the one-time slave trader turned pastor and author of the famous Hymn *Amazing Grace* wrote: "I am not what I might be, I am not what I ought to be, I am not what I wish to be, I am not what I hope to be; but I thank God I am not what I once was and I can say with the great Apostle, 'by the grace of God I am what I am.'"

**"O, to grace how great a debtor
Daily I am constrained to be!
And let that grace, Lord, like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Take my heart, O, take and seal it,
Seal it from Thy courts above!"**

"Grace...turns counters into gold, pebbles into pearls, sickness into health, weakness into strength and wants into abundance." Thomas Brooks

COME TO THE CROSS OF CHRIST

The Law says 'do'; the Gospel says **Done!**

The Law says 'go'; the Gospel says **Come!**

"Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be white as snow." Isaiah 1:18

"I have loved you with an everlasting love." Jeremiah 31:3

Nothing shall be able to separate us from the love of God (Romans 8:39).

"Who shall bring a charge against God's elect?" Romans 8:33

RESPOND TO THE WORD OF GOD

You have heard the Law of God. You have heard the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. Have you confessed your sins and repented of your rebellion against Almighty God? Repent and be converted. **"Seek the Lord while He may be found, call upon Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return to the Lord and He will have mercy on him; and to our God, for He will freely pardon."** Isaiah 55:6-7

"Love so amazing, so Divine, shall have my life, my soul, my all!"

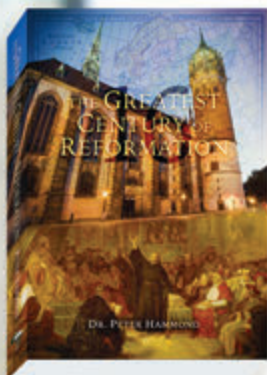
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Paul preaching to the Thessalonians.

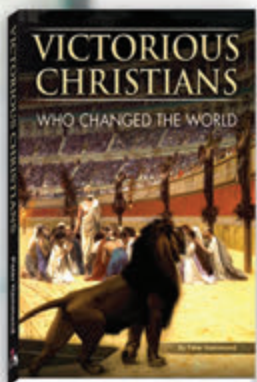
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Other Resources Available

Books

A Christian History of Africa
Angola By the Back Door
Answering Skeptics *
Biblical Faith and Modern Counterfeits *
Biblical Principles for Africa (Also in Afrikaans and French) *
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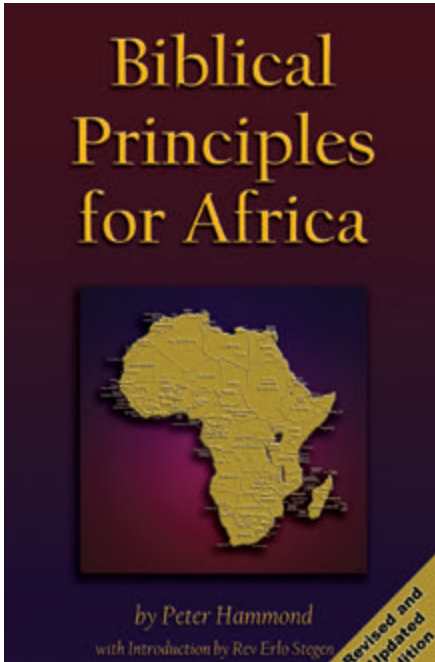


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Rev. Timothy Humphrey, Intensive Evangelism Network, Port Harcourt, Nigeria.

About the Author

Dr. Peter Hammond is a Missionary who has pioneered Evangelistic outreaches in the war zones of Mozambique, Angola and Sudan. Often travelling by off road motorbike, Dr. Hammond travelled hundreds of thousands of kilometres to deliver Bibles to persecuted Christians in Africa and Eastern Europe. In the course of his missionary activities Peter has been ambushed, come under aerial and artillery bombardments, been stabbed, shot at, beaten by mobs, arrested and imprisoned. On some missions he has flown far behind enemy lines to the beleaguered Nuba Mountains in Central Sudan with tonnes of Bibles, books and relief aid. He then walked throughout the war devastated Nuba Mountains showing the *Jesus* film in Arabic, proclaiming the Gospel, training pastors and evading enemy patrols.

