

## We All Need Grace

<sup>“</sup><sup>12</sup> All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. <sup>13</sup> For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God’s sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. <sup>14</sup> (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law. <sup>15</sup> They show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts sometimes accusing them and at other times even defending them.)” (Romans 2:12-15 NIV)

Have you ever wondered why some values are universally accepted? Few people will say murder, adultery, and stealing are okay, and people who say those things are okay are often looked down on as evil. Why is that? The reason is found in the above Bible passage; God gave us consciences that know His standards of right and wrong. Many people find the Bible offensive or treat it like a book of fairy tales, but few people will argue with its teachings on morality. Apart from a handful of commandments that have become politically incorrect, people generally regard the Bible’s commandments as good. So how do you measure up?

Many people feel if they are a good person, they will go to Heaven. But the Bible doesn’t support that belief. What the Bible teaches is that we are all sinners, and God’s justice demands we either receive His forgiveness, or pay for those sins in Hell (Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23). It isn’t hard to see why when you look at the Bible’s commandments. To be truly good people, we would have to live up to a standard far beyond our abilities. This article will present some of the commandments in the Bible, so you can determine whether or not you need the forgiveness Christ offers.

*Love God perfectly:*

<sup>“</sup><sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.” <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment.”” (Matthew 22:37-38 NIV)

This commandment alone proves us all to be sinners. The greatest saint on Earth couldn’t live up to this standard (Galatians 5:17, Romans 8:7). The reason why is found in the three letter word “all.” To be truly good people, we would have to love God with all our beings. This includes our emotions, but it also entails making every decision in life with the intention of pleasing God (1 John 5:3). If we are honest with ourselves, none of us are that good.

*Love everyone to the same degree you love yourself:*

<sup>“</sup><sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”” (Matthew 22:29 NIV)

As with the first commandment, there is a catch to it. It isn’t enough to just love others; you have to love them to the same degree you love yourself. Who honestly does that? This love can’t merely be a friendly disposition towards others either; this love has to express itself in all your actions towards others (1 John 3:18). We also can’t pick and choose who we love. To truly live up to God’s standards, we would have to go as far as loving our enemies (Matthew 5:43-44).

People often say all a person has to do to be a good person is love God and love people, but none of us love to the degree we are commanded to love. We all fall painfully short.

*The Golden Rule:*

“<sup>12</sup> So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12 NIV)

Every commandment so far has a catch to it, and this commandment is no different. Do you treat others as you wish to be treated *in everything you do*? Are you sometimes inconsiderate? Do you only keep this rule with people who are good to you? It’s such a simple commandment, but it often proves us to be sinners.

*No idols:*

“<sup>3</sup> You shall have no other gods before me.” (Exodus 20:3 NIV)

Once again, we all fall short. Does anything in your life ever take priority over God? I’ll give a short list of “gods” that people give their attention to, and I want you to ask yourself if any of these things are ever more important to you than God:

- 1) Your family
- 2) Your friends
- 3) Your popularity
- 4) Money
- 5) Accumulating possessions
- 6) Your career
- 7) Your hobbies
- 8) Your goals and dreams in life
- 9) Pleasure

The list could go on, but do you see the point? Even the best of us chase after idols.

*Don’t misuse God’s name:*

“<sup>7</sup> You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.” (Exodus 20:7 NIV)

*No selfish anger:*

“<sup>21</sup> You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ <sup>22</sup> But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell.” (Matthew 5:21-22 NIV)

It’s one thing to be angry over injustices in the lives of others and in the world around us. This is known as righteous anger. But anger that refuses to love for any other reason is a violation of God’s standards.

*No lust:*

“<sup>27</sup> You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ <sup>28</sup> But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.” (Matthew 5:27-28 NIV)

We’re all guilty once again. There are many commandments in the Bible about sex. We all know the Bible condemns adultery, pre-marital sex, and homosexuality, but God’s standards of purity go beyond that to forbidding even mere lust. If you lust after anyone other than your wife or husband, you are guilty of adultery. Some people are asexual and have no issue with this standard, but the average person falls painfully short. And all you need to do to be an adulterer is break this commandment one time.

*No lying:*

“<sup>25</sup> Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.” (Ephesians 4:25 NIV)

Lying is a sin. Do you see how brutal the demands of God’s Law are? The thing about God’s judgement is it doesn’t discriminate. A lie is always a lie. The casual lie you tell that isn’t a big deal is a lie. The lies you tell throughout the course of a work day are lies. Every white lie you tell is still a lie. God can certainly be merciful, and He often is, but there is no mercy on the day of judgement for those who reject His forgiveness (Revelation 20:11-15).

*No Stealing:*

“<sup>15</sup> You shall not steal.” (Exodus 20:15 NIV)

This is another commandment where the degree of the offense doesn’t matter. If you stole something small and trivial, you are judged as a thief.

*No Coveting:*

“<sup>17</sup> You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.” (Exodus 20:17 NIV)

*Honor your parents:*

“<sup>12</sup> Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.” (Exodus 20:12 NIV)

“Boys will be boys” won’t fly of the day of judgment. A truly good person will have never disobeyed their parents while they were living under their roof (Ephesians 6:1). Also consider that there is more to this commandment than merely obeying your parents while you are under their roof. We are called to honor our parents. This means you can never speak ill of them. You must show them respect at all times. You have to show them honor as adults, even if you don’t want to. This is another commandment that proves us to be sinners.

*The point of everything:*

If I wanted to make this list longer, I could. But the point has been made. We all need forgiveness. You may be a good person, but by God's standards, none of us are good (Romans 3:10-20). So what is the solution to our problem? While we can't make ourselves righteous by our actions, God is willing to make us righteous through faith in Jesus Christ:

“<sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. <sup>25</sup> God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith.” (Romans 3:23-25c NIV)

If you wish to know how you can receive this forgiveness, the message of Christianity is found in this ministry's one-page flyer and free booklet. You can find them on the ministry's website. God bless you.