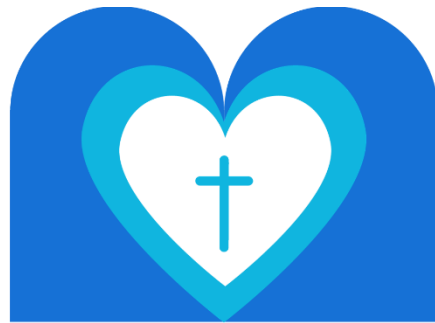


God's Recipe For A Wonderful Life

Restoring Truth in a World of Confusion



If U Love Me

John 14:15

If you love me, you will keep my Commandments.

John 14:15

Ed Van Buskirk



Everyday the insanity of the world seems to take yet another giant step beyond the insanity of the previous day. Society's moral compass spins without any direction as moral relativism grants each person permission to decide right and wrong based on personal preferences and the popular trends of the day.

To make room for moral relativism, society has deemed the truth and wisdom of the Commandments as a negative list of outdated and restrictive rules imposed on us by a demanding God. As a result, we now see the backlash of moral relativism causing frightening levels of chaos, confusion and division. Having lost the proper moral compass, the toll on families, society, our nation and the world is overwhelming and the outlook for the future is very concerning.

But there is a better option. A MUCH better option. The antidote to all the chaos, confusion and division is the wisdom and truth, given to us by God and written with His own hand on tablets of stone. The antidote is the wisdom and truth of His Ten Commandments.

God's Recipe For A Wonderful Life offers a fresh perspective of the Commandments showing how they are upbeat, relevant in today's world and surprisingly liberating. The Commandments restore the truth and wisdom necessary for restoring harmony, building good relationships, strong families and a promising future.

With the truth of the Commandments as our compass, it becomes clear how the Divine wisdom of the Commandments helps navigate the confusion and chaos and instead experience joy-filled relationships and authentic freedom.

Each Commandment protects what God has created as holy and sacred and they call us to the greatness for which each of us were designed. Enter into this journey to discover how, individually and collectively and the wisdom of our Creator, we can turn back society's moral trend and restore the harmony, joy and freedom that God wants for all His children.



Nihil Obstat: After review, I have concluded that the materials presented in this work are free of doctrinal or moral errors.

Reverend Charles N. Rowe, STD, censor librorum

February 19, 2021

Imprimatur: In accord with 1983 CIC 827 permission to publish this work is hereby granted.

Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr, DD, JCL

Kansas City - St. Joseph

February 19, 2021

Copyright © 2022 by Ed Van Buskirk (Author)

All rights reserved. This book or any portion thereof may not be reproduced or used in any manner whatsoever without the express written permission of the Author except for the use of brief quotations.

Printed in the United States of America

First Printing, 2020

Second Printing, 2022

If U Love Me

905 Carnoustie Dr

Kansas City, MO 64145

IfULoveMe.org



Table of Contents

Ten Commandments Prayer	5
A Prelude To The Ten Commandments	6
The First Commandment	9
The Second Commandment	12
The Third Commandment	15
The Fourth Commandment	17
The Fifth Commandment	19
The Sixth Commandment	21
The Seventh Commandment	24
The Eighth Commandment	27
The Ninth & Tenth Commandments	30
The “Eleventh Commandment”	33
The Mission of <i>If U Love Me</i>	37



TEN COMMANDMENTS PRAYER

Creator of the universe and Redeemer of my soul, give me Your grace to grow in Your Commandments and Your mercy when I stumble.

(1) You are the Lord my God. I will not have any gods before You. (2) I will not use Your name in vain but will glorify Your name in all my words and deeds. (3) I will keep holy the Lord's day by preserving it only for worshiping You, resting in You and for relationship with family and friends. (4) I will honor my father and mother and teach my children to do the same. (5) I will not kill but will honor and protect life from conception to natural death. (6) I will not commit adultery, but instead I will honor our bodies for the sacred purpose of new life within Marriage. (7) I will not steal, but instead I will cultivate a heart of generosity. (8) I will not lie, but rather honor truth in all my words and actions. (9 & 10) I will not covet my neighbor's spouse nor covet the things of this world. Rather, I will set my heart on building treasures in Heaven. Amen.

Praying the Ten Commandments at the beginning of each day helps us to be mindful throughout the day, and again at the end of the day, as an examination of conscience.



A PRELUDE TO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

The general perception of the Ten Commandments is that they are just a list of rules imposed on us by a demanding God to restrict us and take the fun out of life. This is so far from the truth. The truth of the Commandments is that God, who is love and the Creator of everything, gave us the Commandments out of His infinite love. The same as any parent loves his or her children and only wants what's best for them, God loves us beyond measure and, in His love, only wants what is best for us. Because He designed and created the human heart and soul, He knows what is best for our heart and soul to thrive and experience authentic joy and boundless freedom. Therefore, He gave us the Ten Commandments as guardrails in life to help us stay on the road and not end up in a ditch.

But most everyone will agree that, in moral terms, the world is heading in the wrong direction and the consequences are inflicting havoc on families, the nation and the world. Increasingly, society is no longer God-centered. Instead, being me-centered is the trend with Sundays being filled with an assortment of to-do's to catch up on what didn't get done last week and to prepare for the week ahead. God's name is being desecrated so frequently that we don't even notice. Lying, cheating and stealing are rewarded in the corporate and political arenas. All this disregard for God and acceptance of worldly wisdom causes a quagmire of confusion that leads to bad decisions, broken relationships, chaos and despair.

Confusion is one of Satan's favorite weapons of choice. He introduced doubt and confusion when he said, "Did God really say, 'You shall not eat from any of the trees in the garden'?" He injected the truth with a lie causing confusion and division. Today, he uses the same trick with questions like, "How do you know you shouldn't be a girl instead of a boy?" and "Don't worry about the cost. You deserve it, don't you? Just use your credit card."

We have taken our eye off God and the wisdom of His Commandments leaving us vulnerable to Satan's deception. We attempt to restore order with human laws that ultimately only introduce more confusion. We don't need more laws. We just need to follow the right laws. God's perfect laws designed as a perfect fit for our human heart. The Commandments provide a framework of moral and ethical standards within which relationships and families flourish, laying a solid foundation for society.

The purpose of this book is to help restore the truth of God's laws and renew a positive perception of and appreciation for God's Commandments so individuals, families and entire societies can avoid the problems caused by the confusion of worldly wisdom. Then, with the clarity provided by the truth of the Commandments, individuals, families and society can draw closer in relationship with God and experience the authentic joy promised by trusting in the wisdom of the Commandments.

The Ten Commandments provide each of us a simple set of basics to (re)learn and teach to the children in our lives. As parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, teachers and coaches, we have the God-given authority and responsibility to restore His Commandments within the hearts, souls and minds of the children in our lives. To turn the tide back toward divine wisdom and restore God's plan for future generations, each of us must do our part. Each of us must get involved and work in cooperation with God. We start with ourselves. Make a commitment to (re)learn the truth and beauty of the Commandments, how they work and the joy and freedom they offer.

As we learn to appreciate the beauty and purpose of each Commandment more fully, we learn to trust them and to become equipped to explain them to our children and grandchildren. By each of us teaching the



Commandments to the children in our lives, we will change the world one family at a time. It will take time and requires a collective effort, but together, with the Holy Spirit guiding us, by focusing on Jesus and His plan for salvation, we WILL change the world.

Group Discussion/Personal Reflection

1. Circle the face below that best represents how well you know and keep the Commandments?



Why? _____

2. How important do you feel the Commandments are for preparing your children/grandchildren to face the temptations of the world and make good decisions?

