

### Part III: Gratitude: The Ten Commandments: LORD'S DAY 34

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#### Q & A 92: What does the Lord say in his law?

God spoke all these words:

*"The First Commandment"*

I am the Lord your God,  
who brought you out of Egypt,  
out of the land of slavery.  
You shall have no other gods before me.

*"The Second Commandment"*

You shall not make for yourself an idol  
in the form of anything in heaven above  
or on the earth beneath  
or in the waters below.  
You shall not bow down to them or worship them;  
for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God,  
punishing the children for the sin of the fathers  
to the third and fourth generation  
of those who hate me,  
but showing love to a thousand generations of those  
who love me and keep my commandments.

*"The Third Commandment"*

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God,  
for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless  
who misuses his name.

*"The Fourth Commandment"*

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.  
Six days you shall labor and do all your work,  
but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.  
On it you shall not do any work,  
neither you, nor your son or daughter,  
nor your manservant or maidservant,  
nor your animals,  
nor the alien within your gates.  
For in six days the Lord made  
the heavens and the earth, the sea,  
and all that is in them,  
but he rested on the seventh day.  
Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day

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and made it holy.

*"The Fifth Commandment"*

Honor your father and your mother,  
so that you may live long  
in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

*"The Sixth Commandment"*

You shall not murder.

*"The Seventh Commandment"*

You shall not commit adultery.

*"The Eighth Commandment"*

You shall not steal.

*"The Ninth Commandment"*

You shall not give false testimony  
against your neighbor.

*"The Tenth Commandment"*

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.  
You shall not covet your neighbor's wife,  
or his manservant or maidservant,  
his ox or donkey,  
or anything that belongs to your neighbor.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ex. 20:1-17; Deut. 5:6-21

## **Q & A 93: How are these commandments divided?**

Into two tables.

The first has four commandments,  
teaching us what our relation to God should be.

The second has six commandments,  
teaching us what we owe our neighbor.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 22:37-39

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## Q & A 94: What does the Lord require in the first commandment?

That I, not wanting to endanger my very salvation,  
avoid and shun  
all idolatry,<sup>1</sup> magic, superstitious rites,<sup>2</sup>  
and prayer to saints or to other creatures.<sup>3</sup>

That I sincerely acknowledge the only true God,<sup>4</sup>  
trust him alone,<sup>5</sup>  
look to him for every good thing<sup>6</sup>  
humbly<sup>7</sup> and patiently,<sup>8</sup>  
love him,<sup>9</sup> fear him,<sup>10</sup> and honor him<sup>11</sup>  
with all my heart.

In short,  
that I give up anything  
rather than go against his will in any way.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 6:9-10; 10:5-14; 1 John 5:21

<sup>2</sup> Lev. 19:31; Deut. 18:9-12

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 4:10; Rev. 19:10; 22:8-9

<sup>4</sup> John 17:3

<sup>5</sup> Jer. 17:5, 7

<sup>6</sup> Ps. 104:27-28; James 1:17

<sup>7</sup> 1 Pet. 5:5-6

<sup>8</sup> Col. 1:11; Heb. 10:36

<sup>9</sup> Matt. 22:37 (Deut. 6:5)

<sup>10</sup> Prov. 9:10; 1 Pet. 1:17

<sup>11</sup> Matt. 4:10 (Deut. 6:13)

<sup>12</sup> Matt. 5:29-30; 10:37-39

## Q & A 95: What is idolatry?

Idolatry is  
having or inventing something in which one trusts  
in place of or alongside of the only true God,  
who has revealed himself in his Word.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Chron. 16:26; Gal. 4:8-9; Eph. 5:5; Phil. 3:19

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#### Q & A 96: What is God's will for us in the second commandment?

