

# OpenTheo

## Exodus 20:13 - 20:17 (Commandments 6-10)



### Exodus - Steve Gregg

In Exodus 20:13-17, the sixth through tenth commandments are outlined. The sixth commandment, "You shall not murder," emphasizes the importance of justice and human life. While Jesus' teaching on turning the other cheek does not negate civil justice systems, the concept of "eye for an eye" was established to establish proportional justice and respect for life. Adultery is a violation of the marriage covenant; sexual behavior and fornication should remain within the confines of marriage. Furthermore, loving money is a violation of the tenth commandment and serves as the root cause of all violations of the other commandments.

### Transcript

The Ten Commandments The Ten Commandments have come to be called the Ten Words, the Ten Commandments. And so we were looking at the Decalogue and the first four commandments that are focused on giving God the proper, exclusive reverence that He demands. These conditions were the covenant demands of God.

As one in a covenant relationship with Israel, they had to show Him that special reverence and that special loyalty. But they also had to behave themselves well in their other relationships with other people. And so we see in the fifth commandment, Exodus 20, verse 12, Now, honor your father and your mother.

What does it mean to honor them? Usually to honor someone means give them proper respect. Although in many cases it would mean to give them whatever respect they deserve. That would be, of course, proper respect.

The word honor, we see Paul, for example, talking about in Romans 13, the need to honor government officials. In Romans 13, 7, after he's talked about the role that government officials play and our need to pay taxes in order to repay them for the services they perform. In verse 7, he says, Render, therefore, to all their due, taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor is due.

You are to honor those who are due honor. And I don't think you're supposed to respect

what is not respectable, but you are supposed to respect, give the proper respect to things that are honorable. Now, parents aren't always honorable in their behavior.

And there are times when you cannot really respect what your parents have done, because some parents obviously are grievous sinners. And as such, they do things that really a Christian could never approve of. But there is some sense in which honor is owed to parents, even if they have not been good parents or good people.

There's a certain honor that is due them. And Paul brings this up in First Timothy, chapter 5, when he's talking about the church giving honor to widows. Now, most widows are mothers.

Most widows have children, not all, but it'd be more common for a widow to have children. They're not. And some widows don't have children and the church was supposed to honor them, that is to support them.

And so Paul says in First Timothy 5, three says, honor widows who are really widows. He means who are really bereft, who really don't have any other means of support. But if any widow has children or grandchildren, let them first learn to show piety at home and to repay their parents, for this is good and acceptable before God.

Now, here he says that the widows who don't have anyone else to support them should be supported by the church. That's what honor widows means, support them. And then he says, but some widows do have people who should support them, so the church should not be burdened with their support.

And those people who should support them are their children or even their grandchildren. Now, children especially, he said, should repay their parents. Repay their parents means that they have a debt that is owed to their parents.

And that should be obvious to anyone who thinks about it. Like I said earlier, your parents brought you into the world. There may be times when you wish you had not been born and feel like your parents should be blamed rather than honored for bringing you into the world.

But God brought you into the world and he used them to do it. Whether you're glad you're born or not, you must recognize that you being born was God's will and that God had a purpose for it. And therefore, your birth was significant and potentially something that is going to be very good in the purposes of God.

And your parents were the ones that God chose not only to bring you into the world, but in most cases to nurture you once you got here. And if someone had paid a person to take care of children during their entire years of their minority and helplessness, to clean up after them, change their diapers, you know, be available 24-7 for their needs, feed them, even from their own body, that would probably be an expensive proposition if

you're going to hire someone to do that for the many years that a child needs that kind of care. But your parents provide that for free.

They never sent you a bill for that. That's owed to them. And I didn't even consider the nine months of being carried in the womb and the painfulness of labor.

I mean, parents do pay a price to bring their children in the world. Sometimes parents are so negligent afterward that you wonder why they went to the trouble of bringing a child in the world in the first place. But the fact is, they did.

And they, at least in modern times, had the option of not doing so. Upon finding themselves expectant, it's now possible to remove the baby from the womb and not go to the trouble of caring and bearing and caring for a child. And so the parents have done all that.

And God has so set up human experience so that everybody spends the time at the beginning of their life where they're helpless and where all their needs have to be supplied by the generosity of somebody else who isn't helpless. And at the other end of life, if people grow old, most of them, it's not universal, but most people get old enough that they need somebody to take care of them. You get older and weaker, less able to work and support yourself, more dependent on others.

And so the way God has set things up is the parents take care of the children when they're helpless, and the children take care of the parents when they're helpless. And so it's simply repaying a debt. Now, this is what Paul says adult children should do to their parents.

This is no doubt the way that they honor their father and their mother, especially their mother, in this case, if they're widows, that they care for their needs. Now, if you have an aged father and mother, and they're both needy, obviously supporting your father and your mother would be the right thing to do. Now, I have to say that we live in a rather different society than in those days.

In those days, the church took care of all their poor, and Christian children would take care of their poor or needy parents and grandparents. We live in a society now where many parents would refuse support from their children, would not come and live with their children, for example. I know of cases like this.

And they receive government assistance, Social Security and so forth, and Medicare. And in many cases, they receive pensions from a lifetime of work, so the companies they work for now support them, or they have investments. In this country, especially, there was so much prosperity in the previous generation that many of our parents are well set up, and we'd be more in the position to need their support than them to need ours.

But nonetheless, in cases where parents do have need, the children have to consider,

well, I owe them something. When I had a need, they took care of me. And that is honoring them for what they have done.

If you turn back to another passage in Paul, in Ephesians chapter 6, here Paul talks about the way that children are to honor their parents. That is, little children. We saw that adult children should honor their parents by repayment of the debt when their parents have need.

Smaller children are told this in Ephesians 6.1, children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. Then he quotes the command, honor your father and mother. Now notice, honor your father and mother does not specify obey, but he's saying that the way that a child honors his father and mother is to obey his father and mother.

He said, and this command is the first commandment with a promise that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth. Now, is Paul saying that if children really obey their parents, that they will live long? I have a friend who lost two daughters, good daughters, good Christian daughters, in an accident when they were 16. They were actually driving home from an evangelistic crusade it was.

