

The Law of God

A Class on Understanding and Loving God's Law Today

Summaries of the Law

The Two Greatest Commandments: Love

And one of the scribes came up and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that he answered them well, asked him, "Which commandment is the most important of all?" Jesus answered, "The most important is, 'Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' [Deut 6:4-5]. The second is this: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these" [Lev 19:18]. (Mk 12:28-31)

- A. God
- B. Neighbor

The Second Great Commandment Summarized as a Chiasm: Love

X. Owe no one anything, except to *love each other*, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law.

Y. For the commandments, "You shall not commit *adultery*, You shall not *murder*, You shall not *steal*, You shall not *covet*," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word:

X'. "You shall *love your neighbor* as yourself." Love does *no wrong to a neighbor*; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Rom 13:8-10)

- A. Love
- B. No Adultery, no murder, no stealing, no coveting, all other commandments

Love of Neighbor Fleshed Out

You know the commandments: 'Do not commit *adultery*, Do not *murder*, Do not *steal*, Do not bear *false witness*, *Honor your father and mother*.'" (Luke 18:20)

OT: Love as the Heart of the Law

- Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall *love the Lord your God* with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (Deut 6:4-5)
- You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall *love your neighbor* as yourself: I am the Lord. (Lev 19:18)

NT: Love of God = Love of Neighbor

- If you *love* me, you will keep my commandments. (John 14:15)
- For this is the *love* of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome. (1Jn 5:3)
- Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who *loves* me. And he who *loves* me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him." (John 14:21)
- If you *keep my commandments*, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. (John 15:10)

NT: Love of Neighbor

- “This is my commandment, that you *love one another* as I have loved you. (John 15:12)
- For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall *love your neighbor* as yourself." (Gal. 5:14)
- Owe no one anything, except to *love each other*, for the one who *loves* another has fulfilled the law ... *Love* does no wrong to a *neighbor*; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (Rom 13:8, 10)
- *Bear one another's burdens*, and so fulfill the law of Christ. (Gal 6:2)
- So whatever you wish that others would do to you, *do also to them*, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matt 7:12)

Other Summaries and Ideas

ONE:

- Everyone who makes a practice of sinning also practices lawlessness; *sin is lawlessness*. (1Jn 3:4)
- In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see *your good works* and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matt 5:16)

THREE:

- For if you will be careful to do all this commandment that I command you to do, *loving* the Lord your God, *walking* in all his ways, and *holding* fast to him... (Deut 11:22)
- He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to *do justice*, and to *love kindness*, and to *walk humbly* with your God? (Micah 6:8)

FIVE: “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to *fear the Lord* your God, to *walk in all his ways*, to *love him*, to *serve the Lord* your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to *keep the commandments* and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good? (Deut 10:12-13)

EIGHT: Finally, brothers, whatever is *true*, whatever is *honorable*, whatever is *just*, whatever is *pure*, whatever is *lovely*, whatever is *commendable*, if there is any *excellence*, if there is anything *worthy of praise*, think about these things. (Php 4:8)

NINE: But the fruit of the Spirit is *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control*. (Gal 5:22-23)

TEN: The law is not laid down for the just but for the *lawless and disobedient*, for the *ungodly and sinners*, for the *unholy and profane*, for those who *strike their fathers and mothers*, for *murderers*, the *sexually immoral*, men who practice homosexuality, *enslavers, liars, perjurers*, and *whatever else* is contrary to sound doctrine. (1Tim 1:9-10)

The Ten Commandments

Introduction

- He [Moses] wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the *Ten Commandments*. (Ex 34:28)
- ... that is, *the Ten Commandments*, and he wrote them on two tablets of stone. And the LORD commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and rules, that you might do them in the land that you are going over to possess. (Deut 4:13-14)
- And he wrote on the tablets, in the same writing as before, *the Ten Commandments* that the LORD had spoken to you on the mountain out of the midst of the fire on the day of the assembly. And the LORD gave them to me. (Deut 10:4)

Note: "Commandments" is the word *debar* (Heb) and *Logos* (Gk). More literally it is "words." Thus, you have varying translations such as ten *matters* (YLT), *sayings* (LXX English), *words of the covenant* (Vul), *rules* (BBE), and *commandments* (many).

