

Confirmation Session 2:

The Ten Commandments

Make Up Packet

This packet has been designed for the student, with the aid and supervision of a parent, to complete at home when he/she was unable to attend the class session. There will be numerous readings, Bible verses to look up and write about, and questions to reflect on. It is expected that this packet will take a little effort on the part of the student - and a corresponding effort on the part of a parent - to learn on an individual basis what we worked together on in class session.

Along with completing this packet, the student will also be required to complete the Family Discussion Guide correlating to this unit. Parents will need to work with the student on the readings and discussion questions. Following the completion of the separate Family Discussion Guide, the parent is asked to complete the "Parent Report Form" attached to the back of the Family Discussion Guide.

The **Make Up Packet** and the **Family Discussion Guide** should both be completed and returned to the teachers at the next scheduled class session.

Please remember that you are also responsible to complete **10 Worship Summaries** during the course of the year. Please work to have at least half of them done before Christmas. Worship Summary forms are in the office in a plastic file box hung inside the office door.

1 - OUR MASTERPIECE GOD

What does it mean to say that God is "the Lord your God"?

These words remind us that God loves us and has chosen us. God gave the Ten Commandments to help the people of God live together peacefully.

What does the First Commandment forbid us to do?

It forbids us to believe in or serve any gods but the one true God.

"I alone am the Lord your God. No other god may share my glory; I will not let idols share my praise" (Isaiah 42:8 TEV).

What does it mean to say "We are to fear God above everything else"?

It means we should respect God more than anything else.

"We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

The First Commandment

You shall have no other gods.

What does this mean?

We should fear, love, and trust God above all things.

If you were asked to describe God, what would you say? Would you try to write God's job description, as if you'd been asked to describe a plumber? It is simple enough to say, "A plumber is a person who installs and repairs water pipes and other components of a water system." Talking about what God does is harder. And even if you came up with pages and pages describing God, you could not produce a perfect definition of God. We cannot produce a perfect image of God with words, or even with paint, canvas, clay, or stone.

Faith gives us the picture

But even if our human tools are incapable of duplicating the true image of God, it is possible to have a picture of God. How? By faith! God has given us the gift of faith in order that we might grasp that which cannot be touched or seen, drawn or described. Faith has the unique quality of perceiving truths that are too majestic for us to handle in any other way.

Think of it this way: we are given an empty picture frame which could be called our "faith frame." Our only instructions are to create a masterpiece for the frame entitled, "God is this and more." Though it is true that neither paints, pencils, nor pastels can duplicate the true image of God, the language of faith uses them to convey thoughts, ideas, words, and symbols. We use them in formulating the masterpiece that fits into our faith frame.

We carry our faith frame with us all through life. Thoughts and ideas, words and symbols come from everywhere and we tuck them a way in the frame. During childhood we hear stories and see pictures about God, so we include them. As we walk under lofty trees or run for shelter from a thundering storm, we continue to collect thoughts and ideas about God. As we grow older, we learn that the Bible is filled with words and stories about God. The Bible becomes a rich resource for helping us develop our masterpiece. All of these ideas go in our faith frame.

There is much, much more about God that we can never grasp or understand. If somebody asks, "What do you think God is like?" we lead them to our masterpiece and unveil before them everything that we have collected in our faith frame.

God and us

God begins the Ten Commandments by saying, "I am the Lord your God." God uses the words "your God" so we know that we belong to God. God loves us and has chosen us. Because God has established a covenant relationship with us, God will always be there. Luther says in the Large Catechism that "to have a God properly means to have something in which the heart trusts completely."

God has given us the Commandments to protect us and help the people of God live together peacefully. They describe what God promises us if we hold firm to God's grace in faith. This is much like a parent who sets guidelines for a child out of love and concern for the child's safety and well-being.

Sometimes it is hard for people to believe God's promise. False thoughts, ideas, words, and symbols can infiltrate and disfigure the true picture of God. When that happens, we may turn away from God. Then we are in danger of creating an imitation of the true masterpiece, because we have a god rather than God. Luther said that faith is capable of creating both God and an idol. Such idols are warned against in the First Commandment. God is gracious and merciful, but no pushover. God does not want to share our faith frame with any god or idol. God wants to be all-important in the lives of those who claim to worship God.

Through grace and love, God has given us the gifts of faith and the Ten Commandments. And it is God who makes fulfillment of the Commandments possible.

