

## The Commandments

The Ten Commandments teach us how we should aim to live

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Following Jesus is about the way we behave as well as what we believe. So how should Christians behave and how should we live?

The Ten Commandments set out fundamental principles of how we are to treat God and how we are to treat our fellow human beings. For centuries they were at the centre of what Christians learned about their faith.

### The Commandments

I am the Lord your God: you shall have no other gods but me.

You shall not make for yourself any idol.

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

Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.

Honour your father and mother.

You shall not commit murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not be a false witness.

You shall not covet anything which belongs to your neighbour.

The text of the Commandments is found in two places in the Bible. In Exodus 20.1–17, God speaks these words after the people of Israel have consecrated themselves at Mount Sinai. They are inscribed on two tablets of the covenant, ‘written with the finger of God’, the first and most important part of the Law of God, and they are a gift of God to the people of Israel – and through them to the whole of humankind.

### What does it mean to love your neighbour as yourself?

Like all Scripture, the Commandments need to be interpreted in order to be understood and used by the Church and by individual Christians.

Our understanding of the Commandments is informed by other parts of the Bible. They especially need to be interpreted through the life and ministry and teaching of Jesus.

**Jesus taught that the greatest Commandment is to love: to love the Lord your God with all your heart and mind and soul and strength, and to love your neighbour as yourself.**



It's clear from the story of the Good Samaritan Jesus tells that loving our neighbour applies not just to our nearest and dearest but to everyone whom God brings across our path ([Luke 10.25-37](#)).

"Everyone is special to God, and it's vital that we show God's love in practical ways."

*Archbishop John Sentamu*

One of the versions of the Ten Commandments often used in worship sets key New Testament texts alongside the original text of the Ten Commandments.

**Read a version of the Commandments used in worship**

I am the Lord your God: you shall have no other gods but me.

*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart,  
with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.*

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

You shall not make for yourself any idol.

*God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.*

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

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

*You shall worship him with awe and reverence.*

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.

*Christ is risen from the dead: set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on the earth.*

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

Honour your father and mother.

*Live as servants of God; let us work for the good of all,  
especially members of the household of faith.*

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

You shall not commit murder.

*Live peaceably with all; overcome evil with good.*

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

You shall not commit adultery.

*Know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit.*

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

You shall not steal.

*Be honest in all that you do, and care for those in need.*

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

You shall not be a false witness.

*Let everyone speak the truth.*



**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

You shall not covet anything which belongs to your neighbour.

*Remember the words of the Lord Jesus:*

*'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'*

*Love your neighbour as yourself, for love is the fulfilling of the law.*

**Amen. Lord, have mercy.**

## **Psalm 19.7-8**

The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul;

the testimony of the Lord is sure

and gives wisdom to the simple.

The statutes of the Lord are right and rejoice the heart;

the commandment of the Lord is pure

and gives light to the eyes.



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