



KNOW YOUR FAITH

Suppose you and your family are out driving, and you saw someone moving toward you on the wrong side of the street? What if they didn't stop at the stop sign or the crosswalk? We have rules about transportation so that everyone knows to stay on the right side of the street and take turns at intersections to avoid accidents and stay safe. We have rules to follow when we play games so that everyone has a fair and equal chance to do well and have fun. We have rules at home to keep us safe and happy, and when someone breaks the rules, it usually ends badly.

God knew that the Israelites needed guidance to keep them safe and happy in the Promised Land, so he gave them rules to follow. Then, he made a covenant, or an agreement, with them that if they followed the rules well and became His people, He would be their God and keep them safe and content.

Can you recite all the Ten Commandments? Let's review them today:

I (1.) I am the Lord your God; you shall not have strange gods before Me.

This is the very first one and for a good reason! God is our creator and Lord, and everything we are, and have, and will ever become He provides for us, so we owe Him our respect and allegiance! We must not be like the Israelites who got bored and tired of waiting for Moses to come down from Mount Sinai and decided to fashion another god for themselves. I know what you're thinking...you wouldn't melt down your jewelry and make a golden calf from it as they did! No, but you could make a decision someday to honor other things first, before the One true God. Sadly, people do it all the time. Some people choose not to attend Divine Liturgy and go to work instead so that money becomes their god. Some go along with the crowd when they commit a sin, so popularity becomes their god. Some people decide to treat others shamefully to feel superior rather than follow Christ's command to love one another. Power becomes their god. It is essential to always put God and His will first in your life.

II (2). You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain.

Have you heard people do this? It's so sad to hear it, yet it has become so familiar that it doesn't even surprise us anymore. The fact is that God commanded that we only say His name with the love and respect that He deserves, never out of anger or exasperation. His name is holy and sacred and should be set apart from all other speech.

III (3). Remember to keep holy the Lord's day.

When God created the universe, He did so in six days, and on the seventh day, God rested. God created humans with the need for relaxing and recharging, so He gave us this example to follow. He must have thought this was very

important because He commanded it! We keep Sunday holy by reserving it for worship, family, and other activities that refresh and renew our souls.

IV (4). Honor your father and your mother.

God brings every soul into existence through their parents because He wants us all to know what it is like to love and be loved. He IS love! He is family; Father, Son, and Spirit, and we are made in His image and likeness. Because our parents love and care for us in such a profound way, they mirror God's love, and for that reason, children of all ages owe them respect.

V (5). You shall not kill.

Of course, this seems quite obvious. Killing is wrong, but do you understand that there are many ways one can take away life? For example, when you discourage others, you kill their spirit. When you criticize their faults openly, you destroy their reputation. Therefore, one must be careful not to take the life or vitality of any living thing frivolously because only God gives life, and it belongs to Him alone to give or to take.

VI (6). You shall not commit adultery.

This commandment instructs us to take the mystery of marriage seriously. When a couple is crowned in marriage, they vow to God that they will love each other always and put the other in first place in their hearts. They may not marry or live together as if they were married to anyone else. To do so is a grave sin.

VII (7.) You shall not steal.

Jesus clarifies this when he tells us that if you seek to put God first in your life, you will see that you have everything else you need. We may not take anything that does not rightfully belong to us.

VIII (8). You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

This means you should not lie. Jesus tells us that God is truth; he can never, ever lie. In fact, He refers to the enemy, the devil, as the Father of Lies! So to lie would put us in direct opposition to God and all He stands for!

IX (9). You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.

This commandment takes the sixth commandment one step further. To covet means to want something so badly that you don't want anyone else to have it. Not only should a person not commit adultery, but he should not even think about it! It is wrong to want to marry someone who was given to someone else by the mystery of marriage.

X (10). You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

People are ALWAYS more important than things. This commandment takes the seventh commandment even further by explaining that not only is it wrong to steal, but it is wrong to wish you had something that belongs to someone else. Once again, there should be no need to worry about things. If we trust in God and live according to His ways, He will see that we have everything we need!

- written by Lynne Wardach