#1 OUR MASTERPIECE GOD

Read over the preceding pages and then answer the following questions.

1. How do you think the quality of life on earth would be improved if everyone followed the First Commandment?

2. In Isaiah 44:9-20 the prophet Isaiah takes the reader on a guided tour of a “god factory.” As he points out the actions of the ironsmith and the carpenter, he reminds us of the uselessness of such activity. Then he ridicules the emptiness of such a religion. Read the passage and answer the following questions.
 - a. When the god maker has completed carving and setting up his god, he bows down before it and prays. What does the god maker pray? (v. 17)

 - b. What does Isaiah say that makes you suspect that the idol worshiper does not have spiritual satisfaction? (v. 18-20)

3. Since the time of Isaiah, do you think there has been any improvement in the ability of humanly created gods to fulfill our spiritual needs? Explain your answer.

4. Read Matthew 22:37-38. Think of the passage as describing a three-volume set of books. The theme of the three books is “All you wanted to give God and more.” From verse 37, find appropriate titles for the books and write them below:
 - a. _____

 - b. _____

 - c. _____

2 - GOD'S NAME IS MORE THAN A WORD

How should we use God's name?

To call upon God in time of need and to worship God with praise, prayer, and thanksgiving.

"Call to me when trouble comes; I will save you, and you will praise me"
(Psalm 50 :15 TEV).

Is it enough to hear the Word of God?

No, Christians must also put God's Word into action.

"Do not deceive yourselves by just listening to his word; instead, put it into practice" (James 1 :22 TEV).

What can we conclude from the Third Commandment?

God wants to nurture our spiritual lives.

The Second Commandment

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

What does this mean?

We should to fear and love God so that we do not curse, swear, use satanic arts, lie, or deceive by his name, but call upon it in every trouble, pray, praise, and give thanks.

The Third Commandment

Remember the Sabbath day, by keeping it holy,

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise preaching and his Word, but hold it sacred and gladly hear and learn it.

Have you ever been called by your sister's or brother's name, or had your name mixed up with someone else in a class or on a team? Were you annoyed when that happened?

Names are important. They are an emblem of who we are. If someone confuses your name with someone else's you might wonder if they are confused not only about who you are, but about what you are. You might feel like saying, "I am not Jennifer! I am not Tony! I am not the one who draws, or the one who set the school record in the 60-yard dash! I'm the one who is good at math, and I'm worth remembering too!"

Names were even more important in Bible times. They were not just convenient labels, but represented the very character of the person called by that name. For example, God changed Jacob's name to *Israel*, which means "he who wrestles with God." Jesus named Simon, Peter, because *Peter* means "rock" and Peter was to be the solid base upon which Jesus would build his church.

God's name

The names we have for God express what God is like. God is God. God is our Creator. God is the God of our ancestors, the God of Abraham and Sarah and Isaac and Rebekah. To know God's name is to be reminded of what God has done for us.

Knowing God's name allows us to become acquainted with God. Our Creator wants to develop a relationship with us. God wants to speak to us, but wants us to listen, too. Knowing God's name is also a sign of God's presence among us. We can use God's name "to call on him in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving."

#2 GOD'S NAME IS MORE THAN A WORD

Read over the preceding pages and then answer the following questions.

1. Read the two stories in Mark 2:23-3:6 where Jesus teaches about the Sabbath. For the Jews the Sabbath was the special day set aside for worship. In the first story, Jesus was going through grain fields on the Sabbath; in the second one, Jesus was in the synagogue on the Sabbath.
 - a. In each story, what persons were mentioned who were friends of Jesus or whom Jesus befriended?
 - b. What persons were watching to see if Jesus would do anything wrong that could be used as evidence against him?
2. In Mark 2:23-28, what did the disciples do that was against the Jewish law?
 - a. What reasoning did Jesus use to prove that they were not doing something contrary to God's will?
3. In Mark 3:1-6, what did Jesus do that was against the Jewish law?
 - a. What reasoning did Jesus use to prove he was not doing something contrary to God's will?
4. Read Mark 2:27 again. What did Jesus say concerning the Sabbath?
 - a. Is Jesus' statement similar to your attitude toward Sunday, the Lord's day? Explain your answer.

Read the following story and answer the questions listed after it.

The Cat and the Bedpost

There is a story about a devout Christian and his cat. Each day the Christian would spend time alone praying and meditating on the words he read in Scripture. He would always meditate in his bedroom since it was the quietest place in his home.