Family Activity

This activity involves making a peanut butter & jelly sandwich. Or, if your children don't like peanut butter and jelly, any type of sandwich will do. However, this sandwich is going to turn out very different.

A good time to do this is at lunchtime, when they are hungry. To prepare

1. Set out all the ingredients of a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. Then, put out a dozen or so additional ingredients that would likely make for a very bad tasting PB&J such as mayonnaise, onions, sardines and oregano. You will also need a large piece of paper and something to write with. To avoid distractions, cover all the ingredients with a towel or tablecloth.
2. Write out the steps to make a PB&J sandwich. Don't make it too detailed. A list of six to ten steps should suffice. Put the recipe on the refrigerator, as it will be used in the next Family Activity.
3. If you don't have a list of the Ten Commandments hanging in a prominent place, go to our web site at IfULoveMe.org/resources and print off a copy. Put it in a frame and hang it in a place where everyone can see it frequently.

Gather the children and tell them what a recipe is and why people use recipes to make good meals. After talking about the purpose of recipes for a few minutes, show them the recipe for making PB&Js.

Explain that you are going to ignore the recipe and then uncover the ingredients. Let them all choose whatever they want on the sandwich and can put as much as they want on the sandwich. Have fun and be silly. Once they are satisfied that the sandwich is finished, cut and share it. (They may choose not to eat any of it.)

Ask them what happened when they didn't follow the recipe? Why didn't it taste like a PB&J? Did it taste good or bad? Ask them if they want to ignore or follow the recipe for making their lunch. Have them help you follow the recipe you wrote down. As you enjoy lunch, ask them if it is better to follow recipes or ignore them?



Finally, explain to them that God has a recipe for life and if we follow the recipe, life turns out better. God's recipe is the Ten Commandments. But if we ignore God's recipe, things don't turn out very good. Give some examples using how lying and stealing cause big problems but telling the truth and being generous help people.

Show them the list of Commandments you printed and read through them together. Adopt the habit of reading the list with your children each day.

Suggested Reading & Resources

Read Exodus 19, 20 & 40

John 14 & 15

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2052 - 2082



THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange gods before me.

“I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. You shall not have other gods beside me. You shall not make for yourself an idol or a likeness of anything in the Heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters beneath the earth; you shall not bow down before them or serve them. For I, the LORD, your God, am a jealous God, inflicting punishment for their ancestors’ wickedness on the children of those who hate me, down to the third and fourth generation; but showing love down to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.” Exodus 20:2-6

But does God inflict punishment and even inflict it on our great grandchildren because of our disobedience? If God is love, how is this possible? It is not God who inflicts punishment. The punishment is simply the natural consequences of disobedience. When we attempt to disobey the physical laws, such as gravity, and leap off the roof of our house, things turn out badly. Similarly, when we attempt to disobey the natural laws of the Commandments and we lie, steal and commit adultery, things turn out badly. So, it is not God that inflicts punishment. The punishment comes as the natural consequences of our disobedience and the punishment, such as a parent being put in prison, will impact the children and eventually their children too.

Jesus is love and the source of all things good, but we become distracted by the modern-day gods, such as money, work, materialism and entertainment. Being distracted and losing focus on the Truth, we become confused, make unwise choices based on human wisdom and then are left to deal with the consequences.

The first Commandment establishes God as the one and only God, Creator of the universe and the one who brings us out of the earthly and eternal slavery of sin. Therefore, we should trust Him above all else.

This first Commandment is the foundation that supports and gives meaning to all the other Commandments. If God is unimportant to us, we become our own god, and lying and stealing become the methods for serving our primary god—namely ourselves. Observing Sunday for worship is unimportant and using God’s name in vain is just an expression.

However, when we place God front-and-center in our lives and love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul and mind, we learn to trust Him, and we see the purpose and beauty of being a person of integrity, and see lying and stealing as the evils they are. We will naturally not want to take what belongs to someone else. Rather we will want to be generous and share with those in need and bring them joy. And, we will only want to glorify God’s name and never say anything that would desecrate His name.

Jesus warns us against the “And” when He says in Matthew 6:24,

No one can serve two masters. He will either hate one and love the other or, be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.

The “And” is when we want to serve God *And* money. Or serve God *And* our work, or love God *And* entertainment. When we attempt this, God always seems to get in the way as we perceive any time, money and attention that is



owed to God as getting in the way of pursuing our other gods. Spending 10 minutes with God at the start of the day gets in the way of getting to work. Fitting in time to go to Mass on Sunday gets in the way of tailgating or shopping.

Therefore, to help us establish a firm foundation, upon which the other Commandments base their purpose and meaning, it is imperative to understand and pursue this First Commandment with all our heart, soul and mind. It is incumbent on us as parents, that we make it our highest priority to impress these Commandments upon our children and grandchildren, so they have the proper foundation to put Jesus front and center in their lives and embrace His Commandments.

Group Discussion/Personal Reflection

1. Circle the face below that best represents how well you put God first in your life and have no other gods such as money, materialism, entertainment or prestige? Have any modern-day gods crept into your life that interfere with your relationship with God?



Why? _____

2. How can you impress upon your children and grandchildren the importance of keeping God first in their life?

Family Activity

1. Remind your children of the purpose of following recipes and how the Ten Commandments are God's recipe for a good life.
2. Talk about why it is the FIRST Commandment and how it makes it easier to obey all the Commandments.
3. Using the Peanut Butter and Jelly recipe from the last Family Activity, read the first step.
4. Ask them what would happen if the first step in the PB&J recipe was skipped.
5. Read the story of creation in Genesis chapters 1 & 2. Have the children do some of the reading.
6. Discuss how, in the very beginning, God created everything that was good.
7. Ask, "What would it be like if God didn't create any of these things in the beginning of time?"
8. Explain that, because God created everything, we should always put God first. Some ways to do this are:
 - a. Pray to God when we first wake up each day and before getting in to bed each night.
 - b. Pray to God, before we eat each meal.
 - c. Pray to God before we make any important decisions.

Below are additional ways to help your children realize how wonderful God is. Point out to them that God 'invented' everything and He knows best. That is why it is important to pray, go to Mass and read from the Bible.

- a. Check out the library and watch one of the Planet Earth programs.
- b. Go for a hike and have the children draw a picture of something that captures their attention.
- c. While enjoying one of their favorite special treats, ask them the question, "How did God create everything in the whole wide world and why did He do that?"



Suggested Reading & Resources

Genesis 1 & 2

Mathew 6:24-34

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2057 – 2141



THE SECOND COMMANDMENT

You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.

“You shall not invoke the name of the LORD, your God, in vain. For the LORD will not leave unpunished anyone who invokes his name in vain.” Exodus 20:7

Our names, which are a reflection of who we are and our reputations, are important. We work hard to develop a positive reputation and we take great offense if someone says something degrading about us.

With name calling such a severe offense, why is it that so many people don't consider it offensive to abuse God's name? We hear people using God's name in frustration and anger all the time, figuring it is not that big of a deal. God, being Who He is, can handle it, right? But names are very important and no one, especially God, should have their name abused and misused.

How we refer to God tells us a lot about the reverence we have for Him in our heart. So, if we use God's name irreverently, it is evidence that we lack proper reverence for God. Conversely, when we genuinely and openly praise God's name, it is a reflection of the honor and reverence we have for God.