These Ten are laid out in various places in the Scripture. We have just seen one in **1 Timothy 1:9-10**, which follows the basic outline of the Ten as traditionally understood:

Three Lists of 1 Tim 1:9-10 Matched to the Ten Commandments		
Luke Timothy Johnson	Unnamed Online Article:	Richard Barcellos
1. & 2. No gods/no idols: godless, sinners	1. No gods: Lawless, disobedient	Intro: Lawless, insubordinate
3. Name in vain: unholy, profane	2. No idols: godless, sinners	1. No gods: godless
4.	3. Name in vain: profane (out of order)	2. No idols: sinners
5.	4. Sabbath: unholy	3. Name in vain: unholy
6. Murders: kills father, mother, murderers	5. Parents: strike fathers, mothers	4. Sabbath: profane
7. Adultery: fornicaters, sexual perverts	6. Murders: murderers	5. Parents: strike fathers, mothers
8. Stealing: slave dealers	7. Adultery: fornicaters, sexual perverts	6. Murders: murderers
9. False Witness: liars, perjurers	8. Stealing: slave dealers	7. Adultery: fornicaters, sexual perverts
10. Coveting (assumed): anything else.	9. False Witness: liars, perjurers	8. Stealing: slave dealers
	10. Coveting (assumed): anything else.	9. False Witness: liars, perjurers
		10. Coveting (assumed): anything else.

The OT, by its own admission, contains three lists, and I would argue that we find them in a fourth place as well. All are found in the Pentateuch.

Ten Words in Exodus:

B 20:1 And God spoke all these words, saying: **{S}** **20:2** I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. *Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.* **20:3** *Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image*, nor any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; **20:4** thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate Me; **20:5** and showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments. **{S}** **20:6** Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. **{P}**
20:7 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. **20:8** Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; **20:9** but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the LORD thy God, in it thou shalt not do any manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; **20:10** for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested on the seventh day; wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. **{S}**
20:11 Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. **{S}** **20:12** Thou shalt not murder. **{S}** Thou shalt not commit adultery. **{S}** Thou shalt not steal. **{S}** Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour. **{S}** **20:13** Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house; **{S}** thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's. **{P}**

B 20:18 And the LORD said unto Moses: Thus thou shalt say unto the children of Israel: Ye yourselves have seen that I have talked with you from heaven. **20:19** *Ye shall not make with Me--gods of silver, or gods of gold, ye shall not make unto you.* **20:20** An altar of earth thou shalt make unto Me, and shalt sacrifice thereon thy burnt-offerings, and thy peace-offerings, thy sheep, and thine oxen; in every place where I cause My name to be mentioned I will come unto thee and bless thee. **20:21** And if thou make Me an altar of stone, thou shalt not build it of hewn stones; for if thou lift up thy tool upon it, thou hast profaned it. **20:22** Neither shalt thou go up by steps unto Mine altar, that thy nakedness be not uncovered thereon. **{P}**

In the Exodus text, you have the Ten all coming in one column (left) as a single block unit. This is because the words are oral, being heard with no ability to see the writing and study. It just comes all at once. Further, Exodus then begins to expound on the beginning of the Ten with the beginning of the Exodus legal code starting in Ex 20:18. This forms the matching B Column (right). This comes are part of the larger Unit (VII: Ex 18:1) and Row (4: Ex 19:20) in which the Exodus Ten are found.

The Exodus text is marked by two major paragraph divisions **{P}** which come after taking the name in Vain (20:6) and coveting anything (20:13). The first large division has two small divisions **{S}** after *God spoke all these words* (20:1) and *those who keep the commandments* (20:5). The second large division has seven smaller divisions after Sabbath (20:10), Parents (20:11), Murder, Adultery, Steal, False Witness (20:12), and Coveting the house (20:13). Clearly then, the ancient source for these divisions saw No Other Gods and Making Idols as one Word and Coveting the House and Wife (etc.) as two Words.

Ten Words in Deuteronomy:

1a

A 5:6 I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. **5:7** Thou shalt not make unto thee a graven image, even any manner of likeness, of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. **5:8** Thou shalt not bow down unto them, nor serve them; for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the third and upon the fourth generation of them that hate Me, **5:9** and showing mercy unto the thousandth generation of them that love Me and keep My commandments. {S}

B 5:10 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain. {S}

2a

A 5:16 Thou shalt not murder. {S}

B Neither shalt thou commit adultery. {S}

C Neither shalt thou steal. {S}

1b

A 5:11 Observe the sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD thy God commanded thee. **5:12** Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work; **5:13** but the seventh day is a sabbath unto the LORD thy God, in it thou shalt not do any manner of work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates; that thy man-servant and thy maid-servant may rest as well as thou. **5:14** And thou shalt remember that thou was a servant in the land of Egypt, and the LORD thy God brought thee out thence by a mighty hand and by an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day. {S}

B 5:15 Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God commanded thee; that thy days may be long, and that it may go well with thee, upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee. {S}

2b

A Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour. {S}

B 5:17 Neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's wife; {S}

C neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's house, his field, or his man-servant, or his maid-servant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour's. {S}

Changes in Deuteronomy from Exodus

Sabbath. Deuteronomy significantly changes the Sabbath Word. “Remember” (*zakar*) becomes “Observe” (*shamar*) in Deuteronomy. It adds the gloss, “As the LORD thy God commanded thee” (we have seen how “as the LORD thy God” binds these four into a single block). So this is significant. Most of all, it gives a totally different explanation for keeping the Sabbath. Rather than creation, the reason is the Egypt. We may observe something about this in the weave that cannot be present in Exodus. “Thou shalt remember that thou was a servant in *the land of Egypt*” in Deuteronomy’s Sabbath reason now parallels the beginning of the Ten Words in Deuteronomy, “I am the LORD thy God, who brought thee out of *the land of Egypt*.” This creates the first pair of Words.