He loved this quiet time, and so did his cat. The cat loved this opportunity to snuggle up, purr, and receive attention from her master.

However, eventually the cat demanded too much attention and began to disturb the prayers of the man, and so he tied the cat to the bedpost.

The man's daughter noticed how helpful this time was for her father, and so when she established her own home, she followed her father's example and spent time praying and studying Scripture. She too went into her bedroom, tied her cat to the bedpost, and proceeded to meditate. When she had children, she had less and less time and so she did not spend as much time with God each day.

The time came when the daughter's son grew up and felt he also should follow some of the family's traditions. But the pace of his life was even busier than his mother's. His drive to work was over two hours a day. His house payments were larger than his grandfather's and mother's put together. He seemed to have less and less time, and so he simply tied the cat to the bedpost each day for a short while, without spending any time to pray and meditate about what he read in God's Word.

1. Why do you think the grandfather spent time with God in meditation and prayer?
2. What did the daughter's son miss by tying the cat to the bedpost without spending time praying and meditating?
3. The grandson simply remembered the tradition of tying the cat to the bedpost, but forgot or did not know, the reason why his grandfather and mother had done the same thing with their cats. Can you think of a tradition you observe even though you may not know the real reason you observe it? (e.g., the tradition of hanging stockings on the mantle for Christmas, coloring Easter eggs, etc.)
4. Read Luke 10:38-42 and answer the following questions.
 - a. When Jesus arrived, what did the two women do?
 - b. Why was Mary's choice, listening to Jesus, more important than helping Martha serve?
 - c. How do we sometimes follow Martha's example rather than Mary's?
 - d. What does God promise to those who hear His Word? Refer to Romans 10:17 and Psalm 119:105 to answer.

3 - LEARNING TO BE LED

How do we honor our parents?

When we think highly of them and repay them with kindness and love for the care they have given us.

"Let them first learn their religious duty to their own family and make some return to their parents for this is acceptable in the sight of God" (1 Timothy 5:4).

What is meant by "others in authority"?

This includes others who are placed over us, like teachers, employers, and rulers.

When may we refuse to obey those in authority?

When they ask us to go against God's will.

"We must obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29)

What does God require of people in authority?

That they are worthy of their position.

"Parents, do not treat your children in such a way as to make them angry. Instead, raise them with Christian discipline and instruction" (Ephesians 6:4 TEV).

The Fourth Commandment

Honor your father and your mother.

What does this mean for us?

We should fear and love God so that we do not despise or anger our parents and other authorities, but honor them, serve and obey them, love and cherish them.

How much of what you learned in kindergarten do you remember now? Though many years have passed since then, you probably remember almost everything! That's because the things you were taught, like the alphabet, counting to 10, recognizing colors and tying your shoes, are basic to almost everything you have learned since.

In a similar way, your relationship with your parents is basic to your social development. This first relationship has shaped all those that have come after it. From your parents, you have learned to be led. You have learned to respect authority.

Authority with a limit

You have been under the office of your parents' authority since you came to them. Parents hold an "office," just as mayors, presidents, or prime ministers do. In fact, parents have the highest office in creation, because God gives us life through them.

As your world has expanded beyond your family, you have developed many other kinds of relationships. You have come under the authority of teachers, government officials, and many others outside your family. God has designed this system of human leadership. As you grow older, you may find that, more and more often, you are also a leader of others. Your authority comes from God, too.

Both leading others and being led have certain responsibilities. Irresponsibility at either end of the system can cause problems. Leaders may do a good job but still not get the respect they deserve. Sometimes leaders do a poor job, leaving those under their authority without power or guidance.

The one limit that God has set on the Fourth Commandment is that no earthly authority is as important as God's authority. Parents, government officials, teachers, and other leaders are God's representatives, but they don't take God's place. Ultimately, each of us is responsible only to God.

A promise is included

The original text of this Commandment in Exodus 20:12 includes a promise that accompanies the Law. "Honor your father and your mother, *that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you.*" Paul points out in Ephesians 6:2 that "this is the first commandment with a promise." Many people have tried to explain what this promise means. Perhaps we will never know exactly. But it is significant that there is a promise connected with the fulfillment of the Commandment. There is a reward of blessing connected with obedience. This positive approach should give us a reason to hope for the fulfillment of that promise.

#3 LEARNING TO BE LED

Read over the preceding pages and then answer the following questions.