Blasphemy and perjury are two serious ways people break the Second Commandment. Blasphemy is referring to God in a curse, calling upon Him frivolously or when our behavior, as Christians, reflects poorly on Christ.

Perjury is when we make a serious oath, calling upon God as a witness, and then breaking the oath. Such as when someone is called as a witness in a court of law.

Understanding blasphemy and perjury and rooting them out are not just a matter of watching our tongue. It requires that we carefully and thoroughly examine our heart and then take steps to properly order our lives to align with God's love for us.

Also, calling upon the name of God frivolously, such as “I swear to God I didn't eat the last piece of pie.” disrespects God and demonstrates that we cannot be trusted on our word, but instead, can only be trusted when we bring God in as a witness.

When others hear us disrespect the name of God, we degrade the image they have of God and we discourage them from wanting to know God. Over time, repeated abuse of the name of God, erodes the perception others have of God. Therefore, when we break the Second Commandment, we share some responsibility for others' lack of reverence for and love of God. That is the opposite of what we are called to do as Christians.

As Christians, how we behave is also a reflection of Jesus Christ and His name. Therefore, it is not just our words that potentially break the Second Commandment. We break it when we treat others disrespectfully and when we lie, steal, willingly ignore the Lord's Day or break any of the other Commandments. Calling ourselves Christian, but behaving contrary to Jesus' example of a Christian, is breaking the Second Commandment by being hypocritical.

Everything in the universe was created by God, out of His love for us. Jesus came as a human being to suffer and die to free us from the bondage of sin. Because they refer to the Creator of the universe and Redeemer of our souls, the names of Jesus, God the Father and the Holy Spirit are all to be honored and glorified above all other



names. When we praise the name of Jesus, we glorify Him in our souls, and we exalt Him for others to see His glory and be drawn to Him.

When Jesus gave us the perfect prayer He began, “Our Father, who art in Heaven, holy be your name,” showing the sacredness of God’s name. There is divine power in the name of Jesus—divine power to cast our demons, heal the sick and mend relationships. Therefore, we are to call upon the name of Him when we pray and in our worship to glorify His name.

Group Discussion/Personal Reflection

1. Circle the face below that best represents how well you honor and glorify the name of God the Father, Jesus and the Holy Spirit?



Why? _____

2. What can you do to restore the image and reverence of God so your children will grow in their reverence for God’s name? Other family members? Coworkers?

Family Activity

Plan some family time to do the following activity. A Sunday afternoon would be a great opportunity.

1. Secretly bake a batch of cupcakes. After frosting them with white frosting, separate out one cupcake for each of your family members and sprinkle dirt and sand on top. That’s right, dirt and sand.
2. On the remaining cupcakes, put delicious sprinkles. Be sure there is at least one dirt-free cupcake for each family member.
3. Hide all the cupcakes.
4. Talk with your family about how using God’s name in vain makes people think about God as bad and ugly.
5. Then talk about how praising God’s name glorifies God and helps people like and want to know God.
6. Show the cupcakes with dirt on them to kids and explain how using God’s name disrespectfully is like putting dirt and sand on delicious cupcakes. Also explain how praising God’s name is like putting yummy sprinkles on cupcakes. It makes people want to like them even more.
7. Ask them which of the cupcakes they want to eat and why? Ask them how the dirt and sand on the ugly cupcakes are like using God’s name in vain. Even just a little dirt and sand will make the cupcakes ugly, just like a little swearing or lying will do a lot of damage to your reputation.
8. Ask your children to pay attention over the next several days to when they hear people use God’s name in vain and then talk about this during dinner each night for a week.
9. Put a “God’s Name In Vain” jar in the kitchen to collect money from anyone who violates the Second Commandment. After a week or two, revisit the discussion of the cupcakes. Decide as a family how to use the money.

Suggested Reading & Resources

Psalm 29

Psalm 96:1-10



Psalm 113
Mathew 5:33-37

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2142 – 2167



THE THIRD COMMANDMENT

Remember to keep holy the Lord's Day.

“Remember the sabbath day—keep it holy. Six days you may labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God. You shall not do any work, either you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your work animal, or the resident 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 on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD has blessed the sabbath day and made it holy.” Exodus 20:8-11

With the rotation of the Earth, God gave us day and night, with the moon revolving around the earth He gave us months, and in the revolutions of the earth around the sun He gave us years. By tilting the earth He gave us the seasons of the year. But nothing in nature has a natural cycle of seven days. God created everything in six days and then, as a bonus, gave us an extra day. A God-given day of vacation every week to recall all He created, to praise Him, to rest and enjoy all His blessings.

But what if God didn't create the extra day? Instead He just ended the creation story after six days and then launched us right into Monday? How fun would that be? However, in His love for us He knew His creation was not complete. He wanted to give us even more. So, in His infinite love and wisdom, He created an extra day as a gift.

Unfortunately, our culture has Sunday turned up-side-down as a day to get caught up for the week ahead. The trap we too often fall into is that we begin thinking about all the other seemingly more important and more fun ways we could use time on Sunday.

As we fill up Sundays with chores and worldly desires, we become too busy for God and too busy to spend time relaxing with family and friends. Between getting the laundry done, grocery shopping for the week, helping the kids finish their science project, the two soccer practices and the big game, there doesn't seem to be time to “fit in” going to church. As busyness takes hold, we drift from our relationship with God, causing us to become confused and tempted with the lies and deception of worldly wisdom and wondering how did life become so difficult.

God knew that in order to have healthy spiritual lives, spending time with Him by attending Mass is not optional but rather essential.

In His infinite love and wisdom, God knew that we needed a break from the hard work of life to remember His love and praise Him for all He did for us in the previous week and ask for His guidance in the week ahead. He wanted to give us time to nurture and enjoy our relationships with family and friends and to give us time just to relax and prepare ourselves for the week ahead. So, why waste it? Set aside the grind of life and trust in God's plan for Sundays. Enjoy them and be prepared to face the week ahead.



Group Discussion/Personal Reflection

1. Circle the face below that best represents how well you preserve Sundays for worshiping Jesus, resting in His love and for building good relationships with family and friends?



Why? _____

2. What would your ideal Sunday look like and what major obstacles prevent you from fully observing the Third Commandment?

3. What can you do to teach your family the purpose of God's weekly day of vacation?

Family Activity

1. To prepare, purchase the ingredients for ice-cream Sundays.
2. With your children, talk about how God created Sunday as a day for worship and a vacation day every week.
3. Ask your children how the family overlooks the vacation day and instead, allows work to get in the way of the vacation day. This includes homework, laundry, yardwork and shopping.
4. Ask your children for their ideas on how to preserve Sunday as a day for worship and relaxation.
5. For each activity you identify not belonging on Sundays, develop a plan to do it at another time.
6. Without activities to enjoy on Sundays, people will initially feel bored. So, also plan for ways to have fun and relax on Sundays together. Be careful of making it a day to veg in front of the TV or computer. Try having no electronics and enjoy some good old-fashioned games. Be creative and include friends and extended family members.
7. Break out the ingredients for ice-cream Sundays and enjoy.

Suggested Reading & Resources

Exodus 31:12-17

Mark 2:23-27

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2168 -2195

Apostolic letter *Dies Domini* of the Holy Father John Paul II



THE FOURTH COMMANDMENT

You shall honor your father and mother.

“Honor your father and your mother, that you may have a long life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.” Exodus 20:12

Over the past several decades, culture has turned the parent-child relationship upside down. This reversal is the result of parents’ authority being increasingly undermined, aided with an unhealthy attitude of entitlement that is offered to, and even imposed upon, children. How will this trend play out over the next several decades? How do we restore the family hierarchy as designed by our Creator and provide our children the childhood they need and deserve to become the best versions of themselves in adulthood? The answer lies within the richness and wisdom of the Fourth Commandment.