They were hit broadside by a drunk driver. Their minivan was totaled and their two daughters in the backseat were killed. And this man struggles with this verse.

He says, well, and he's had me, he's counseled with me before, he said, isn't there a promise here that if children are obedient to their parents, that they'll live long on the earth? And, you know, there isn't really, that's not what Paul's doing. Paul's not saying here's a guarantee to Christians. Because remember, Paul says we're under a different covenant.

But he quotes this because he says this commandment, which God gave, was particularly important. Remember, it even had a promise attached to it. Most of the commandments do not.

But this one did. When God told Israel to honor their father and mother, it was so that they would remain in the land for a long time. And I personally don't believe that that commandment, even in the Old Testament, was a commandment that contained the promise of individual longevity.

Because even a good Jew could die young. Jesus was a good Jew. He died young.

He honored his mother and his father, we have to presume. Certainly God his father he honored. But he died young.

I don't believe the command and the promise connect in an individual manner, that if you as an individual obey your parents, that you as an individual are guaranteed a long life. That simply isn't guaranteed to anyone in any category. But what I think it means is

that if Israel, if each generation of Israel will honor the standards that God had given their parents and the standards of God are carried on from father to child through to the generations, then Israel will be able to stay a long time in their land rather than being expelled from it.

Because at later times in the Pentateuch, God tells them that they will be expelled from the land if they are if they lapse into disobedience and disloyalty to God. So the parents are told to teach their children to obey God's laws and the children obey their parents in this so that they as a nation will be able to stay in the land a long time instead of being expelled prematurely from it. In Deuteronomy, Chapter six, we see that this is what God assumes to be the case with parents and children.

Because he says in Deuteronomy, six, six, and these words which I command you today shall be in your heart and you shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up now. What God is saying to Israel is every generation of parents need to diligently teach their children the laws of God and those children need to honor the teaching that they receive from their parents. They honor their parents because if they then do honor them and keep the teaching that they get, they will remain obedient to God.

The nation will continue to be God's people. They will remain long in the land that the Lord your God is giving you. This is not a promise of living long on the planet Earth.

It's a promise of living a long time in the land that the Lord is giving you the land of Israel. So Paul would not be suggesting to the Christians that there's a promise to Christians to live a long time as individuals on Earth, but rather that there was a promise in the Old Testament. That Israel would live a long time in the land if children would honor their parents.

Now, Paul apparently is making reference that promise only to show that the command was an important one. So important that God attached further incentives in the form of a promise to keep it and that children honor their parents by obeying them. Adult children honor their parents by repaying them their debt and supporting them.

And all children need to honor their parents in the sense that they treat them with general respect. When we were going through Genesis, I pointed out that I felt like Ham's sin was his failure to honor his father. His father had done something dishonorable.

Noah was drunk in his tent. He was not only drunk, but he was in an undignified state, one that he would certainly if he was sober, not allow himself to be seen in. And one which he would if he awoke sober from that condition, would hope that no one had ever learned about.

In other words, the kind of thing that would he would wish to keep a private matter, a secret. We all have things we've done that we would not like to have broadcast. Yet our children are in the position to learn those things because they live with us.

I believe that when a when parents have children, they're inviting into their home witnesses against themselves. Because children will see the flaws of parents that outsiders will not see. Whatever parents, whatever flaws parents have will be revealed at home more than they will out in the public square.

And therefore, the children that are born into the home are brought in to be witnesses of what their parents do. And since parents are not perfect, children will see their parents flaws. But how do you honor your parents? There's a sense in which you've been given privileged information.

And you honor them, not like Ham did. Ham saw his father in an undignified condition in his home. And he went out and told the public.

Now, as a matter of fact, the whole public was just his two brothers. But he publicly declared his father's indignity. And the other brothers, acting more according to the moral obligation to honor one's parents, refused to look at their father in that condition and went backward in and threw a coat or a garment over him so that no one else would see him in that condition.

That is, they covered his indignity. And I think that's something that we need to ponder a lot when we talk about our parents. Sometimes just when we give our testimonies, it's part of our testimony that our parents did something wrong.

My father abused me or my father was a drunk and left the home or my father or my mother did this bad thing. I mean, a lot of times that really spices up our testimony to tell about the dysfunctional homes we were raised in. Not me.

I was raised in actually a very good home. My parents, I'd have a hard time finding any kind of a list of things they did wrong because they were so unusually good parents. But but certainly it's not uncommon for people our age to have testimonies about the dysfunctionality of the homes they were raised in and the negligence of their parents or even the abusiveness of their parents.

And that becomes part of their story that they tell. There's a sense in which that's uncovering the nakedness of your parents. And you say, well, they shouldn't have done those things if they don't want people to know about it.

True. And would you like everything you've done that you should have done to be broadcast? Probably not. But most people are not in a position to know all the things you've done or to broadcast it.

But children are much more so in the lives of their parents than most people will be. And therefore, the parents are vulnerable. Their reputations are vulnerable to their children.

And honoring your parents. Well, that's what Ham didn't do. He broadcast his his his dad.

Error. But the other two sons, knowing about that error, nonetheless covered for him because they wanted to preserve the honor and the dignity of their father, even when he had compromised it because he was still their father. If he'd been some stranger, I don't think they would have taken any concern in the matter.

But it was their father and the honor for parents. There is a certain honor owed them. And so.

And that was even before the command was given. But ancients, besides, almost always honored their fathers. It was understood they were patriarchal, but their mothers were to be honored as well.

But that doesn't always mean to be obeyed, because sometimes parents will give orders that are contrary to what God would have you do. And especially after you're older and left home and you're living independently, I think that the decision to obey or disobey what your parents say has got to be made as a mature person weighing, you know, biblical obligations and things like that more than even a small child. A small child has very little option but to obey his parents.

I mean, if the parents say go out and steal something, probably the child should not do it. But the child is hardly in a position to resist their parents. And for that reason, the Jews understood that a child up to a certain age was not really responsible for their own obedience to the law.