1. Read Ephesians 6:1-3 and 1 Peter 2:17. These verses speak of the kind of relationship necessary between individuals and between individuals and groups. Study these passages and write the words you find which tell how we should behave towards:
 - a. Parents _____
 - b. All persons _____
 - c. God _____
2. What does Ephesians 6:4 say to parents regarding their children?
3. Your parents are God's representatives in your house, but they don't take God's place. Look up Matthew 10:37. What is the one limit that God has set on the Fourth Commandment?

4 - HOW COMMON IS KILLING?

Why does Luther say we should "not hurt our neighbor in any way"?

Besides forbidding killing, this Commandment forbids other ways we hurt people, and even requires that we make every effort to help others improve their lives.

"Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him" (1 John 3:15).

What should we think of human life?

We should regard it as God's creation and therefore protect it whenever possible.

Who deserves our kindness and helpfulness ?

Everyone, even our enemies.

"But I say to you that hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you" (Luke 6:27).

The Fifth Commandment

You shall not murder.

What does this mean for us?

We should fear and love God so that we do not hurt or harm our neighbor in his body, but help and support him in every physical need.

"I could never kill anyone!"

That's the way most of us feel. Even the *thought* of taking someone else's life is repulsive and terrifying. But sometimes we get carried away. Someone gets us angry, and all of a sudden we hear ourselves saying, "I'll kill you for that!"

But such words are just that - only words. When we get excited, we exaggerate. *Saying* we feel like killing somebody isn't anything like doing it. Or is it? Could this way of speaking betray a deeper truth about us?

Most of us have occasional outbursts of anger. What we may not realize is that such outbursts have a way of pulling us into violent action. Anger may begin as a small trickling stream, but it can grow into a raging river. Many of us come closer to causing someone serious harm than we like to think.

Other kinds of "killing"

Of course, all anger doesn't end in murder. But murder is not the only kind of killing. In Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said that becoming angry, insulting, or calling someone a name are also ways of killing. Words can be powerful weapons. They can hurt a person's inside as badly as physical abuse can harm a person's outside. All of us are capable of hurting by words. That is why we need to take seriously what Jesus said about the Fifth Commandment.

What would it mean to take this Commandment literally? Would we all have to become vegetarians and pacifists? Would it mean that we could never defend ourselves from personal attack, or protect our loved ones from murdering maniacs? Would it mean that children should never play cops and robbers? How far does this Commandment go?

Life is sacred

Maybe the best way to answer this question is to think about another question: Why did God give us this Commandment? As creator and giver of life, God looks upon all life as sacred.

The gift of life must be protected. God wants us to respect the lives of others so that we do not hurt our neighbor in any way, whether with words or with actions, whether openly or in secret.

#4 HOW COMMON IS KILLING?

Read over the preceding pages and then answer the following questions.

1. Read Matthew 5:21-22. How does Jesus define killing? Circle the answer or answers that you think explain Jesus' teaching.
 - a. Murder
 - b. Insulting someone with words
 - c. Belittling someone's self worth
 - d. Giving someone a "rough time"

2. What are the three levels of anger that are mentioned in Matthew 5:21-22?
 - a. "But I tell you that anyone who is _____ with his brother will be subject to judgment."
 - b. "Again, anyone who says to his brother, _____ is answerable to the Sanhedrin." (footnote says this is a term of contempt or hatred)
 - c. "But anyone who says " _____ " will be in danger of the fire of hell."

 - d. What is the consequence of all three (hint: it's the same as what is stated for the consequence for someone one who murders (v. 21)?)

3. Read Matthew 5:23-26. How important is it to settle your differences with others?

Read the following story and then answer the questions listed.

Once there was a boy who carved a small boat out of wood. Upon attaching a small sail to it, he rushed down to a nearby lake to try it out. At first it would not move in the water, but after pushing it farther away from shore, it began to take off, so fast, in fact, that it went beyond the little boy's reach. Soon a gust of wind came and pushed it far beyond even his sight. Saddened, he returned home.

A few weeks later, as he was walking past a hobby shop in a local mall, he saw his sailboat in the display window. He rushed into the store and told the owner that the boat belonged to him. The manager of the store said he was sorry, but that the boat

now belonged to him. Someone had found it and asked the store owner to sell it for him.

“How much” the little boy asked, “do you want for it?”

“Three dollars,” said the store manager.