Rev. Peter Hammond is the Founder and Director of Frontline Fellowship, Africa Christian Action and of The Reformation Society. He is the author of *Victorious Christians - Who Changed the World*, *Answering Skeptics*, *Practical Discipleship*, *Faith in Action*, *Faith Under Fire in Sudan*, *Holocaust in Rwanda*, *the Great Commission Manual*, *Putting Feet to Your Faith*, *In the Killing Fields of Mozambique*, *The Discipleship Handbook*, *Slavery, Terrorism and Islam*, *The Greatest Century of Missions*, *The Greatest Century of Reformation* and *The Power of Prayer Handbook*. He has co-authored or contributed to: *Fight for Life*, *Make a Difference*, *The Pink Agenda*, *South Africa - Renaissance or Reformation?* and *Reforming our Families*. He is the Editor of both *Frontline Fellowship News* and *Christian Action*.

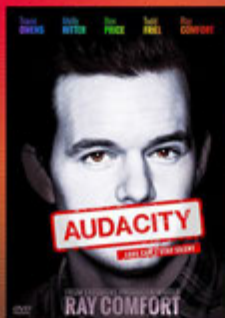
For over 35 years, Peter has been dedicated to assisting persecuted Christians and working for Reformation and Revival in Africa. Peter has developed the Biblical Worldview Seminar and Great Commission Course to mobilise Christians to comprehensively apply the Lordship of Christ to all areas of life and to effectively fulfil the Great Commission.

Peter was born in Cape Town (in 1960) and brought up in Bulawayo (in what was then war torn Rhodesia - now Zimbabwe). He was converted to Christ in 1977, worked in Scripture Union and Hospital Christian Fellowship, served in the South African Defence Force and studied at Baptist Theological College, Cape Town. He earned a Doctorate in Missiology and has been Awarded an Honorary Doctorate in Divinity. Peter is married to Lenora (whose missionary parents Rev. Bill and Harriett Bathman, pioneered missionary work, especially into Eastern Europe, for over 67 years). Peter and Lenora have been blessed with four children: Andrea, Daniela, Christopher and Calvin, whom they have homeschooled. They now also have been blessed with their first grandchild: Jeremy.

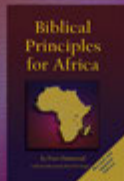
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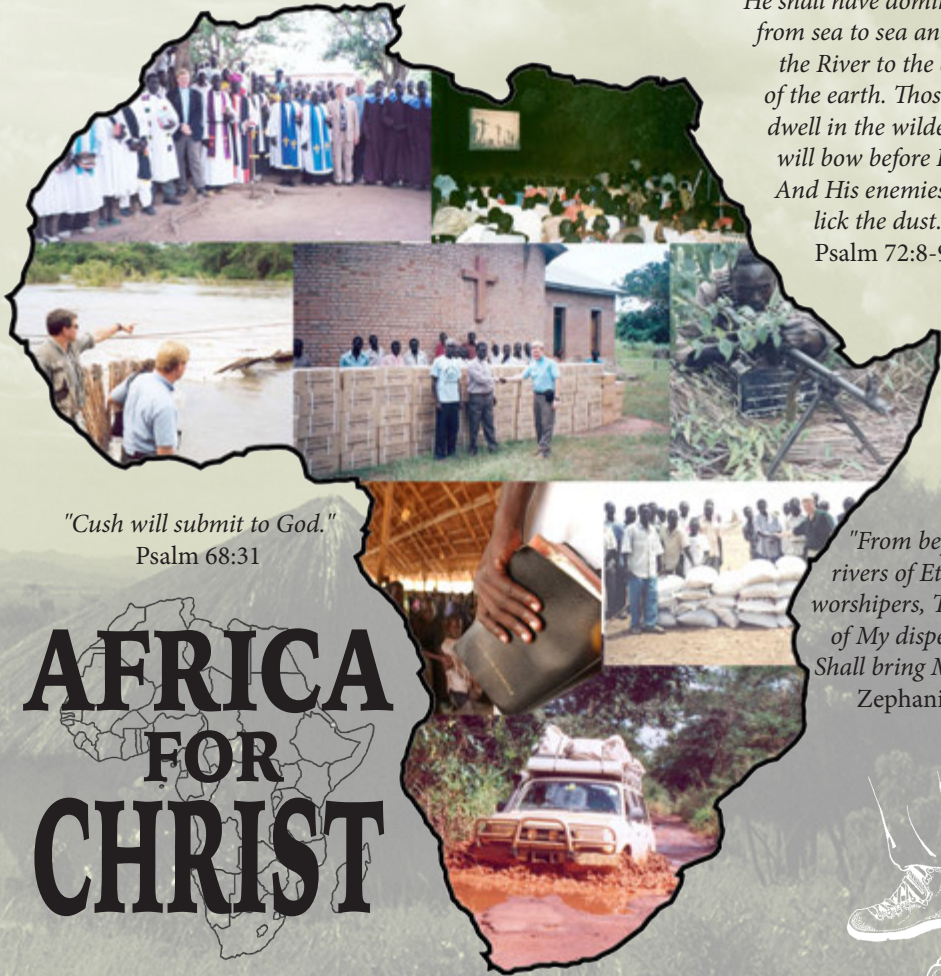