Not until they reached Bar Mitzvah age. Bar Mitzvah made a young boy transfer to the case where he now is obligated to keep the law himself. Prior to that, he was pretty much under the umbrella of his father's obedience to the law.

But now he was required to be. Apparently, he should obey his father before that time, even if it was maybe contrary to the law, because he wasn't the child could not be expected necessarily to have a very sophisticated understanding of how the law applies to things. And therefore, he's considered to be not accountable until he reached a certain age.

But so children, perhaps if they know that their parents are going to do something wrong, maybe they shouldn't do it. But at a certain age, they certainly shouldn't because they reach a mature place of responsibility before God. And although we are to honor and to obey even certain people, we should never do so if it involves disobeying God.

But you can honorably disobey your parents. That is, you can say as an adult, you can

say, mom or dad, you know, I really I really don't want to do something that displeases you because I want you to be happy with me and I don't want you to be, you know, grieved. But it's my obligation before God to do such and such a thing that the Bible says.

And I wish that didn't bother you like it does, because I don't mean to dishonor you, but I just you know, I want to honor you, but I can't obey you in this. I must obey God rather than man. And that's really what Peter was saying to the Sanhedrin, is that we have to obey God rather than man.

He wasn't saying, I don't want to honor you people or the position you hold on society. I'd love to honor that. But right now, I have an obligation to God that is in contrast with what you're asking me to do.

So much as I honor your position, I will not obey you in this. There comes a time when honor to parents probably has to take that form. Now, the fifth commandment, the sixth commandment is you shall not murder.

Verse 13. And of course, the older King James says you should not kill. And this has always been a bit of a stumbling block for some people, because thou shalt not kill is pretty unspecific.

And some have taken it so far as to say, well, I mean, quite a lot of people take it to say forbid capital punishment. Because if you say, well, I think this man should be executed, they say, no, the Bible says thou shalt not kill. And therefore, they'd say capital punishment is forbidden by the command not to kill because capital punishment is killing a man.

Some have gone so far as to say you should only eat a vegetarian diet because thou shalt not kill. You shouldn't kill animals. This is truly what some people thought could be derived from this.

But the command is not about killing in general. It's about a specific kind of killing. And this is something that we need to understand about these last commands in the Decalogue from the one about parents on.

And that is, this is a concern for justice. Every one of these laws is teaching what justice demands. You honor your parents because they deserve it, because you owe it, because it's an injustice to receive as many benefits as you've received and to deny the honor back that they deserve in response.

That's an injustice. So honoring your parents is a matter of justice. Likewise, when it comes to human life, it's an injustice to commit murder.

It is not an injustice to execute a murderer. Why? What is justice then? Justice is defined



in terms of rights. In this case, human rights.

God has made human beings with some basic rights. And what is unjust is when you violate those rights. Thus, God has given each person a right to live.

Now, God has the right to take that from them because they have sinned against God. But not all have committed crimes worthy of death at the hands of men. If somebody walks up and kills me while I'm standing here, that's a crime.

That's unjust. I have not committed an act worthy of being offed. I haven't done anything worthy of death here.

Now, if God strikes me with a heart attack and I die, he's done no injustice. You know, I'm a sinner. All sinners deserve to die.

That's God's prerogative. God has the right to decide when he, you know, when he collects on that particular death. But when it comes to humans treating other humans, humans cannot go and kill another human who has done nothing specifically defined as a crime worthy of death.

But there are crimes worthy of death. If you kill a man who has done no such crime, you are depriving him of the right that God has given him to live. But if you have done a crime worthy of death and you are put to death for it, that's not an injustice.

You're getting what you deserve. What you deserve is justice. You say what you what you should have.

You have given up your right to life by doing something that is itself a forfeiture of that right. There were many crimes in Israel, not just murder, but many crimes in Israel that were understood to be a forfeiture of one's own right to live. If you cursed your parents, if you struck your parents, if you practice witchcraft, if you worship idols, if you kidnap somebody.

If you murdered somebody, if you committed adultery with your neighbor's wife, these and a large number of other things were actions which under the law were seen as a deliberate forfeiture of your right to live. If you wanted to live, you didn't do those things. If you did those things, you're doing that which you recognize will cost you your life and you're giving up your right to live.

You're forfeiting. Once you have no more right to live, then society is not wrong to take your life. They're not violating your rights.

It's not an injustice. And that's why it is not inconsistent for Christians who are in most cases politically conservative to, on one hand, be against abortion, but also favor capital punishment. It's interesting that people who are of a more political liberal stripe, they

favor abortion and are against capital punishment.

And they sometimes say we're inconsistent because we say we're pro-life and because we are against killing infants. But they say, how can you be pro-life and you're in favor of capital punishment? That means killing people, doesn't it? We liberals don't believe in that because we're really the ones who honor human life. Well, they're the ones who are confused because neither side is really so much honoring life as making some kind of decision about justice.

Those who are called pro-life would better be called pro-justice because we don't believe that human life is always to be preserved. If it is, then God ordered the Israelites to do some evil things. When God told them to kill the Canaanites, when God told them to kill murderers and idolaters and so forth, then God was ordering people to do something wrong.

But he wasn't. It's not always wrong to kill, but it is wrong to kill innocent people, to violate the rights of an innocent man to live or a child or a fetus. You see, it's entirely consistent for someone who believes in justice to say, I am opposed to killing a fetus because that's an innocent human being.

I'm not opposed to killing a criminal who's committed a crime worthy of death. He's not an innocent human being. He has done something to forfeit his right to life.

And justice is that you... Well, justice in law was an eye for an eye, tooth for tooth, burn for burn, stroke for stroke, life for life. That's justice. Now, someone says, well, we're pro abortion, but against capital punishment, they're saying we're pro injustice.

We're all about injustice. We don't want people to get what they deserve. The child is innocent.

We want to kill the man whose forfeit his right to life. We want to preserve at the expense of society because we want him to be imprisoned for life. And that means the honest people have to pay for his room and board for the rest of his life instead of him paying for it.

So he gets to victimize society for the rest of his life. That sure is justice. You see, when people get away from God's ideas of justice and think they're more enlightened than God, then they get stupid.