The little boy rushed home and went rummaging through his drawers and piggy bank to see how much money he had. He discovered he had just enough. He rushed to the hobby shop and purchased the boat. As he walked home, he was so happy. He held the boat close to his chest and said, “You’re twice mine. Once you were mine when I carved you out of wood. Then you disappeared. Now I have bought you back to be mine again.”

1. In what ways is this story similar to what happened between God and people?
2. What does 1 Peter 2:9-10 tell us about our importance?

5 - PROTECTING RELATIONSHIPS

What does God require of us in the Sixth Commandment?

That we honor marriage and avoid sins against it either before or during marriage.
"Marriage is to be honored by all, and husbands and wives must be faithful to each other. God will judge those who are immoral and those who commit adultery"
(Hebrews 13:4 TEV).

How do we sin against this Commandment?

By being unfaithful in marriage or by looking lustfully at others.
"But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28).

Why is it important to be pure even in thought?

Because all sins begin in the heart.
"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander" (Matthew 15:19).

The Sixth Commandment

You shall not commit adultery.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we lead a sexually pure and decent life in what we say and do, and husband and wife love and honor each other.

Does God think sex is a bad thing? Is God saying, in the Sixth Commandment, that Christians shouldn't enjoy themselves?

There is only one kind of relationship closer than friendship, and that's marriage. We all need friends and companionship. But there is no law that says friendship has to last forever. God doesn't limit us to one friend apiece. Friends move in and out of our lives as our interests and situations change. Marriage is meant to last until death parts the two people.

More than friendship

A marriage has all the marks of a good friendship but it goes further. In it, a man and a woman give themselves to one another completely, as lifetime friends to each other and with God. The man and the woman express their love and friendship for each other in many ways, including sexual intercourse.

The purpose of this Commandment is to assure that marriage partners respect their commitment to each other. Adultery breaks into the marriage bond, weakens it, and tries to break it off.

The first thing that adultery kills in a marriage is the friendship between the man and woman. If there are children, they get caught in the trouble, too. Because the third person involved in adultery has family and friends, others in the community are hurt by this breaking of the marriage promise.

Jesus goes one step further and says "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart'" (Matthew 5:27). Jesus knows that adultery can begin in looks and daydreaming. People commit adultery when they look at someone as an object and lose respect for that person. Jesus isn't just speaking of people who are already married, but everyone who looks lustfully. We have a responsibility toward others whether we

are married or not. Though you may not marry for several years or not at all, God is already at work to protect you.

God is not against sex. Nor does God think it's an evil or shameful thing. After all, God made us sexual beings. But God wants us to respect marriage. In marriage, people make a commitment that is more than a friendship. That's why God says not to give your whole body in sexual intercourse to anyone until you have publicly declared that person to be the one with whom you want to spend your life. In this way, God protects the joy of marriage you may have in the future.

#5 PROTECTING RELATIONSHIPS

Read over the preceding pages and then answer the following questions.

Read Genesis 39 to answer the questions below.

Joseph's brothers were jealous of him, so they sold him as a slave to an Ishmaelite caravan going to Egypt. In Egypt Joseph was tempted by his boss's wife to commit adultery with her.

1. What did Potiphar's wife ask Joseph to do? What did she mean by it?
 - a. What was Joseph's response?
 - b. Did Potiphar's wife accept his response? Explain your answer.
2. What happened one day when Joseph was alone working in the house?
 - a. How did Potiphar's wife make Joseph look guilty?
3. What did Potiphar do to Joseph?
4. In what way was Joseph's life better because he didn't commit adultery?
5. Read Romans 12:1 and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. These passages talk about how faith is more than just a spiritual thing - our bodies are important to God, too. Fill in the blanks to complete the phrases below.
 - a. Romans 12:1: ... offer your _____ as _____, holy and pleasing to God. (NIV)
 - b. 1 Corinthians 6:19: ... your _____ is a _____ of the Holy Spirit, who is _____ you, whom you have _____ from God? (NIV)

6 - BEYOND COPS AND ROBBERS

What does the Seventh Commandment forbid us to do?

To take something that does not belong to us.

"Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his hands, so that he may be able to give to those in need" (Ephesians 4:28).

What is required of us?

That we help our neighbors to improve and protect their property.

Since all things belong to God, what is the correct use of God's gifts?

We should use them wisely and in the ways God would want them to be used.

"But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him?" (1 John 3:17).

The Seventh Commandment

You shall not steal.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not take our neighbor's money or possessions, or get them in any dishonest way, but help him to improve and protect his possessions and income.