At first glance the Fourth Commandment is only intended for children to learn obedience of and respect for their parents. But there is so much more packed within the Fourth Commandment. While it is clearly intended for children, it is equally intended for parents. The Fourth Commandment actually is a comprehensive field-guide for raising strong, stable families and raising children who are confident, joy-filled and prepared to contribute to society.

The Fourth Commandment implies that parents, grandparents, aunts, uncles, teachers and all adults live honorably and demonstrate the example of respecting others, so the children in our lives can learn through our example how to honor and obey, not just their parents, but everyone. Parents set the tone for a child. Additionally, a parent’s model of obedience and honor for God shapes how their children will obey and honor God.

The Fourth Commandment also includes a promise. Honoring our father and mother promises a “long life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.” This promise may seem to be just some extra fluff to make the Commandment sound appealing. However, when you consider how the Fourth Commandment plays out, it really paves the way for a long and happy life.

Living a good life is about choices, and children who learn obedience and respect are better equipped to make good choices that lead to a better life for them and their children. For example, a child who obeys his parents and comes in at curfew may miss out on the “fun” of staying out late, but they also avoid the situations that put drunk drivers behind the wheel.

As parents and grandparents, we are called by God to be examples of honor and respect. Furthermore, we must be intentional about teaching honor and respect to our children. Don’t let it happen by chance.

Another aspect of the Fourth Commandment is that it instructs us to honor our parents by caring for them in their old age. No one has perfect parents and too many people have parents who clearly fell short of providing an ideal childhood. Regardless, we all are called by God to set aside our differences and honor our parents and fulfill their needs as they become physically and mentally unable to care for themselves.

When it seems impossible to lovingly care for parents, we can draw strength from the following Bible verse:



“With your whole heart honor your father; your mother’s birth pangs do not forget. Remember, of these parents you were born; what can you give them for all they gave you?” Sirach 7:27-28

One of the hidden gems masterfully designed within God’s framework of the Fourth Commandment is a variety of blessings for the whole family, including future generations.

Group Discussion/Personal Reflection

1. Circle the face below that best represents how well you set the right example for your children/grandchildren to follow?



Why? _____

2. How can you be intentional in teaching your children/grandchildren about how obedience and respect for their parents paves the way for a long and joy-filled life?

Family Activity

1. Play the game, “Mother May I” with your children. To review the rules of the games, enter an Internet search of “How to play the game Mother May I”
2. After playing and while enjoying a favorite family treat, have a conversation with the children about why God gave parents to children and how God wants them to respect and honor you.
3. Read & discuss Sirach 3:1-24. Notice how the lessons of humility immediately follow lessons of obeying parents.

Suggested Reading & Resources

Proverbs 6:20-23

Mark 7:8-13

Sirach 3:1-16

Sirach 3:17-28

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2197-2257



THE FIFTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not kill.

“You shall not kill.” Exodus 20:13

Because most of us don’t go around killing people, it would be easy to give little or no thought to the Fifth Commandment. However, I propose we all make life-and-death decisions more frequently than we realize.

For example, if we decide to invest in companies that produce abortion equipment or that provide services or supplies for an abortion clinic we participate in the killing of unborn babies. What about texting while driving and voting for candidates who support abortion and assisted suicide? These are just a few common examples of how the Fifth Commandment applies to all of us.

Therefore, when we engage in business and decide how we vote, we are obliged to have a clear understanding of the practices and purpose of the business and we need to know what the issues are and where the candidates stand on the sanctity of life.

Also, physical killing is not the only type of killing addressed in the Fifth Commandment. In Matthew 5:21-22, Jesus warns that, even without participating in physical killing, anger in our hearts is the root of killing.

“You have heard that it was said to your ancestors, ‘You shall not kill’; and whoever kills will be liable to judgment. But I say to you, whoever is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment.”

Jesus is warning us that anger in our heart, while not sinful in itself, can cause us to kill with our tongue. The words said in anger by a parent to the tender heart of a son, daughter or spouse can never be taken back, and can kill their ideas, hopes, dreams and self-esteem. Out of jealousy and greed our words can kill someone’s reputation, their career or even their marriage. All of which are protected by the Fifth Commandment.

Think of the joy and excitement of a young couple having a baby. Conversely, recall the heartache and pain when someone close to you dies. The joy and sorrow experienced at the beginning and end of life makes it exceedingly obvious that life is precious. And, because human life is created in God’s image, it is even more than precious. It is sacred. Jesus’ life and death on the cross to save our lives demonstrates that our lives are the very purpose of His coming to live among us.

Opposed to Jesus’ mission of salvation is Satan’s mission of death and destruction of our lives and our souls. The Fifth Commandment protects sacred human lives and it stands to protect the souls of those who participate in Satan’s mission of destruction.

The Fifth Commandment calls us to protect life in the choices we make. The reality is, we are sometimes required to make difficult decisions in very complex situations. To choose life in these difficult decisions, it is imperative that we become well informed about Catholic teachings regarding life. Spending time reading Scripture, studying the Catechism of the Catholic Church and in quiet



prayer offer wisdom and the clarity of thought needed to navigate the lies and deception of our culture regarding life, and make the right decisions.

Group Discussion/Personal Reflection

1. Circle the face below that best represents how well your heart, tongue and actions align with the Fifth Commandment?



Why? _____

2. How can you begin discussing with your children/grandchildren to help them value life and understand the lies of our culture regarding abortion and euthanasia.

Family Activity

To gain a more complete appreciation for the miracle of life, have each person in the family spiritually adopt a baby. Each member of the family decides if the baby is a boy or a girl, gives their baby a name and together as a family, a day is chosen as the birthday for all the babies. Over nine months the family watches to see how the babies grow and each person prays for the baby, its mother and father. Then, on the big day, have a big party to celebrate their birth. Invite other family members and friends. Include presents that will be donated to a local pregnancy resource center or adoption agency. Make their birthday an annual celebration to be reminded of how your family celebrates the miracle of God's gift of life.

To make your spiritual adoption fun and easy, we have provided full instructions with adoption certificates, posters, prayer cards and birth certificates on our web site. All are free and can be downloaded at IfULoveMe.org/spiritualadoption.

Suggested Reading & Resources

Genesis 4:1-16 Story of Cain and Abel. Consider the freedom Cain lost as a result of his sin.

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2258 – 2330

Theology of the Body for Beginners by Christopher West.

www.NumberOfAbortions.com – Live counter of abortions

DailyRosary.net – Rosary recorded new each day and emailed to you.



THE SIXTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not commit adultery.

“You shall not commit adultery.” Exodus 20:14

A Stradivarius violin is one of the most sought-after and revered musical instruments. Its primary purpose is to produce beautiful music. What if the owner of a Stradivarius decided to use it as a drum, beating the back of it with drumsticks? It would still produce music, but how would it compare to the music it was intended for and how would it degrade its purpose and disrespect its maker?

How much more precious is the human body than a Stradivarius? Yet through adultery, pornography, sex change operations and contraceptives we degrade our bodies and disrespect our Creator. Instead of properly glorifying and respecting our sexuality, today’s culture desecrates it.

Our mission: To restore the preciousness and miracle of our bodies so our children and grandchildren can avoid the heartache, depression and disappointment of the abuse that rips families apart, requires children to grow up not knowing their father or mother and jeopardizes souls.

