

In addition, God is not only concerned with our actions, but also the condition of our hearts. In the New Testament, Jesus referred to the Law when He emphasized that hatred is tantamount to murder and lust is tantamount to adultery. We have all had these thoughts. Indeed, we have all sinned according to God's standards.

After reviewing the Ten Commandments, some argue that God is unjust for imposing a standard upon humanity that he knows we cannot fulfill. Does it not seem awfully cruel for a loving God to condemn man for the evil that is inherently part of the human condition? The response to this perplexing question lies in Jesus Christ. In fact, Jesus came to earth in order to reconcile this dilemma. Like the perfect lambs that were constantly sacrificed for the sins of Israel, Jesus was perfect and without blemish, because He was sinless. Like the lambs, however, He was sacrificed for the reparation of sins. Unlike the lambs, however, the sacrifice of Jesus Christ redeemed the sins of all humanity for all time. Unlike the lambs, Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead and conquered the power of sin for all humanity for all time. The Bible tells us why Christ had to become a sacrifice: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3: 16).

For many, the Ten Commandments are symbols of condemnation that point out our faults and mistakes. Some feel so guilty that they believe God will never accept them. Others simply choose to reject God because His law is impossible to obey. Ironically, the Ten Commandments were never given by God to condemn humanity, but rather, they were given to convict humanity. They act as a mirror to "reflect" the condition of our souls. When we examine our life in light of the Ten Commandments, we realize our shortcomings and our need for redemption. Jesus Christ is our redeemer. Therefore, God gave the Ten Commandments not to condemn humanity, but to show us His love for us. For, **WHILE WE WERE STILL SINNERS, CHRIST DIED FOR US** (Romans 5: 8).

*(excerpted from: www.allabouttruth.org)

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The Ten Commandments



THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. ***I am the Lord your God: you shall not have strange Gods before me.***
2. ***You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.***
3. ***Remember to keep holy the Lord's day.***
4. ***Honor your father and your mother.***
5. ***You shall not kill.***
6. ***You shall not commit adultery.***
7. ***You shall not steal.***
8. ***You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.***
9. ***You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.***
10. ***You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.***



*The Ten Commandments are first recorded in the book of Exodus, Chapter 20, in the Bible's Old Testament. They were given directly by God to the people of Israel at Mount Sinai after He had delivered them from slavery in Egypt. They were moral statutes given by God, through Moses, so that the Israelites could enjoy fruitful and holy lives. The Commandments were significant in that they formed the basis of Jewish life, law and faith. Inscribed on stone tablets, the Ten Commandments were initially broken by Moses in anger over the flagrant sins of the Israelites. They were then re-inscribed and kept in the Ark of the Covenant at the command of God.

About fourteen hundred years later, the Ten Commandments were summed up in the New Testament at Matthew, Chapter 22, when Jesus was confronted by the religious "experts" of the day: "*Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?*" Jesus replied: "***Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with***

all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: '***Love your neighbor as yourself.***' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments" (Matthew 22: 36-40).

A reflective reading of Christ's teaching reveals that the first four commandments given to the children of Israel are contained in the statement: "*Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.*" It continues that the last six commandments are enclosed in the statement: "*Love your neighbor as yourself.*"

The Ten Commandments were also known as the *Law*. For ancient Israel, breaking the law was a serious offense. To deviate by any degree from the Ten Commandments was to sin and fall short of God's standard of holiness. Knowing that it was impossible for any human being to perfectly follow the Law, a sacrificial system mediated by the Levitical priesthood was established. Through this system, God permitted ancient Israel to make reparations for the sins they committed. As an example, an appropriate sacrifice would involve the slaughtering of a young lamb that is found to be without blemish. The sacrifice was not meant to be barbaric, but rather, symbolic of the gravity of sin. The annual Jewish holy day of Yom Kippur is a day of atonement that is set aside for the reparation of sins.

Although God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites, they do not apply to Jews alone. They reflect God's standard of holiness for everyone. Since God is the universal authority of moral conduct, all of humanity is subject to His standards. According to the Bible, no one is exempt from God's Law. Some say that the Ten Commandments do not apply to them, since they did not grow up with "religion." However, the scriptures reveal that the requirements of the law are written on our hearts (Romans 2: 25), and thus, our conscience ultimately confirms our guilt. Wait a minute! Since most of us, to some degree, have tried to live good lives, contributing positive things to our families and communities, how can God fault us if we have tried our best? Based on God's standard of holiness, "all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23).