It would be a sad world if we were honest only because we feared the consequences of being discovered. No government could afford the immense law enforcement system it would need to keep everyone under constant surveillance. Government depends on the people's integrity and honesty to make the system work.

There's an old story about a farmer who paid \$50 for a cow because he had been told she would give 20 quarts of milk a day. After a while the farmer discovered that the cow was giving 25 quarts a day. The farmer went back to the person who had sold him the cow and paid another \$10.

No one made the farmer pay more, but he thought it was the honest thing to do. He felt he had done what was needed to make the deal fair. To him, honesty and fairness were the same thing.

God expects honesty and fairness

God, too, thinks that honesty and fairness go together. That is why the Seventh Commandment goes beyond a warning not to take our neighbor's money or property. It also says that we must not get our neighbor's goods by any unfair dealing or fraud.

The Commandment doesn't stop there, either. Stealing time and money from an employer by loafing on the job, making shady business deals, using misleading advertising, cheating on exams, producing and selling shoddy merchandise, and even consuming more than our share of food, clothing, and energy, are just a few of the ways we steal from our neighbors.

God trusts us to use what we are given to help our neighbors "improve and protect their property and means of making a living." God doesn't have a police force to keep us honest and fair. Yet we can be assured it is to everyone's benefit that we try to keep this Commandment. By asking us to respect others' property and be fair about the way we acquire our own, God seeks to protect each of us. With our goods protected, we can keep what we need and use it to benefit ourselves, our neighbors, and God.

#6 BEYOND COPS AND ROBBERS

Read over the preceding pages and then answer the following questions.

1. Read Amos 8:4-6. In this passage, Amos criticizes the greedy and dishonest merchants of his day who made money at the expense of poor people. These people were so greedy they could hardly wait until the holy days of the new moon and the Sabbath were over, so they could start making money again. In the space below, write an example of greedy behavior that goes on today.
2. In Amos 8:5, Amos tells how the merchants cheat their customers by fixing their scales. They made the *ephah* (the measure they used for grain) smaller and weighted down the scale to get more *shekels* (money). Write down an instance of dishonesty you have heard about.
3. Read Luke 10:29-37. The parable of the Good Samaritan talks about robbers and stealing, but it also points out that God expects us to help our neighbors. The priest and the Levite were the unconcerned persons who refused to help the victim. Do you think they were as much in the wrong as the robbers? Explain your answer.
4. Read Philippians 2:4. If this verse were to be applied to the use of property, what are some differences that you would notice in your community?

7 - LIKE FEATHERS ON DOORSTEPS

What is it to bear false witness against your neighbor?

To betray, lie, or slander your neighbor.

Does this Commandment apply only to bearing false witness in court?

No. We are not to bear false witness against our neighbor at any time.

"Therefore, putting away falsehood, let everyone speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another" (Ephesians 4:25).

What does the Eighth Commandment require us to do?

To defend our neighbors and speak well of them.

"Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things" (1 Corinthians 13:7).

The Eighth Commandment

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not tell lies about our neighbor, betray him, slander him, or hurt his reputation, but defend him, speak well of him, and explain everything in the kindest way.

One day a woman went to St. Francis of Assisi and confessed that she had been guilty of malicious gossip. She asked him what she could do to be forgiven. St. Francis told her to pluck a goose and lay one feather on the doorstep of each person about whom she had said malicious things.

The woman went away hurriedly and did as she was instructed. She returned to St. Francis to ask the next step. He sent her back to gather each feather she had placed on the doorsteps. But she discovered that the feathers had blown all over town.

When she returned the second time, St. Francis said, "You may wish to repent, and that is good. But you can never recall the words that you have spoken. They have gone on their way doing harm. You have committed a sin for which no reparation is possible. Confess your sin to Almighty God and ask for forgiveness, for God is the only one who can forgive you."

A good name

God's name is protected in the Second Commandment. In the Eighth Commandment, God does the same for your name. God knows how important it is to have a good name (a good reputation). Your reputation follows you all through your life.

This Commandment is also meant to protect our neighbor's reputation. St. Francis knew the great harm that comes from slandering and lying about others. He wanted the woman to know the terrible results of her loose tongue. God goes one step further. God expects us to stick up for others when their names are being dragged through the mud. God wants us to find opportunities to say good things about our neighbors and give them a fair chance even when they do something wrong.