The Sixth Commandment emphasizes the importance and purpose of our sexuality, warns us of the evil and dangers of adultery and it calls us to glorify God through our sexuality.

God created our human sexuality as sacred and holy and good. He created it with the primary purpose of participating with God, within marriage, in His creation. Anything that deviates from this purpose and within marriage, degrades God’s purpose, is offensive to God and disrespects His creation.

To more fully appreciate the greatness of the Sixth Commandment, let’s take a quick look at the topics of Creation, Sexuality, Marriage, Chastity and Lust.

Creation: As the encore and crown-jewel of creation, God created man and woman and made us holy and sacred in His image and likeness. We participate with God in His creation through the gift of life given to us in our bodies.

Salvation: Reverence for our bodies is essential to salvation. Therefore, it is paramount to do everything and anything to protect and treasure our sexuality. However, Satan has a different plan for our sexuality: division, not unity; death, not life; eternal damnation instead of eternal salvation.

Marriage: Jesus gave Himself exclusively and totally to His bride for the purpose of giving life—eternal life! The sacrament of marriage models the marriage of Jesus and His bride, the Church. Anything less than being exclusive, without reservation and fully open to life, falls short of God’s plan for marriage.

Chastity: Chastity is the virtue that removes lust from our heart and frees us from the torture and slavery of impurity. Chastity is not about abstaining from sex. Rather it is about having the self-mastery to freely and properly choose with whom and when to have sex, namely with one’s spouse and with openness to human life.



Lust: The opposite of Chastity is the vice of lust which enslaves our hearts. Lust distorts sex to be self-serving instead of life-giving. It is deadly. Today's culture has embraced lust, promoted it, and flaunted it as a natural and necessary way of life.

The human heart is constantly in search of authentic love. But we get distracted and lose our way. We try to fill a God-sized hole with worldly pleasures that don't satisfy. Having been made in the image and likeness of God, we are made for greatness, for joy and for the freedom of salvation.

Group Discussion/Personal Reflection

1. Circle the face below that best represents how well you live free of adultery including watching sexually tainted or explicit shows, reading sexually tainted or explicit books or viewing pornography?



Why? _____

2. How does today's sexually oriented culture distort God's plan for life and salvation through our bodies?

3. How can you be intentional about teaching your children/grandchildren God's plan for their sexuality and warn them about how our culture attempts to rob them of what is intended as holy and pure?

Suggested Reading & Resources

Psalms 139:13-18

Proverbs 5

Matthew 19:1-12

Romans 1:18-32

1 Corinthians 6:15-20

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2331 - 2400

CatholicInRecovery.com

TheCatholicSexAddict.wordpress.com

Strive21.com

www.covenanteyes.com – Internet blocker

www.netnanny.com – Internet blocker

“Beyond the Birds and the Bees” by Gregory Popcak

“Parents, Children and the Facts of Life” By Fr. Henry V. Sattler

“It's time for the talk” by John Van Buskirk

The Chastity Project (Chastity.com) led by Jason and Chrystalina Evert and Christopher West. ,

“The Thrill of the Chaste” by Dawn Eden.



Family Activity

The Family Activity for this Commandment initially involves just the parents. The objective is to draft a general outline for having intentional, well thought-out conversations with your children about their bodies and sexuality. As a starting point, below is a cursory breakdown of topics that you can use for your plan. Also, refer to the suggested reading list and tailor to suit your children's maturity. Also, remember that this is not a one-time conversation, but an ongoing conversation that begins at an early age and continues, at least, into early adulthood.

Young Children (Ages 3 – 10)

1. Our bodies are special/holy/sacred?
2. Why do we cover our bodies?
3. No one should touch where underwear covers.
4. The difference between boys and girls, both physically and emotionally.

Adolescents

1. The purpose of marriage.
2. God's purpose for our bodies.
3. Pornography and how it disrespects what is sacred.
4. The dangers of pornography to themselves and others.
5. Physical maturity/body changes.
6. Abstinence and the purpose of purity and Chastity.
7. How to handle peer pressure regarding sexuality.
8. Coming to you when they have questions.

Early Adulthood

1. Same as Adolescents but at a more mature level.

The stakes and the threats are too high to wait or not be intentional about engaging with your children about their bodies, marriage and sex. **MAKE THIS A PRIORITY!**



THE SEVENTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not steal.

“You shall not steal.” Exodus 20:15

If you were having a conversation with Jesus about not stealing, do you think He would have anything to add such as, “You have heard it said, ‘You shall not steal. But I say...’?” Of course He would, because Jesus wants us to look beyond the simple words of a Commandment so we can discover ourselves. By looking beyond the words, “Do not steal,” and looking at the motivations of our heart, we discover what and who we love most. We discover whether we sincerely love others or if that love is overshadowed by selfishness and fear.

Jesus would likely continue the conversation by encouraging you to cultivate generosity in your heart so you can not just share, but share joyfully. And not just share your possessions, but share your time, your appreciation for others and various intangibles that are even more valuable than money or possessions. Being generous demonstrates that God is real and is living through you.

The Seventh Commandment calls us to detach from the things of this world, so our possessions don’t impede us from setting our hearts on pursuing treasures in Heaven. The Seventh Commandment teaches us to be grateful for the big and small blessings each day offers, and it teaches us to trust that God will always provide what we need.

Conversely, stealing is evidence that we love ourselves more than we love others and that we love the creation more than we love the Creator. Stealing shows a lack of trust that God will provide what we need, it shows we lack generosity and it turns us inward on ourselves, setting us up to be discontent, never having enough.

There are many forms of stealing. Some are very obvious, and others are not so easy to recognize because they don’t involve the act of taking. When we keep something that belongs to another, it is the same as stealing. Some examples are when we find something, like a wallet or when the cashier gives us too much change and we don’t return it. Other forms of stealing that are often not easily recognized include gossiping, which steals someone’s privacy and reputation, and being mean to people, which steals their dignity and robs them of having a good day. There are many ways to steal that don’t involve taking.

The Seventh Commandment teaches that all of God’s creation is intended for everyone’s benefit, not just the “chosen few.” For a variety of reasons, some have too little and others have too much. Those with too little are likely to struggle in their experience of God’s goodness because they are focusing on surviving.

Those with too much are likely to struggle in seeing the goodness of God because they are focusing on accumulating more and safeguarding it all. The Seventh Commandment calls us to moderation, to have what we need and share the rest with others who struggle with less than they need. Through moderation and generosity, we participate with God in His plan of salvation for ourselves and our neighbors.



We are called to prioritize the allocation of our tangible and intangible possessions according to the Greatest Commandment. That is, to first love God with all our heart, soul and mind. Regarding our possessions we do this through a tithe to His church. Next, the Greatest Commandment calls us to love others as we love ourselves. Therefore, we are not just to share from our leftovers. We are to be intentional in planning to include what others need, the same as we plan for our own needs.

The Seventh Commandment is a call to greatness and an invitation to participate in God's plan of joy, freedom and salvation through our work and our generosity.