*"All authority has been given to Me in Heaven and on earth.
Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations
teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded ..."*

Matthew 28:18-20

*"...The harvest truly is plentiful,
but the labourers are few. Therefore,
pray the Lord of the harvest to send out
labourers into His harvest." Matthew 9:37-38*

PRAY FOR AFRICA



*"He shall have dominion also
from sea to sea and from
the River to the ends
of the earth. Those who
dwell in the wilderness
will bow before Him,
And His enemies will
lick the dust."
Psalms 72:8-9*

*"Cush will submit to God."
Psalms 68:31*

*"From beyond the
rivers of Ethiopia, My
worshippers, The daughter
of My dispersed ones,
Shall bring My offering."
Zephaniah 3:10*

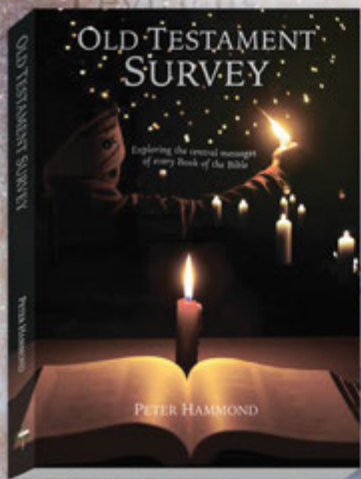
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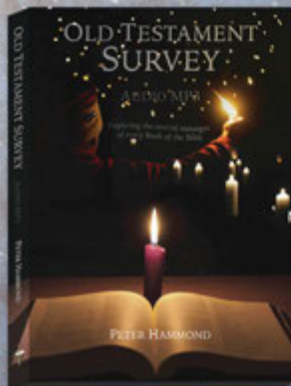
*"That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those
in Heaven and of those on earth and of those under the earth and that every
tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."
Philippians 2:10-11*

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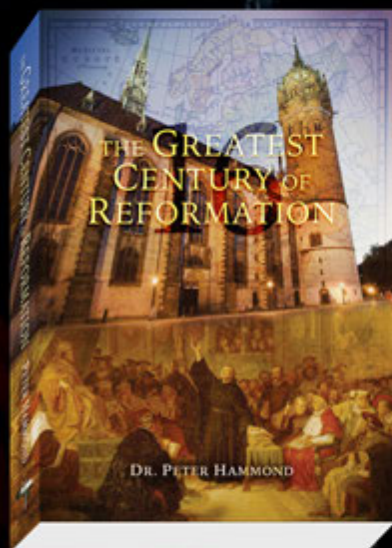
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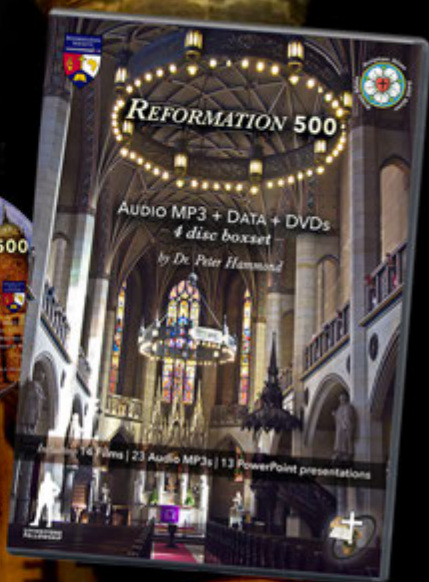
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