That we in no way make any image of God<sup>1</sup>  
nor worship him in any other way  
than he has commanded in his Word.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. 4:15-19; Isa. 40:18-25; Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:22-23

<sup>2</sup> Lev. 10:1-7; 1 Sam. 15:22-23; John 4:23-24

#### Q & A 97: May we then not make any image at all?

God can not and may not  
be visibly portrayed in any way.

Although creatures may be portrayed,  
yet God forbids making or having such images  
if one's intention is to worship them  
or to serve God through them.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ex. 34:13-14, 17; 2 Kings 18:4-5

#### Q & A 98: But may not images be permitted in the churches as teaching aids for the unlearned?

No, we shouldn't try to be wiser than God.  
He wants his people instructed  
by the living preaching of his Word – <sup>1</sup>  
not by idols that cannot even talk.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rom. 10:14-15, 17; 2 Tim. 3:16-17; 2 Pet. 1:19

<sup>2</sup> Jer. 10:8; Hab. 2:18-20

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#### Q & A 99: What is God's will for us in the third commandment?

That we neither blaspheme nor misuse the name of God  
by cursing,<sup>1</sup> perjury,<sup>2</sup> or unnecessary oaths,<sup>3</sup>  
nor share in such horrible sins  
by being silent bystanders.<sup>4</sup>

In a word, it requires  
that we use the holy name of God  
only with reverence and awe,<sup>5</sup>  
so that we may properly  
confess him,<sup>6</sup>  
pray to him,<sup>7</sup>  
and praise him in everything we do and say.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lev. 24:10-17

<sup>2</sup> Lev. 19:12

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 5:37; James 5:12

<sup>4</sup> Lev. 5:1; Prov. 29:24

<sup>5</sup> Ps. 99:1-5; Jer. 4:2

<sup>6</sup> Matt. 10:32-33; Rom. 10:9-10

<sup>7</sup> Ps. 50:14-15; 1 Tim. 2:8

<sup>8</sup> Col. 3:17

#### Q & A 100: Is blasphemy of God's name by swearing and cursing really such serious sin that God is angry also with those who do not do all they can to help prevent it and forbid it?

Yes, indeed.<sup>1</sup>

No sin is greater,  
no sin makes God more angry  
than blaspheming his name.

That is why he commanded the death penalty for it.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lev. 5:1

<sup>2</sup> Lev. 24:10-17

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#### **Q & A 101: But may we swear an oath in God's name if we do it reverently?**

Yes, when the government demands it,  
or when necessity requires it,  
in order to maintain and promote truth and trustworthiness  
for God's glory and our neighbor's good.

Such oaths are approved in God's Word<sup>1</sup>  
and were rightly used by Old and New Testament believers.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. 6:13; 10:20; Jer. 4:1-2; Heb. 6:16

<sup>2</sup> Gen. 21:24; Josh. 9:15; 1 Kings 1:29-30; Rom. 1:9; 2 Cor. 1:23

#### **Q & A 102: May we swear by saints or other creatures?**

No.

A legitimate oath means calling upon God  
as the one who knows my heart  
to witness to my truthfulness  
and to punish me if I swear falsely.<sup>1</sup>  
No creature is worthy of such honor.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Rom. 9:1; 2 Cor. 1:23

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 5:34-37; 23:16-22; James 5:12

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### Q & A 103: What is God's will for you in the fourth commandment?

First,

that the gospel ministry and education for it be maintained,<sup>1</sup>  
and that, especially on the festive day of rest,  
I regularly attend the assembly of God's people<sup>2</sup>  
to learn what God's Word teaches,<sup>3</sup>  
to participate in the sacraments,<sup>4</sup>  
to pray to God publicly,<sup>5</sup>  
and to bring Christian offerings for the poor.<sup>6</sup>

Second,

that every day of my life  
I rest from my evil ways,  
let the Lord work in me through his Spirit,  
and so begin already in this life  
the eternal Sabbath.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Deut. 6:4-9, 20-25; 1 Cor. 9:13-14; 2 Tim. 2:2; 3:13-17; Tit. 1:5