They really do. They really do get stupid. And while I'm not a person who has... I don't consider myself to be a person who's a political activist or political spokesman.

And I actually try to avoid things that are strictly political in nature. But certainly politics and justice are overlapping categories and Christians are concerned about justice. They have to be because God is.

And I have friends who've said that they think that liberalism is a mental illness. And that might sound like, you know, just a slam against them. But when you think about how the positions that many political liberal people take are just the opposite of common sense.

Kill the babies, preserve the lives of the murderers. I mean, what in the world are they thinking? Whatever it is, it's not rational. And, you know, I'm not making that as a political statement.

It's simply to say that when people use something other than God's standards to decide what's right and wrong, they get stupid. It's entirely rational and intelligent to say innocent people should not be killed. Guilty people who deserve to die should get what they deserve, because that's what justice is.

Now, someone will say, but didn't Jesus change that? Didn't Jesus say, you have heard that it was said an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you, do not resist the evil man. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.

If a man wants to take you to court and see you for a quote, give him your coat also. Give to everyone who asks of you. If a man makes you go one mile, go two miles.

Didn't Jesus kind of, you know, change that eye for an eye, tooth for tooth thing? I don't think he did. Because the eye for eye and tooth for tooth, stroke for stroke, burn for burn, even even capital punishment. That was something that was the civil code telling the magistrates, the judges, what penalty to exact against somebody.

If somebody killed someone, what was the judge supposed to do? Have the guy killed. If a guy by negligence or malice knocked another guy's tooth out and he's brought to court, what should the judge say? Well, you took his tooth, you get one of your tooth knocked out. Now, you might say, well, that sounds very barbarian.

Actually, it was the opposite of barbarian. It was actually extremely civilized. There's a very high view of justice because ancient in the ancient world, injuries were often repaid with much worse injuries.

You know, you knock my tooth out, I'm going to knock out all your teeth. Retaliation was often not proportionate. And God is saying this is what exact justice is.

A man pokes out another guy's eye. Well, you can't take both of his eyes in retaliation, but you can take one. That's exact justice.

You take this from one man, you give up one of yours. You know, the Jews believe, at least conservative Jews believe, that if you do not execute a murderer, you are showing disrespect to his victim. Why? Because he himself has shown that he had no respect for that person's life.

And if we have respect for his life, then we're basically saying his life is worth more than his victim's life. If a murderer is put to death and we're saying your lives are of equal worth, humans are equal. And just as you took this man's eye, you give up one of yours.

You took his life. You give up one of yours. Oh, you only have one.

Well, that's sorry. He only had one, too. You give up your life because you took his.

That's justice. Anyone who can't see that that's justice is strange. Now, didn't Jesus teach, oh, well, we don't want justice.

We want mercy. Well, Jesus taught his disciples that if someone strikes them rather than doing the thing that justice would permit them to do, that is to strike the person back, you can extend mercy to them. You can give up your right to justice and you can turn the other cheek and let him strike you again.

That'd be a merciful and loving thing to do. But the judges aren't supposed to do that. You can give up your right to justice, but a judge has no option to give up his obligation to do justice.

You can if someone knocks your tooth out, you don't have to take him to court over it. But if you do, the judge should knock that guy's tooth out. Jesus was not bringing in a different criminal justice system.

He was not saying from now on, no more courts, no more penalties, no more prisons, because I'm here. But what about what about robbers? What about murderers? What about that? Isn't there supposed to be some kind of a court system? Isn't there supposed to be some kind of penalty? If the judges are always turning the other cheek, then there can't be any criminal justice system at all. It's clear that Jesus was not trying to modify the way the criminal justice system worked.

He quoted a verse that was about the criminal justice system. An eye for an eye, tooth for tooth. You've heard that, you disciples, you've heard that.

And you apparently have thought that means that if someone does something wrong to you, you ought to do something wrong back to them. Equivalent. But you don't have to do that.

Now, if you're a judge, then you have to still be a just judge. You can't let the criminal walk or else, you know, you're not a judge. You're remiss.

Jesus is not trying to abolish civil government. He's not trying to abolish criminal penalties. He's trying to tell his disciples there are times when you would, in fact, have a legal recourse to punish somebody who has hurt you.

But as a Christian, you can forgo that. You can give up your right to retaliate. You can be

generous hearted.

You cannot press charges. You can be in the presence of a man who's knocked your eye out and you deserve to take his. But you say, I don't want to take your eye out.

That won't give me my eye back. Why would I want to take your eye? You'll be happier with your eyes. I'll let you keep them both because I care about you, even though you're my enemy.

That's in the context of loving your enemies and doing good to those who persecute you. The point he's making is as an individual, a Christian does not have to press his rights, but he's not denying that an eye for an eye is a good principle for the courts to follow. He's not he's not giving the courts some other standard to go by.

Some people say, well, you know, yeah, murder should be punished, but killing him, that's that's a bit severe. Why don't we just give him life imprisonment? Well, I guess the issue is once we've decided that a criminal should be punished, we've already decided that turning the other cheek is not what we're talking about. Right.

If the judges are supposed to punish criminals at all, then it means that turning the other cheek is not instructions to the courts. It's instructions to individuals in relationships with people who are hostile to them. But the courts have an obligation to the victims and to God to uphold justice and therefore to punish the criminals.

But once we decide that the criminal should be punished at all, the next question is what punishment is just? Because a punishment, a punishment can be unjust by being too severe or by being too lenient. Frank and I were talking about this during the break, so I'm repeating myself here, but if a man steals a loaf of bread and you kill him. That's too severe.

If a man steals a loaf of bread and you give him a slap on the wrist, that's not severe enough. He should replace it. He should make restitution to punish.

Too lenient is not justice, to punish too severely is not justice. What is justice? To give a punishment that is exactly appropriate to the crime. That's justice.

And where do we learn what punishment is appropriate to the crime? How about in the most perfect of any law code ever given to any people? Once we decide that murder is punishable, how do we know what punishment is appropriate? How about let God tell you? Paul thought that. Paul certainly was a New Testament man. He knew the ethics of Christ.