Group Discussion/Personal Reflection

1. Circle the face below that best represents how well you cultivate a heart of generosity?



Why? _____

2. What is the most important lesson you can teach your children/grandchildren about God's plan of generosity?

Family Activity

1. Talk with your family about creation and how it is all intended for everyone's benefit. Discuss how stealing goes against God's plan of creation and talk about how Jesus wants us all to be generous and why. Refer to paragraph 2452 in the Catechism of the Catholic Church to help with the conversation.
2. Load the family in the car and take a drive. First, slowly drive through a very wealthy neighborhood. As you drive, discuss how material possessions and excess can be obstacles to generosity and nurturing a relationship with God.
3. Next, drive through a very poor neighborhood. Discuss how the people who live there may not have basic necessities. Discuss how their struggle can be obstacles for nurturing a relationship with God.
4. Stop for a treat at your favorite ice-cream or donut shop.
 - a. Write a list of some of the things your family has that the poorer families don't have. Include some intangibles such as safety and heat. (Post this on the fridge when you get home.)
 - b. Decide on a family plan for sharing some of what you have with the less fortunate. Keep your plan simple to implement, but meaningful for each person to participate.
5. Implement your plan. On the following several Sundays, review the list from the fridge and ask the members how they are becoming more grateful and more generous.



Suggested Reading & Resources

Matthew 25:14-30 – Parable of the Talents

Luke 15:11-32 – Parable of the Prodigal Son

Tobit 4:7-11

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2401 – 2463

Santa's Secret: A Story of Hope by Donna McGuire



THE EIGHTH COMMANDMENT

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

“You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.” Exodus 20:16

With each Commandment, God reveals what He has made sacred and is to be protected. The Eighth Commandment follows suit. God’s warning to not lie reveals that truth is sacred and is to be protected.

God, who is the Creator of all things, established truth in the very things He created. When He created the solar system, He created the truth of gravity. When He created a sparrow, He created the truth that sparrows fly and produce offspring. Therefore, Jesus is justified when He says, “I am the way, the truth and the life.” And so, logic follows that anything that falls short of what is true, leads us away from God.

Truth is the foundation of relationships making it possible to live in harmony with one another and to live a peaceful and joy-filled life. Truth establishes honor and respect for one another, and truth is a pillar of trust necessary for healthy marriages and strong communities.

However, because of our selfishness and pride, we struggle with accepting the truth and go to great lengths to deny the truth, creating a mess. In time, the lies produce confusion, fear, disagreements, anger and division, and we spin more lies to cover the first lie with each lie growing bigger than the last. With each lie, our humanity and dignity diminish, making it more difficult to recognize the truth as we are led further from God.

Satan devised the lie and first used it in the garden of Eden when he sprinkled a little doubt by asking Eve, “Did God really say you would die...?” He then lied to make God out to be the bad guy saying, “You certainly will not die!” and then followed up with the false promise of “your eyes will be opened and you will be like gods.”

Satan, the father of lies, causes nothing but confusion, division, destruction and slavery to sin. Because of their disobedience, Adam and Eve hid themselves from God and from one another. Satan’s strategy worked so well with Adam and Eve that he uses the same strategy on us today, and it still works!

Through the Natural Law, lies disrupt the beautiful natural order instilled in God’s creation and always lead to negative consequences, such as shame, confusion and division. Lying can have devastating lifelong impacts that span generations. Alternatively, truth leads us to Jesus, who is Truth, and living in truth sets us free from the slavery of lies, free to enjoy good relationships and experience authentic joy.

There has been much debate by theologians, such as St. Augustine, as to whether lying in some situations is okay. St. Augustine warns against all lying. His fear is that allowing exceptions that permit lying opens the door for erroneous rationalization and emotions that lead to lies that are unjustified. He also warned that exceptions for lying introduce the risks of becoming a habitual liar.

However, is lying justified in situations such as when the Nazi soldiers asked a Polish family if they were hiding Jews,? Or, is lying justified when someone asks how you are doing and you say, “Good”, when you are really struggling? So, how do we know when lying doesn’t break the 8th Commandment? Without dissecting the theology of lying, the short answer is , lying introduces confusion and hides the



truth which damages relationships and leads us away from Jesus, Who is Truth. And, through the confusion we lose the clarity of thought and freedom of living free and joy-filled lives.

To more fully understand the Catholic Church's teaching on truth and lying, carefully read paragraphs 2464 – 2513 in the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

To become better aware of the lies that we have grown blind to, the list below is a breakdown of the types of lies along with some examples.

White Lies – False responses given to avoid hurting other's feelings, e.g., "Yes, I really do like your new haircut. (*Gag, cough, smile.*)" To avoid white lies, we should be loving, respectful and sincere in giving a true response that will be helpful and not hide the truth.

Fib/Exaggeration/Boasting – A false statement to impress someone or diminish someone's credibility. This type of lie is prone to becoming habitual lying, e.g., "I have done that a million times." Or, "You never get to work on time."

Half-truth – Withholding some of what is necessary for others to assess the full truth, e.g., telling your boss the third quarter preliminary sales are up twenty percent, but intentionally leaving out that the final results will be considerably less.

Gossip/Fabrication/Plotting – Talking about someone with the intent of damaging their reputation or boosting your own, e.g., "Did you hear that Bob might lose his job again?"

Flattery – Insincere compliments that misleads others to think they are better than they are. Flattery is often used insincerely to make others like us, e.g., "Your cooking is absolutely the best."

Compulsive/Habitual – Frequent use of any one or multiple forms of lying. Habitual lying is a symptom of severe confusion and insecurity.

Breaking promises – Making a promise and then not keeping that promise. Or, making a promise with little or no intention to keep the promise, e.g., "I promise I will make it up to you."

Living a lie – Portraying to be someone we are not or living contrary to reality, e.g., Living above our income to impress others or being in denial of our talents and the person God created us to be.

Disclosing Secrets – Sharing something that was told to you in confidence, e.g., "I'm not supposed to tell you this, but...."

Euphemisms – Flowery words that hide the real meaning of something bad. For example, "freedom of choice," "death-with-dignity" and "right-sizing the workforce."

Bold-faced/Blatant lies – A direct false statement that we know is not true and is intended to mislead someone.

Group Discussion/Personal Reflection

1. Circle the face below that best represents how well you avoid telling lies and uphold what is true?





Why? _____

2. How can you best explain to your children/grandchildren the importance of being truthful?

Family Activity

1. Read the story of Adam and Eve in Genesis 3:1-13 and discuss it with your children. In your discussion, include the following points.
 - a. God gave Adam and Eve everything in the garden to enjoy.
 - b. Life was good and they were free to live as they wanted.
 - c. There was only one rule, which was to not eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil.
 - d. The serpent used the following tricks.
 1. The serpent, who is the devil, first asked a question to make Eve doubt God.
 2. Instead of walking away from the serpent, Eve continued to listen.
 3. The serpent lied and made a promise to trick Eve.
 4. Adam remained silent and did not protect Eve.
 - e. After disobeying, Adam and Eve blamed others for their disobedience.
 - f. Adam and Eve's freedom was restricted. They were no longer free to enjoy the garden.
 - g. Adam and Eve hid themselves and life became difficult for them.
2. Talk about some real-life situations in which Satan tries to trick us and the problems it causes.
3. After your discussion, enjoy some dessert. As you do, turn your treat into a lesson about lying. To do this you will need a carton of the family's favorite ice-cream, salt and pepper.
 - a. Before serving everyone their portion of ice-cream, scoop up just one bowl.
 - b. Tell the kids that the ice-cream represents truth. Talk about how truth is good and comes from God. Explain that truth makes life enjoyable and delicious like the ice-cream.
 - c. Then, sprinkle generous portions of salt and pepper over the ice-cream and tell them that the salt and pepper are like lies that make what is good, taste bad.
 - d. Let each of the children sprinkle some salt and pepper. Do they want to add a little or a lot?
 - e. Have each person take a bite of the ice-cream and then have each person describe what the salty lies did to the delicious ice-cream.
 - f. Scoop up new servings for each member of the family. Ask the kids if they want any salt or pepper on their ice-cream. Why did they not want salt?
 - g. Enjoy!