<sup>2</sup> Deut. 12:5-12; Ps. 40:9-10; 68:26; Acts 2:42-47; Heb. 10:23-25

<sup>3</sup> Rom. 10:14-17; 1 Cor. 14:31-32; 1 Tim. 4:13

<sup>4</sup> 1 Cor. 11:23-25

<sup>5</sup> Col. 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:1

<sup>6</sup> Ps. 50:14; 1 Cor. 16:2; 2 Cor. 8 & 9

<sup>7</sup> Isa. 66:23; Heb. 4:9-11

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### Q & A 104: What is God's will for you in the fifth commandment?

That I honor, love, and be loyal to  
my father and mother  
and all those in authority over me;  
that I obey and submit to them, as is proper,  
when they correct and punish me;<sup>1</sup>  
and also that I be patient with their failings –<sup>2</sup>  
for through them God chooses to rule us.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ex. 21:17; Prov. 1:8; 4:1; Rom. 13:1-2; Eph. 5:21-22; 6:1-9; Col. 3:18-4:1

<sup>2</sup> Prov. 20:20; 23:22; 1 Pet. 2:18

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 22:21; Rom. 13:1-8; Eph. 6:1-9; Col. 3:18-21

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#### Q & A 105: What is God's will for you in the sixth commandment?

I am not to belittle, insult, hate, or kill my neighbor –  
not by my thoughts, my words, my look or gesture,  
and certainly not by actual deeds –  
and I am not to be party to this in others;<sup>1</sup>  
rather, I am to put away all desire for revenge.<sup>2</sup>

I am not to harm or recklessly endanger myself either.<sup>3</sup>

Prevention of murder is also why  
government is armed with the sword.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gen. 9:6; Lev. 19:17-18; Matt. 5:21-22; 26:52

<sup>2</sup> Prov. 25:21-22; Matt. 18:35; Rom. 12:19; Eph. 4:26

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 4:7; 26:52; Rom. 13:11-14

<sup>4</sup> Gen. 9:6; Ex. 21:14; Rom. 13:4

#### Q & A 106: Does this commandment refer only to killing?

By forbidding murder God teaches us  
that he hates the root of murder:  
envy, hatred, anger, vindictiveness.<sup>1</sup>

In God's sight all such are murder.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Prov. 14:30; Rom. 1:29; 12:19; Gal. 5:19-21; 1 John 2:9-11

<sup>2</sup> 1 John 3:15

#### Q & A 107: Is it enough then that we do not kill our neighbor in any such way?

No.

By condemning envy, hatred, and anger  
God tells us  
to love our neighbors as ourselves,<sup>1</sup>  
to be patient, peace-loving, gentle,  
merciful, and friendly to them,<sup>2</sup>  
to protect them from harm as much as we can,  
and to do good even to our enemies.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matt. 7:12; 22:39; Rom. 12:10

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 5:3-12; Luke 6:36; Rom. 12:10, 18; Gal. 6:1-2; Eph. 4:2; Col. 3:12; 1 Pet. 3:8

<sup>3</sup> Ex. 23:4-5; Matt. 5:44-45; Rom. 12:20-21 (Prov. 25:21-22)

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#### Q & A 108: What is God's will for us in the seventh commandment?

God condemns all unchastity.<sup>1</sup>

We should therefore thoroughly detest it<sup>2</sup>  
and, married or single,  
live decent and chaste lives.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Lev. 18:30; Eph. 5:3-5

<sup>2</sup> Jude 22-23

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. 7:1-9; 1 Thess. 4:3-8; Heb. 13:4

#### Q & A 109: Does God, in this commandment, forbid only such scandalous sins as adultery?

We are temples of the Holy Spirit, body and soul,  
and God wants both to be kept clean and holy.