After all, Paul was the one who wrote Romans 12, said, Brethren, do not avenge yourselves, but leave vengeance to God. But then he said in Romans 13 and the state officers are God's ministers of vengeance. So in chapter 12 of Romans, Paul says,

Christians do not avenge yourselves.

But then he says in chapter 13, God has ordained the state to avenge. So vengeance is something that God approves of and he's ordained the state to do it. But he has told Christians not to do that for themselves.

And that is Paul's way of applying. Christ's teaching about this, about retaliation, about turning the other cheek and so forth, because in Romans 12, Paul says on verse 17, Romans 12, 17, Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things inside of all men.

If it is possible, as much as depends on you live peaceably with all men, beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath. That is like God's wrath. Take care of it in his own way, for it is written.

Vengeance is mine. I will repay, says the Lord. So God will repay.

God will bring vengeance. It's not for you to do. You don't repay.

You let God repay you. You keep your hands off and give God room to avenge in whatever way he sees fit. But how does he see fit the next chapter? First, Chapter 13, it says in verse three and four, for rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil.

Do you want to be unafraid of authority? Do what is good and you'll have praise from the same for he the authority. The ruler is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid for he does not bear the sword for nothing, for he is God's minister and avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.

Notice, Paul tells us in Chapter 12, don't avenge yourself, leave that to God. Give room to God's vengeance, to God's wrath. And they said, and this is where it comes from, from the state.

God has ordained the rulers to be his executioners of wrath. So an eye for an eye and tooth for tooth is the rule for the state. Turn the other cheek is the rule for the believer.

And so Paul definitely did believe that some things that a man might do are worthy of death and that execution of a man for those things is legitimate. And we know this because of his statements in Acts 25, 11, when Paul was on trial, he said in Acts 25, 11, for if I am an offender or have committed anything worthy of death. Paul acknowledged there are things that he might have committed worthy of death, but he didn't, he said.

But if I had, if I committed any of those things that are worthy of death, I do not object to being executed. He says, I don't object to dying if I deserve it. Paul indicated there is such a thing as deserving to die.

There is such a thing as deserving to be executed. He says, I didn't do any of those things, so I am opposed to being executed. It's not just.

But if I had done something worthy of it, then I couldn't object to it because that would be just, you see, murder is unjust. Capital punishment is justice. So the command, you should not murder is the better way to understand you should not kill.

There are times when the same law that said you should not kill or murder went on, say, and don't let this kind of person live and you shall stone this person to death. And, you know, God instructs them to kill certain persons. So it should be understood that there is not some kind of a blanket forbidding of killing.

It is unjust killing. It is murder that is forbidden. The seventh commandment, Exodus 20 and verse 14.

You shall not commit adultery, adultery, by definition. Adultery, by definition, is the violation of a marriage covenant among the unique privileges of married couples is the is their right to reproduce together, to have children together, to have sex. Now, it might seem like I just equated having sex with reproduction as if the two can never be separated.

They can be, but not as much as we tend to separate them. It's true that couples that are too old to have children are not forbidden to have sex. Couples that are known to be barren are not forbidden to have sex.

It is not wrong for a couple to have sex if they can't have children. But sex was nonetheless created for the having of children. God created man and woman and told them to be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth.

The reason God made a woman slightly different than a man was so that they could reproduce. If God had made two men, there could be no reproduction. The reason God forbids people to have sex with animals or sex with people of the same sex as themselves is because it violates the essential purpose of sexual activity, which is to reproduce.

Now, we live in a fallen world where sometimes people may legitimately be married and have sex and be unable to reproduce. That's not wrong to do. But that doesn't change the fact that when God came up with the idea of sex in the first place, it was, ah, we can combine the genetic material in just this way so that we'll create a new person.

God did not create asexual humans. He created asexual amoebas, but he created sexual humans. And sex was so that they could reproduce.

So that through sexual activity, genetic material could be combined in such ways to create a new human being. And it's the fall that has resulted in such things as barrenness and such things as that which have made it, you know, less than ideal. In an ideal world, all people would be able to reproduce.

Excuse me. But not everyone wants to reproduce these days. In ancient times, everyone wanted to have kids.

In fact, it was a tragedy if they were barren. Nowadays, we have planned barrenhood. And family banning.

And, ah, basically people want to have sex, but they don't want to have kids. Now, there's nothing wrong with a couple who are married having sex, even if they can't have kids. But there seems something a little perverted about wanting to take that which was made for reproduction and completely divorce it conceptually from reproduction.

It's a little bit like eating food. It's pleasurable, but it's made for a purpose. Its purpose is to be nutritious, to sustain your health and your body, your strength.

That's what food's made for. God made it pleasurable to eat because we had to do it anyway and he was just nice. Imagine if he made eating not very pleasurable, but still necessary.

Suppose he made reproduction absolutely necessary, but not pleasurable. Well, God's a nice God. The things we have to do, he makes them pleasurable.

He added certain nerve endings and glands and so forth to make eating and sex and other things enjoyable. But that doesn't mean he made them just for enjoyment. You might as well say he made food just for enjoyment.

Oh, some people do say that. That's what bulimia presupposes, isn't it? Let's eat and enjoy and then vomit it out and do it some more. What is that? That is divorcing the purpose of eating from the activity of eating.

Now, I realize that anytime you eat candy, you're divorcing the purpose of eating from the activity. And I don't think that that in itself, I think within measure, there's nothing wrong with that. Just like there's nothing wrong with a couple who are married having sexual enjoyment when they can't reproduce.

There's times when it's reasonable to enjoy food that isn't necessarily going to nourish you. There's no forbidding of that in the Bible. But if someone always made their food choices without reference to nutrition, this would be a very foolish thing to do.

If someone said, I know what food is for. It's for enjoying myself. And that's all they knew it to be for.

And they totally divorced it from the activity of from the function of nutrition. We think that was really stupid and hurtful. And likewise, when a society divorces sex from reproduction, it's a similar kind of mistake.

Yeah, perhaps it's fine for couples at times to have sex when they know they're not



going to reproduce. But to deliberately say, I know what sex is for. It's for pleasure.