Parents. Deuteronomy changes the Word about honoring parents by adding the explanation “that it may go well with thee,” and by adding the same gloss it did with the Sabbath Word: “as the LORD thy God commanded thee.” As it does not do this with any other Word, this creates a block (1b) of Sabbath and Parents. But this also now links the Parents with taking the Name in Vain via the same language that links all of row 1 together (“the LORD thy God”). This is not possible in the Exodus wording. So this creates our second pair of Words.

Bearing False Witness. Deuteronomy changes the word “false” from “*sheker*” (falsehood, deception) to “*shav*” (emptiness, vanity). *Sheker* is the same word in the Name Word for “vain.” “You shall not take the Name of the LORD your God in *vain*. You shall not bear *vain* witness against your neighbor. This moves the sin to something higher than just deception. For this is something you can do to God. Notice also that the pair here is “You shall not murder.” You can murder a neighbor that you would do this too.

Coveting the Wife. Deuteronomy changes the order of coveting. In the first instance, it begins with the wife rather than with Exodus’ “house.” Notice that this fourth pair is matched on the left column with adultery. You commit adultery against a neighbor’s wife whom you covet. This is not possible as a pairing in the Exodus order.

Coveting the House and Property. Deuteronomy now puts “house” where Exodus had “wife.” It further adds the word “field,” which is not in the Exodus commandment. Notice the changes that are made by comparing the two tables:

Exodus:	House							
	wife		man-servant	maid-servant	ox	donkey	anything	
Deuteronomy:	Wife							
	house	field	man-servant	maid-servant	ox	donkey	anything	

Using the ancient small paragraph markers of the Hebrew text, we can divide both lists into two sets of coveting. The first list is a single item, while the second list contains several. The change in Deuteronomy does something important. It moves from the wife (which pairs with adultery) to possessions. Curiously, the house, field, servants, animals, and other stuff are all things that you can steal. You shall not steal is thus the fifth and final pair of Deuteronomy.

A Prototype (10th-7th Cent. B.C.): The Valediction of Moses

Discovered in the late 1800s, and long thought to be a forgery, recent scholarship has decidedly proven that they are real documents. They contain a prototype of the Ten Commandments as we have them today in the Torah (which was itself worked over from earlier copies by Ezra and his scribes).

I am Elohim, your god, who freed you from the land of Egypt, from the slave-house. You shall not have any other gods. You shall not make a carving or any image that is in the heavens above or upon the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth. You shall not prostrate yourselves before them, and you shall not serve them. I am Elohim, your god.

Sanctify the seventh day and rest on it. For in six days I made the heavens and the earth and all that is in them, and I rested on the seventh day. Therefore you too shall rest, along with your livestock and all that you have. I am Elohim, your god.

Honor [feed and provide for] your father and your mother. I am Elohim, your god.

You shall not slay the living person, your brother. I am Elohim, your god.

You shall not commit adultery with the wife of your fellow. I am Elohim, your god.

You shall not steal the wealth of your brother. I am Elohim, your god

You shall not swear in my name falsely, for I shall avenge the transgression of fathers against sons, grandsons, and great grandsons for those who bear my name falsely. I am Elohim, your god.

You shall not submit against your brother a false judgment. I am Elohim, your god.

You shall not desire the wife of your fellow, his male slave, his female slave, or anything that is his. I am Elohim, your god.

You shall not hate your brother in your heart. I am Elohim, your god.¹

¹ Idan Dershowitz, *The Valediction of Moses: A Proto-Biblical Book*, Forschungen zum Alten Testament 145 (Tübingen, Germany, Mohr Siebeck, 2021)