Suggested Reading & Resources

Genesis 3
Sirach 27
Wisdom 7:7-30
Catechism of the Catholic Church 2464 – 2513



THE NINTH & TENTH COMMANDMENTS

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor." Exodus 20:17

When we covet, we develop an inordinate emotional attachment to something, and our attachment becomes so great that we push God out of the center of our lives and replace Him with the object of our desire. The object of the desire can be a person, something material or it can be something intangible such as prestige, pleasure, entertainment or success.

Having become obsessed, we become blind to the authentic goodness and purpose for which the object was intended by God. Then, in our blindness and striving to possess it, we jeopardize other intrinsically good things, such as relationships, physical and spiritual health, dignity, and the future.

Having a covetous heart entices a person to violate the Commandments that pertain to lying, stealing, adultery and killing. And most sadly, coveting is a form of idolatry that violates the first Commandment of not having strange gods.

But knowing that coveting is what entices us to break the first eight Commandments, we can use this to our advantage. Becoming aware of what we covet helps identify specific virtues to cultivate, giving us the prudence and fortitude to live according to the Commandments and reap their rewards. How cool is that?

Coveting is a condition of the heart. When we become aware of what we covet, we begin to foresee when we are approaching a danger zone (near occasion of sin) and can then avoid the temptation. For example, Jesus warns us about any lust or anger we have in our heart as being precursors to adultery and murder.

There are several conditions of coveting that are helpful for understanding how coveting operates.

Discontentment causes us to diminish what we have, grumble, complain and wallow in self-pity, and, instead of celebrating the achievements of others, we celebrate their misfortunes.

Greed makes us feel that enough is never enough. Greed continually makes us want more money, more time, more knowledge, more food, more sex, more entertainment, more prestige. Greed makes us bitter, self-centered and blind to important responsibilities and precious relationships. Greed causes us to become a slave to our "strange" gods as they demand an inordinate amount of our time, attention and love.

Envy is the most dangerous symptom of a covetous heart. The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines envy as, "The sadness at the sight of another's goods and the immoderate desire to acquire them for oneself, even unjustly." The intense emotion of envy drives people to distort reality, leading to poor judgement and malicious actions such as slander, vandalism and even murder.



Misplaced Trust is another characteristic of coveting that places trust in things of the world instead of in God. By sowing doubt and a lie, Satan was quick to transfer Eve’s trust from God to himself. With the trust misplaced, Eve was an easy target of the false promise of becoming “like God.”

When we drift from observing the First and Third Commandments, we begin to covet worldly gods. These other gods begin to consume us and further push God and His authentic love to the margins of our hearts and, in time, leave us feeling empty.

Group Discussion/Personal Reflection

1. Circle the face below that best represents how well you are grateful for all you have been blessed with. Family, health, job, home, etc.



Why? _____

2. What allows coveting to enter our heart and what problems does coveting cause?

3. How can you teach the children in your life how coveting sets the stage for stealing, lying and break all the other Commandments?

Family Activity

1. To prepare, think of each family member’s favorite treat and purchase it. If possible, make each treat different and specific to each family member.
2. Wrap each treat and write one family name on each. But, write the name of someone who does NOT consider this their favorite treat.
3. Have each child think of something that another person has that makes them really jealous.
4. Have them write it on a piece of paper. (Parents can play along too.)
5. Next, have them answer write their answers to the following questions. Don’t discuss them. Just have them write their answers.
 - a. When you think about this, how does it make you feel about the person?
 - b. Would having what that other person has help you be a better person? How?
 - c. What would it take to have what they have?
 - d. What is more important to you: God, or the thing you are jealous about?
6. Read Exodus 20:17 and explain to them what it means to covet
“You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.”
7. Give each person the wrapped treat with their name and have them open them one at a time, but not eat the treat.



8. Hopefully, when a family member opens their treat, the member who likes that treat the most will wish it was for them.
9. After all the treats are open, ask the question, “Do any of you feel jealous?” Laugh and have some fun figuring out how everyone can have what they like most.

Suggested Reading & Resources

Romans 7

1 Timothy 6:7-19

Catechism of the Catholic Church 2514 – 2557

Book *The Pearl* by John Steinbeck



THE “ELEVENTH COMMANDMENT”

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, until the end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20

With such astonishing wisdom and goodness packed into the Commandments, it is woefully unfortunate that our culture has brushed aside the Commandments, ignored them and perceived them as just a list of outdated rules imposed on us by a demanding God.

Wisdom of the past warned that future generations would forget the Commandments and suffer the consequences. Would you agree that that time is now, and the consequences are becoming increasingly evident in today’s culture?

It doesn’t have to be this way. With the power of the Holy Spirit, the insight of your experiences and the appreciation you have gained in this book, you have the wisdom, the authority and responsibility to teach the greatness of the Commandments to those whom God has put in your life.

For forty years Moses taught the Commandments to his Israelite family so they could enter the promised land. He understood the power of the Commandments and, with the same earnestness that a parent sends their children off to college or into the world, Moses stood on the banks of the Jordan River and using his last opportunity he warned his Israelite family of the dangers of forgetting God’s Commandments. This was his warning.

See, I have today set before you life and good, death and evil. If you obey the commandments of the LORD, your God, which I am giving you today, loving the LORD, your God, and walking in his ways, and keeping his commandments, statutes and ordinances, you will live and grow numerous, and the LORD, your God, will bless you in the land you are entering to possess.

If, however, your heart turns away and you do not obey, but are led astray and bow down to other gods and serve them, I tell you today that you will certainly perish; you will not have a long life on the land which you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.

I call heaven and earth today to witness against you: I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Choose life, then, that you and your descendants may live, by loving the LORD, your God, obeying his voice, and holding fast to him. For that will mean life for you, a long life for you to live on the land which the LORD swore to your ancestors, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give to them. Deuteronomy 30:15 -20

As his final effort to teach his Israelites family what was most important for them to remember and establish as the foundation for success in the promised land, Moses laid out their options. But the decision to listen and trust in God’s wisdom was in the hands of the Israelites. Scripture shows that when the Israelites trusted and obeyed, their trust in God’s wisdom paved the way for prosperity, peace and harmony. When they set aside God’s wisdom and replaced it with mere human wisdom, confusion, evil and destruction soon followed.



As you finish your journey through the Ten Commandments, you have a decision. Will you keep what you learned to yourself and hope your family and friends figure it out for themselves? Or, will you be intentional to share the wisdom of the Commandments with them so your family and friends and future generations will learn and trust God's gift of the Commandments and experience the prosperity, peace and harmony they promise?

Are the Commandments important enough to teach them to the children in your life so they can avoid the pitfalls of confusion and instead, stay on the path that leads them to Jesus...to heaven? If so, how intentional should you be about teaching them? Should you hope that the school will teach them and teach them well? Will they learn them through television, social media or the music they listen to? If not you, who? If not now, when?

What is it going to take for future generations to know, understand and live the Commandments? It is going to take you and me, making a commitment. Teaching them the greatness and purpose of the Commandments and helping them apply the Commandments in their everyday challenges and showing them how they are a recipe for a wonderful life.

In the last chapter of three of the four Gospels (Mathew, Mark and Luke), Jesus instructs the apostles to carry forward all that he had taught them and to go and make disciples of all nations. Jesus' Great Commission, which I refer to as the 11th Commandment, was not only intended for the apostles. His Great Commission is also intended for you and for me and for all generations. It is not a suggestion. It is a commandment.