#7 LIKE FEATHERS ON DOORSTEPS

Read over the preceding pages and then answer the following questions.

1. Why is a good name important to you?
2. Should you speak well of a person when you know they don't deserve it? Explain your answer.
3. Read Matthew 26:57-75. This story of Jesus' trial provides several examples of people bearing false witness. In verse 59, what kind of evidence were the chief priests and whole council looking for to use against Jesus?
4. Many false witnesses came forward to testify against Jesus, but their evidence did not convince the council that Jesus should be put to death. Finally, two witnesses were found to testify. What did they say Jesus had said? (v. 61)
5. Read John 2:19 to find out what Jesus did say. What did Jesus mean by these words?
6. How did the two witnesses change the meaning of Jesus' words?
7. How did the people act toward Jesus (Matthew 26:67)?
8. Even Peter is caught speaking falsely against Jesus. What does he say in Matthew 26:70-74 about his relationship to Jesus?
9. In order to crucify Jesus, was it necessary to bear false witness against him? Why or why not?
10. Read Matthew 18:15-17. What are the three steps Jesus suggests taking to handle differences that come between neighbors?

8 - WANT, WANT, WANT

What does it mean to covet?

To desire something so intensely that the desire is out of control.

What do the Ninth and Tenth Commandments require us to do?

To help our neighbors keep their property and whatever else is theirs.

"Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others"
(Philippians 2:4).

Why do we strive to obey all the Commandments?

Out of fear and love for God. We know that God loves us, and has given us the Commandments to help us live together peacefully. God wants to be important in the lives of those who call themselves God's people.

The Ninth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's house.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not scheme to get our neighbor's inheritance or house, or get it in a way which only appears right, but help and be of service to him in keeping it.

The Tenth Commandment

You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What does this mean?

We should fear and love God so that we do not entice or force away our neighbor's wife, workers, or animals, or turn them against him, but urge them to stay and do their duty.

Both the Ninth and Tenth Commandments deal with coveting. What is coveting? A dictionary may define it as "desire." But desire in itself is not evil. Desire may be a normal reaction to our human appetites. Coveting goes beyond our ordinary appetites, both in what we desire and how intensely we desire it.

Coveting is desire which is out of control. It is a craving so intense that a person will do almost anything to satisfy it. When desire reaches this intensity, the chances of someone being hurt by the coveting are very real.

The persons most noticeably affected by our uncontrolled desires are those who live close to us. But there are many others - even many we may never have heard of - who can be hurt too. Because we consume much more than our share of the earth's resources, we take what others need. For many people in the world, survival is a daily struggle. These people lose out when we get so much.

How can we become less covetous? First, we can be assured that God, our loving parent and generous provider, will care for us. Jesus taught us to live as he did, accepting God's generous gifts.

Second, coveting can be controlled if we decide to live more simply. This means calling a halt to our drive to accumulate material goods, wealth, and even persons!

What if

What would the world be like if we made a conscious effort to simplify our lives?

- What might happen if we bought our cars, houses, and clothes for their usefulness, instead of for the status we might gain from others?
- What if we developed a habit of giving things away, such as money, clothes, food, or homemade gifts?
- What if we made up our minds to ignore advertising that tells us we can't live without the most sophisticated home computer or stereo, or new and improved soap?
- What if we found things to enjoy without owning them, such as a beach, a park, or the moon?
- What if we developed a deeper appreciation for God's creation, by walking, looking at a flower, or learning the names of birds?
- What if we worked to change things that contribute to the oppression of others, such as paying men more than women for comparable work, or using more than our share of the world's resources?

Such idealism may seem impractical. But if there is any hope of creating a world in which more people can have an improved quality of life, we need to begin somewhere. Why not with obedience to these Commandments?

#8 WANT, WANT, WANT!

Read over the preceding pages and then answer the following questions.

1. Read Mark 10:17-22. The man was setting out on a journey when he approached Jesus. What did the man say to Jesus?
2. Jesus responded by saying, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone" (Mark 10:18). Then Jesus reminded the man of the Commandments. What did the man say in response to Jesus?
3. Read Mark 10:21 again. How did Jesus feel toward the man?
4. How did the man feel at the end of the story?
5. We are not told whether the man said anything more. What might you have said if you were in the man's place?
6. In addition to the warnings not to covet, there is a positive side to these Commandments. How can we help our neighbors keep their material possessions and encourage persons important to our neighbors to remain loyal to them?