A Third "Ten Words": Exodus 34

<p>34:10 And He said: 'Behold, I make a covenant; before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been wrought in all the earth, nor in any nation; and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD that I am about to do with thee, that it is tremendous.</p>	
<p>34:11 Observe thou that which I am commanding thee this day; behold, I am driving out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. 34:12 Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest they be for a snare in the midst of thee. 34:13 But ye shall break down their altars, and dash in pieces their pillars, and ye shall cut down their Asherim. 34:14 For thou shalt bow down to no other god; for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God; 34:15 lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go astray after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and they call thee, and thou eat of their sacrifice; 34:16 and thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go astray after their gods, and make thy sons go astray after their gods. 34:17 Thou shalt make thee no molten gods.</p>	<p>34:24 For I will cast out nations before thee, and enlarge thy borders; neither shall any man covet thy land, when thou goest up to appear before the LORD thy God three times in the year.</p>
<p>34:18 The feast of unleavened bread (assume = Passover) shalt thou keep. Seven days thou shalt eat unleavened bread, as I commanded thee, at the time appointed in the month Abib, for in the month Abib thou camest out from Egypt.</p>	<p>34:25 Thou shalt not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread;</p>
<p>34:19 All that openeth the womb is Mine; and of all thy cattle thou shalt sanctify the males, the firstlings of ox and sheep. 34:20 And the firstling of an ass thou shalt redeem with a lamb; and if thou wilt not redeem it, then thou shalt break its neck. All the first-born of thy sons thou shalt redeem. And none shall appear before Me empty.</p>	<p>neither shall the sacrifice of the feast of the passover be left unto the morning.</p>
<p>34:21 Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest; in plowing time and in harvest thou shalt rest</p>	<p>34:26 The choicest first-fruits (lit: first-first-fruits) of thy land thou shalt bring unto the house of the LORD thy God.</p>
<p>34:22 And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks, even of the first-fruits of wheat harvest, and the feast of ingathering at the turn of the year. 34:23 Three times in the year shall all thy males appear before the Lord GOD, the God of Israel.</p>	<p>Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk.</p>
<p>34:27 And the LORD said unto Moses: Write thou these words, <i>for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel</i>. 34:28 And he was there with the LORD forty days and forty nights; he did neither eat bread, nor drink water. And he wrote upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten words.</p>	

This list shows that the Ten are only an entry way into the law. Somehow, the rest of the law (what we call civil and ceremonial) are related to the Ten.

A Fourth “Ten Words”: Leviticus 19 and the Broken Tablets

Parallels Between the Decalogue and Leviticus 19	
The Decalogue in Exodus 20	Parallels in Leviticus 19
2 I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.	36 ...I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt.
3 You shall have no other gods before me. 4 You shall not make for yourself a graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.	4 Do not turn to idols or make for yourselves molten gods
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.	12 And you shall not swear by my name falsely, and so profane the name of your God
8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy...	3 ...and you shall keep my sabbaths
12 Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.	3 Every one of you shall revere his mother and his father,
13 You shall not kill.	16 ...and you shall not stand forth against the life of your neighbor
14 You shall not commit adultery.	20 If a man lies carnally with a woman who is a slave, betrothed to another man
15 You shall not steal.	11 You shall not steal
16 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.	11 ...nor deal falsely, nor lie to one another.
17 You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant, or his maidservant, or his ox, or his ass, or anything that is your neighbor's.	17 You shall not hate your brother in your heart

Layout and Laws of Leviticus 19

Be Holy (2b)	2b			Steal	11
"I the LORD your God"				Deal Falsely	
Revere parents (3a)	3a			Lie	12
Keeps sabbaths (3b)	3b			Swear Falsely by name	
"I am the LORD your God"				"I am the Lord"	
Idols of metal (4)	4			Oppress neighbor	13
"I am the LORD your God"				Rob him	
Peace offerings	5-8			Pay him	
Harvesting and the Poor	9-10			Curse the deaf	14
"I am the LORD your God"				Stumbling block blind	
Mate different cattle	19	Sex with slave	20	Fear God	
Sow different seed in field		Entrance to tent	21-22	"I am the LORD"	
Weave different material in clothes		Forgiveness		Justice in court	15
Eat blood	26			Slander	16
Practice divination/soothsaying				Life of neighbor	
Round hair				I am the Lord	
Destroy beard	27			Hate brother in heart	17
Cut for the dead				Reason frankly with him	
Tattoos	28			Taking vengeance	18
"I am the Lord"				Love neighbor as self	
Daughter to harlot (land filled depravity)	29			"I am the LORD your God"	
Keep sabbaths	30			Plant tree for food-3 yr. not eaten	23
Venerate sanctuary				Fourth year fruit set aside to Lord	24
"I am the Lord"				Fifth year eat	25
No ghosts	31			Rise before the aged	
No familiar spirits				Defer to the old	
"I the Lord am your God"				Fear your God	32
				"I am the Lord"	
				No wrong to stranger	33
				Stranger is like citizen	34
				Love neighbor as self	
				You were strangers/Egypt	
				"I the Lord am your God"	
				False measures (35)	35
				Honest balances/weights (36)	36
				"I the Lord am your God"	
				Who freed you from Egypt	
				Faithfully observe all my laws	37
				I am the Lord	