That is why he forbids

everything which incites unchastity,<sup>1</sup>  
whether it be actions, looks, talk, thoughts, or desires.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> 1 Cor. 15:33; Eph. 5:18

<sup>2</sup> Matt. 5:27-29; 1 Cor. 6:18-20; Eph. 5:3-4

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#### Q & A 110: What does God forbid in the eighth commandment?

He forbids not only outright theft and robbery,  
punishable by law.<sup>1</sup>

But in God's sight theft also includes  
cheating and swindling our neighbor  
by schemes made to appear legitimate,<sup>2</sup>  
such as:

- inaccurate measurements of weight, size, or volume;
- fraudulent merchandising;
- counterfeit money;
- excessive interest;
- or any other means forbidden by God.<sup>3</sup>

In addition he forbids all greed<sup>4</sup>  
and pointless squandering of his gifts.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ex. 22:1; 1 Cor. 5:9-10; 6:9-10

<sup>2</sup> Mic. 6:9-11; Luke 3:14; James 5:1-6

<sup>3</sup> Deut. 25:13-16; Ps. 15:5; Prov. 11:1; 12:22; Ezek. 45:9-12; Luke 6:35

<sup>4</sup> Luke 12:15; Eph. 5:5

<sup>5</sup> Prov. 21:20; 23:20-21; Luke 16:10-13

#### Q & A 111: What does God require of you in this commandment?

That I do whatever I can  
for my neighbor's good,  
that I treat others  
as I would like them to treat me,  
and that I work faithfully  
so that I may share with those in need.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Isa. 58:5-10; Matt. 7:12; Gal. 6:9-10; Eph. 4:28

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#### Q & A 112: What is God's will for you in the ninth commandment?

God's will is that I  
never give false testimony against anyone,  
twist no one's words,  
not gossip or slander,  
nor join in condemning anyone  
without a hearing or without a just cause.<sup>1</sup>

Rather, in court and everywhere else,  
I should avoid lying and deceit of every kind;  
these are devices the devil himself uses,  
and they would call down on me God's intense anger.<sup>2</sup>

I should love the truth,  
speak it candidly,  
and openly acknowledge it.<sup>3</sup>

And I should do what I can  
to guard and advance my neighbor's good name.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 15; Prov. 19:5; Matt. 7:1; Luke 6:37; Rom. 1:28-32

<sup>2</sup> Lev. 19:11-12; Prov. 12:22; 13:5; John 8:44; Rev. 21:8

<sup>3</sup> 1 Cor. 13:6; Eph. 4:25

<sup>4</sup> 1 Pet. 3:8-9; 4:8

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#### **Q & A 113: What is God's will for you in the tenth commandment?**

That not even the slightest thought or desire  
contrary to any one of God's commandments  
should ever arise in my heart.

Rather, with all my heart  
I should always hate sin  
and take pleasure in whatever is right.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 19:7-14; 139:23-24; Rom. 7:7-8

#### **Q & A 114: But can those converted to God obey these commandments perfectly?**

No.  
In this life even the holiest  
have only a small beginning of this obedience.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, with all seriousness of purpose,  
they do begin to live  
according to all, not only some,  
of God's commandments.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Eccles. 7:20; Rom. 7:14-15; 1 Cor. 13:9; 1 John 1:8-10

<sup>2</sup> Ps. 1:1-2; Rom. 7:22-25; Phil. 3:12-16

#### **Q & A 115: No one in this life can obey the Ten Commandments perfectly: why then does God want them preached so pointedly?**

First, so that the longer we live  
the more we may come to know our sinfulness  
and the more eagerly look to Christ  
for forgiveness of sins and righteousness.<sup>1</sup>

Second, so that,  
while praying to God for the grace of the Holy Spirit,  
we may never stop striving  
to be renewed more and more after God's image,  
until after this life we reach our goal:  
perfection.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 32:5; Rom. 3:19-26; 7:7, 24-25; 1 John 1:9

<sup>2</sup> 1 Cor. 9:24; Phil. 3:12-14; 1 John 3:1-3