And to totally divorce it from the idea of reproduction is like divorcing food from the action of eating from the function that God made. I sometimes think of the mentality of our modern age about sex as reproductive bulimia. Because people want to have the continual pleasure, but they don't want the results that it was made to bring.

And I'm not saying that people have to have as many kids as they can or anything like that. I'm just thinking there's something wrong with the society that has decided that the pleasure of sex is the most important part of sex. As if the pleasure of eating is the most important part of eating.

It's not. God made sex primarily to be a reproductive activity. It says that in the book of Malachi, when it says that God made the two, the husband, wife, one.

He says, and why? Because he sought godly offspring. That's why. When God made Adam and Eve and made them one flesh, he was seeking godly offspring.

It says in Malachi chapter two, I think it's verse 10 or 11 or somewhere about there. And that's what God made it for. It can have other ancillary benefits, but it was made for that.

Now, because sex was made for that and because God designed a family and a marriage, a covenant relationship between man and woman as the ideal environment for raising children. It's important to God that the sexual behavior remain within the marriage. And it is the unique and exclusive privilege of husbands and wives to engage in that activity.

Now, when people are married and they engage in that kind of activity with another person, this is very disruptive to God's purposes of the solitary of families and so forth. And it's immoral. It also is something that God, God not only made sexual activity pleasurable, he also did something else.

He made it have a very close psychological connection to our happiness, that if a man knows his wife is sleeping with someone else or a woman knows her husband's sleeping with someone else. They can't be happy about it. You know, it's an interesting thing.

I mean, if someone's, you know, uses my bicycle without my permission, well, they're doing a wrong thing, but I don't get too upset about as long as they bring it back. But if a man uses my wife without my permission and brings her back, I'm not happy about it. You know, it's like there's something different about that.

God has made us emotionally and psychologically all wrapped up in our sexual identity and the oneness that exists between a couple in a covenant relationship. So that any violation of that outside of that relationship is hurtful. It's hurtful to humanity.

It's hurtful to the parties that are cheated. And therefore, God ordained that sexual activities to take place between one man and one woman. And they're supposed to have kind of a lifetime commitment to it.

And when you go outside of that, that's wrong. Now, we know that the command not to commit adultery is something that Jesus amplified. I don't think he changed it.

I think he just illuminated it when he said, if a man looks at a woman to lust after her, he has committed adultery already with her in his heart. Now, remember the word woman and wife are the same word in the Greek. And when Jesus said, if a man looks at a woman to lust after her, he's committed adultery in his heart.

Obviously, he's talking about looking at another man's wife. This is also forbidden in the Tenth Commandment. You should not covet your neighbor's wife.

If you look at your neighbor's wife and desire to have her, you are mentally committing adultery. Now, if she's not your neighbor's wife, she's just a single woman, then you're mentally committing a different kind of fornication. That's not okay either, but adultery and fornication are different things.

Jesus basically was talking about if it would be wrong for you to sleep with that woman, if it would be adultery for you to sleep with her, it's also adultery for you to fantasize sleeping with her. She's someone else's wife, not yours. Now, this commandment doesn't specify anything about fornication, although it may be implied in a way, because an unmarried woman, in most cases, will someday be somebody else's wife.

And it is possible that a man who has sex with an unmarried woman will find that he is having sex with somebody else's future wife, in which case it may turn out to be adultery after all. But fornication is a more general term for just sexual misbehavior. Fornication is not used in this passage, but certainly some forms of fornication would be adultery too, even, as I say, because the woman involved may be someone else's future wife.

But in any case, this is talking about not violating a man or a woman's right to have the exclusive access to their mate. Now, the way Paul put it in 1 Corinthians 7 was that a man does not have power over his body, but the wife has it. And the wife does not have power over her body, but the husband has it.

That is, when people are married, they become one flesh. They, in a sense, own each other's bodies, as much as they own their own, I suppose. In a sense, none of us own our own bodies because they belong to God.

But in terms of, you know, me identifying with my body, I in a similar way identify with my wife's body and she with mine so that I don't have the choice of what to do with my body without her consent. Nor does she have the choice of what to do with her body without mine. That's what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 7, 4. The wife does not have

authority over her own body, but her husband does.

And likewise, the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. This means that once a couple is married and they become one body, one flesh, then the use of their bodies are under the authority of each other. And therefore, a man, in a sense, owns his wife and the wife owns her husband.

Just like God owned Israel, Israel owned God. That's what a covenant relationship does. And so adultery violates that, obviously, and it's a covenant breach.

Now, adultery in Israel, in the law, was punishable by death. Fornication was not. That is, if a man slept with a virgin girl, they had to get married.

They didn't get stoned to death, they weren't killed. What they had done was not considered to be adultery because she was a virgin and unbetrothed and unconnected. But they couldn't just leave it at that.

They had to get married. Which makes it very clear that God intended sex only for marriage. And if people get involved in it before they're married, well then they ought to get married.

However, it was clear that people who were not married who got involved sexually were not doing the same thing as adultery. But, I mean, in general, it wasn't punishable the same. Adultery was punishable by death.

The sexual activity between unmarried parties was punishable by marriage. Not by death. So it was a different kind of misbehavior.

Okay. You shall not steal is the 8th commandment. Obviously, the command against stealing establishes property rights.

There's no way to see it otherwise. People have property rights. I don't mean real estate, because not everyone owns real estate, but everyone owns whatever they own.

It's not communal property. If something was truly, if everything was communal, then there'd be no such thing as stealing. You could not be forbidden to steal, because there wouldn't be any such thing as stealing.

If we all owned everything in common, then I could take anything of yours, it wouldn't be stealing. And you could take anything of mine, because there really isn't anything of mine or yours anyway. Stealing presupposes that God has established legitimate property rights.

Just like murder presupposes that there is a right to life. People have rights that God has established. They have the right to live, unless they forfeit that right.

They have the right to their property, unless they surrender that right, by giving it away or spending it in exchange for something else. But it's their decision, because it's their property. Now, how does property come to be owned? How does someone come to have property rights? Well, there's a couple of ways, or three probably at least.