When Jesus sent the apostles to make disciples of all nations, He promised that He would be with them and He sent His Holy Spirit upon them at Pentecost to guide them and to give them courage in the midst of their fear and uncertainty. Through your baptism and through the Sacrament of Confirmation, God sent down the Holy Spirit upon you to guide you and to give you courage in the midst of your fear and uncertainty.

Therefore, be courageous and go make disciples starting with your family and friends. Be assured that the same Holy Spirit will be with you and guide you. Just like with the Apostles, the Holy Spirit won't give you a full view of all that you will do. Rather, He just gives you a view of what to do first. He wants you to take that first step and trust that He will then show you the next step.

As a starting point, use this booklet as a teaching guide to engage your family and friends in discussions about everyday life. Be intentional and make a monthly date with your children and grandchildren to go out for ice cream and engage with them about what is happening in their world. Dream with them and warn them of the dangers of disobeying the Commandments and how doing so will rob them of their dreams. Teach them the hidden secrets of the Commandments and the wonderful life they offer.

At first, children are likely to resist and complain. This is no different than when they complain about having to eat vegetables before dessert or go to bed at a reasonable time. So, don't be discouraged and let it go. **THIS IS TOO IMPORTANT**. Instead, persevere in your monthly dates and, in time, they will appreciate and look forward to these special moments with you. We have precious little time for these precious holy conversations with them and before you know it, they will grow up and be out on their own. So, don't hesitate. Get started today.



To help you get started with the young children in your life, I encourage you to make use of the Family Activities we have provided you in each chapter of this book. Let us know how your family activities turn out by sending an email to Admin@IfULoveMe.org and include a photo of your family as you do the activities. If you have suggestions on how to make the Family Activities more engaging, let us know.

If your children are already adults, pray about how to best engage with them in this important mission. Pray, listen and then **take action**. The same Holy Spirit that was with the Apostles will be with you. It may be as simple as telling them about this book or simply saying, “What do you think about all the division in the world and how do we begin to restore common decency?” Then, in the course of the discussion, introduce the idea of the Ten Commandments and let the Holy Spirit guide the conversation from there.

To discover more about sharing the Commandments with others, we have developed a video series that you can watch and share with others. Consider gathering family and friends to explore and discover the Commandments in your home or church and watch the videos and have some good conversation to learn from each other. To access the videos and other resources go to IfULoveMe.org.

Thank you for caring about the children in your life and their salvation. May our amazing Creator and Savior Jesus Christ be with you as you carry on His mission of leading others to the ultimate Promised Land where Jesus, the Holy Spirit and our Father offer us complete joy, unbounded freedom and the harmony God has desired for all His children from the very beginning.

Group Discussion/Personal Reflection

1. How might you overcome any obstacles and fears you have about being a disciple of the Commandments? _____

2. In what ways has God prepared you, with your specific skills and specific place in life, to be a disciple? _____

3. What would be the best approach for you to be a disciple of the Commandments? To your family? With a group of friends? In your parish? At Work? _____

4. What is the best next steps for you to take to teach the Commandments and when will you begin? _____



Family Activity

This family activity, hosting a Mezuzah ceremony, is a fun and easy way to get started as a Disciple and begin teaching the wonder and wisdom of the Commandments. To make the ceremony lively and fun, invite extended family members, members of your parish family, friends & neighbors. Or, just keep it simple and have the ceremony with your immediate family.

The Mezuzah ceremony includes

1. Reading the contents of the mezuzah and a few scripture passages
2. Hanging a framed list of the Ten Commandments in a prominent place in the home.
3. Hanging the Mezuzah on the doorpost(s) of your home.
4. Celebrating with some good food, friendship and good conversation. In other words, make it a party.

For a full outline of the Mezuzah ceremony go to IfULoveMe.org/resources.

Suggested Reading & Resources

Matthew 28:16-20

Luke 24:36-49

Mark 16:14-18

Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary Mission by John R. Wood

Catechism of the Catholic Church 1302-1305, 849-852, 863-864, 1295-1300



THE MISSION OF *IF U LOVE ME*

Our ministry here at *If U Love Me* is based on what Jesus told the Apostles during the Last Supper in John 14:15.

“If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

While Jesus is making a statement, He is also asking the question, “Do you love me enough to trust and obey my commandments?” The answer to this question first depends upon us knowing and understanding them. Unfortunately, today's society has largely forgotten the Commandments and are therefore no longer basing basic moral decisions on them. This describes where I was, in regard to the Commandments, several years ago.

To restore the Commandments back to the place of honor and respect God intended, our mission here at *If U Love Me* is:

To restore God’s truth and the timeless wisdom of His Ten Commandments in our world of confusion.

To accomplish this mission, we have created a variety of resources to make learning and teaching the Commandments interesting, easy and fun. We encourage you to visit our web site at IfULoveMe.org to access various resources to learn and teach the Commandments.

Invite us to come share ***God’s Recipe For A Wonderful Life*** with your church, ministry or group. We offer a variety of presentation options including short talks for lunch or dinner meetings, longer presentations for retreats, conferences and RCIA formation. We have also created a video series designed as an adult faith formation course designed for parishes, small groups and for personal viewing.

To fulfill our mission we have ambitious plans for developing and distributing resources. We depend on donations from caring individuals and foundations to make this possible. If you are such an individual or if you participate in making decisions for a foundation, please consider helping us achieve our mission. – Thank You!

Donations can be made at our website at IfULoveMe.org/donate or mailed to us at 905 Carnoustie Dr, Kansas City, MO 64145.

If you have a story about the Commandments to share or suggestions, please contact us.

Make it a Joy-filled life,

Ed Van Buskirk

Ed@IfULoveMe.org

816-941-9567



*I recommend **God's Recipe for a Wonderful Life** for use in parish and family catechesis and renewal. These easy-to-use materials show how knowing God's Commandments and how they relate practically to daily life can transform our choices and lead to happiness.*

Most Reverend James V. Johnston, Jr.

Bishop of Kansas City-St. Joseph

The Ten Commandments have long been recognized as a bedrock for civilization and an important foundation for the moral life. Each of us would do well to immerse ourselves in the meaning of these 'Ten Words' from God.

Joe Heschmeyer

Apologist, Catholic Answers

I've had to relearn a lot of things I memorized as a child -- including the Ten Commandments. Recognizing God's commands as an invitation to deeper relationship with Him and a plan for my daily life has been a great gift. I encourage you to explore this book for insights into your life and behaviors through the lens of Christian covenant.

Emily Lopez

Lead Consultant, Adult Evangelization & Young Adult Ministry

Archdiocese of Kansas City Kansas

*We're all going to live forever. The question is where? **God's Recipe For A Wonderful Life** engages the Commandments as a guide to answer that question and open previously unseen doors to grow in deeper confidence of God's Merciful love and joy-filled relationships. The book on its own is an invaluable guide to closer relationships with God and with others. The associated video series offers a very powerful accompaniment to the book.*

Michael McGlenn

Husband, Father, Founder of Sistine Films and Adore Him Daily

Ed has done every Christian family an enormous favor. In this book, and the accompanying video series, Ed has repropounded the importance of the Ten Commandments. He has done so with a wonderful insight into both the obvious and subtle implications of each commandment while providing thought-provoking questions, resources, and activities to make each commandment come alive. Don't miss this family affirming work.

Dan Spencer

Writer, Speaker and Author, *Every Parents Battle*



IfULoveMe.org