One, well, several ways. I can think of several ways, once I begin to think about it. One is you can inherit property from your family.

If so, it's yours. It doesn't belong to the government. It doesn't belong to your neighbor.

It belongs to you. You leave it, your parents leave it to you, and you have, you own it by right. You could earn it by working, exchanging hours or days of your life for a tangible piece of property that you have purchased by your labor.

It is yours by right then. It's not the government's, it's not your neighbor's, it's yours. You can obtain money by trading something you have, some of your property for some other kind of property.

You can also receive it as a gift from the charity of others. A beggar, once he has been given something by a benefactor, that beggar now owns that. It's his to do with what he wants to.

But all those are legal ways of obtaining money. If you obtain money by fraud, by violence, by theft, well, then that's not legitimate. You don't have legitimate rights to that money.

But the thing is, if you have, in a legitimate and legal way, obtained property, then you have the right to that property. You have the right to dispense it as you wish. Now, about this point, I better address the matter where Christians say, well, we don't have any rights, we're Christians.

Well, that's not really true. We do have rights, but we are called upon to surrender our rights on a case-by-case basis when that is the loving thing to do. In other words, I do have the right to my property.

Otherwise, if I didn't, then you could take my guitar and run over it with your car, and if you're in an angry fit, you can smash it against the walls, and I'd say, well, there goes my guitar, but it wasn't mine anyway, right? I'm a Christian, I have no rights. Well, that's not true. I do have rights.

What you're doing is a wrong thing. If I had no right to that guitar, if you had as much right to it as I do, or no one had any rights to it, then it wouldn't be wrong for you to do that. But because you're damaging someone else's property, it's wrong.

Now, I, as a Christian, might say, I'm going to forgive you for that. I'm not going to make

you pay me back for that. Well, that's my right to surrender my rights.

I can surrender my property rights. I can surrender my right to life. I can lay down my life for somebody else.

I can lay down any of my rights that I wish to, but I still have them. I'm just not enforcing my rights. There's a difference between having no rights and laying down your rights in a case-by-case situation.

If we said Christians have no rights, then I should be able to do anything I want to do because I'm not violating any of your rights. But you do have rights, and it is wrong for me to kill you, or to steal from you, or whatever. So, I think Christians miscommunicate when they say, we have no rights.

What the Bible does say is there are times when laying down our rights is the generous and gracious thing to do. Paul said in 1 Corinthians 9 that he has a right to be paid for his ministry. He has the right to have a wife and take her around when he ministers.

But he says, I've not used any of these. I've laid down these rights for the sake of the gospel. And so, Christians have rights, but they lay them down.

But if they didn't have rights at all, then they could never be wronged because people killing them wouldn't be taking anything from them. They don't have a right anyway. So, there is a right to property.

Now, I keep saying that, you know, honestly obtained property does not belong to the government. Does that mean I don't believe in taxation? No, I do believe in taxation. Paul did too.

Paul said in Romans 13 that the government provides a service that God ordained them to provide. And they have to be supported. So, he says, for this reason pay taxes, pay tribute.

Just like you would pay a workman who comes and does landscaping at your house, or who paints your house, or who repairs your roof. You pay them for their work. They're doing a service for you.

So, the policeman is doing a service for you. So, the military that keeps you safe, they're doing a service to you. And they need their pay.

So, they're paid by a government distribution center that takes in tax money from the people who are being served and distributes to the servants. That's what Paul says. They are continually attending to their full-time job that God has given them.

And therefore, you should pay taxes to support them. However, if I hired a man to come over and do my landscaping, and he started putting in a swimming pool, I said, now, wait

a minute. I didn't actually ask for a swimming pool.

Well, that's okay. I'm going to put this in anyway. You'll like my prices, you know.

And so, he puts in this swimming pool. And then, he's supposed to repair my roof, but he decides to build a new wing on my house too. And I didn't authorize that.

And he sends me the bill for this activity. And I say, wait a minute. Wait, wait, wait.

I don't mind paying you to do the landscaping that I hired you to do or to fix my roof, but I didn't ask for this swimming pool or this wing to be built on. I shouldn't have to pay for that. And that's how it is with the government sometimes too.

The government provides legitimate services that God authorized them to provide. That is to maintain a criminal justice system, to maintain the national security. The Bible says God gave us the rulers to do that for us, and we should pay them for that.

But then when they say, oh, we're going to do some more stuff for you. We're going to provide a public educational system and a public health system and a public this and a public that, and we'll just send you the bill. Then I think, wait a minute.

I didn't ask for that. God didn't authorize you to do that. Now, you're just using your power.

You're taking my money at the point of a gun. This is, in a sense, robbery. Providing services that I will not use and don't want and don't authorize, and then sending me the bill for them.

We don't, you know, this is injustice. If the government provides legitimate services, then we should justly pay our taxes for those services. If they do things that God has not authorized them, we have not asked them to do, and then they say, oh, but we'll charge you for it, and if you don't pay us, you go to jail.

Well, that's something else. That's robbery. That's robbery at gunpoint is what it is.

Anyway, stealing. The government can be guilty of stealing, too. You have property rights.

You should not bear false witness. Real quickly here, and we'll be done. What is bearing false witness? This largely envisages a courtroom situation.

The Bible has many things to say against false witnesses, and many examples of them. False witnesses were brought in to testify against Stephen. Actually, false witnesses were called in to testify against Jesus at his trial.

False witnesses rose up against Naboth when Jezebel wanted to get a hold of Naboth's

vineyard. She had false witnesses rise up to say that he had blasphemed God so that he would be put to death and the king could acquire his vineyard. False witness, bearing false witness against your neighbor means that you are accusing him of something and imposing him, therefore, to penalties for something that he is not guilty of and does not deserve.

It's an injustice. The man under consideration is not guilty of anything. He's lived a law-abiding, honest life.

He's done nothing actionable. There's no reason he should be in court. There's no reason someone should be accusing him of something because he hasn't done it.

And if he hasn't done it and you accuse him of doing it, you're bearing a false witness against him. You are bringing a reproach upon his good name, which he has done nothing to deserve. You might even be bringing criminal penalties upon him for crimes he did not commit.

This is an injustice. You should not slander a person or gossip about a person if you don't know the things to be true, and sometimes even if you do know them to be true, you shouldn't. There are times when a true and negative witness needs to be brought against somebody, but never a false negative witness against them.

Now, what is gossip then? Well, there's a distinction between gossip and slander. Slander, of course, is when you're actually spreading a false rumor about somebody. This certainly is bearing false witness against somebody.

Gossip is not always false. Gossip can be where you're spreading some negative information about somebody that's actually true information. But when it's gossip, it's because it's malicious and unnecessary information.

You can tell the truth about somebody and destroy their reputation, but you're doing it in a way that's not right. Generally speaking, I would say that gossip is taking place when you are spreading negative information about somebody to somebody who is not either part of the problem or part of the solution. That is, there's no reason why they need to hear it.

You're just passing it on because it happens to be a juicy morsel and you know that people love to hear it. But it's not someone who needs to hear it and it's just damaging someone's reputation. One reason to be careful about that is because you don't know whether that person who has done something has repented necessarily.

If they've repented, then to spread a bad rumor about them or whatever is not going to be a good idea. It may not be a false witness, but it's unjust. What this law is guarding is the person's right to their good name, a right to their reputation.

And when you bear a false witness against somebody, then you are damaging their reputation just as surely as you're damaging their life by murder or their property by theft. Now, the last command there is about coveting. And as I said in a previous class, this command shows that God is concerned about more than just what you do outwardly, but what you want to do.

And it's this commandment that no doubt informs Jesus' teachings about murder in the heart and adultery in the heart. Now, if a person murders someone in their heart or commits adultery in their heart, it is indeed a different thing than for them to do it outwardly because murder and adultery are punishable in the courts of law, at least in Jewish law. But being angry or being lustful was not punishable in the law because people are not given the privilege of... the courts are not supposed to punish thought crimes.

But that doesn't mean that God doesn't see them and that God doesn't object to them and that God won't judge for them because the domain of judging the heart is God's domain. And on the day of judgment, the secret thoughts of every man are going to be brought to light, the Bible says. God is going to judge the thoughts of everyone's heart.

That's not the role of government. The role of government is not to decide that certain crimes are hate crimes. We don't need thought police in a free society or in any society for that matter.

Now, if you go out and do something hateful, then let the action be punished as an action. But the motives are not the realm of the government to decide additional penalties because you were thinking bad thoughts when you did it, because you hated homosexuals or you hated Asians or you hated black people or you hated white people or you hated some class and therefore when you commit this crime against one of them, you get additional penalties added besides what the crime deserves because you hated it. God has every right to punish people for their thoughts.

But man does not. But Jesus pointed out that when it comes to your thoughts, God is paying attention and He is keeping track and though you might not commit adultery outwardly, God knows if you're committing adultery in your heart. You may not be stealing from your neighbor, but God knows if you're coveting.

You may not be committing murder, but God knows if your heart is murderous toward it. And what we need to understand is that these things, this last command basically kind of covers all of them and says what you want in your heart, God is paying attention to that too. Now we don't, it would be wrong for any criminal justice system to say well Jesus said if you're angry at your brother without a cause you've committed murder, so we're going to hang this guy because he was angry.

Or Jesus said if you look at a woman to lust, you've committed adultery, so we're going



to grant this woman a divorce because her husband had these thoughts. These outside punishments and penalties and so forth for behavior, those belong to actions not to thoughts. But God judges the heart and the command here makes it very clear that God has claim on your thought life as well as on your outward life.

Now coveting, covetousness, I'm going to give this real quick, is the same thing that Paul referred to as love of money, although you might love other things besides money, but the love of money is called covetousness in the Bible. And Paul said that the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Over in 1st Timothy chapter 6, you remember everyone quotes that the love of money is the root of all evil.

By all evil, he means all kinds of evil. Certainly not every evil act that anyone has ever done was motivated by love of money. That would be a mistake to interpret that way.

But certainly every kind of evil has been perpetrated by the love of money. And that's 1st Timothy chapter 6 verse 10. The love of money is the root of all kinds of evil.

Now it's interesting that for the love of money all kinds of evil have been done, including the violation of all nine of the other commandments. The love of money is covetousness, a violation of the 10th commandment, but every one of the other commandments have been violated for the love of money. It is the root of all kinds of evil.

Have people had other gods before God? Yes, covetousness is idolatry, the Bible says. Have people taken the name of the Lord in vain? Have people sworn falsely in the name of God for the love of money? Yes. Yes, to deceive someone they were doing business with, they have sworn falsely for the love of money.

That's happened many times. Have people violated the Sabbath for the love of money? Yes. In the Bible there were times when the Jews went out and they worked on the Sabbath because they wanted more money than they would have made just working six days.

Have people dishonored their parents for the love of money? Absolutely. Many people have tried to cheat their parents out of things, or even, as Paul pointed out, not supporting your parents is not honoring your parents. And certainly it would be out of love for money that someone would withhold financial support from their parents.

Have people committed murder for money? Yeah, you ever heard of Hitman? People do commit murder for money. How about adultery? Has anyone ever committed adultery for money? Yeah, there are prostitutes. How about theft? Has anyone stolen for the love of money? Well, that goes without saying.

How about bearing false witness? Yes. False witnesses usually require payment for their services. Those that testified against Jesus were paid to bear false witness.

Every single command, every kind of evil defined in the other commandments has had its roots, from time to time at least, in this 10th commandment. Love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Now, of course, there have been murders and adulteries and blasphemies that were not related to money and love of money.

But the thing is, the love of money actually has led to every one of those things from time to time, and therefore is the root cause. Violation of the 10th commandment is kind of the root cause, or can be the root cause, of violation of all of them. Therefore, what's in the heart is the first thing of importance.

And though it's the last command, it's sort of a capstone of the 10 commandments, because it does kind of, in a sense, govern them all. All right, we've run over time, but we had to get through the last one.