

Meaning of the Decalogue (so far)

A good summation of what we covered so far in our study of the Decalogue is how we can use them as the 10 principles that govern our relationship with others. The Decalogue is the only part of Scripture that is written by the finger of God, and as such, it helps us to be like him (1 Peter 1:15-16; Leviticus 19:2; 11:44-45) and relate to others as He does (Leviticus 19:18).

Within this framework, I understand the Decalogue both as a revelation of God's character and as an assurance that, through the power of the Holy Spirit, we will increasingly reflect the very qualities it reveals. (Ezekiel 36:26; Jeremiah 31:33).

Therefore, here is how I frame the Decalogue to personalize its principles and turn them into 10 principles to live by, which I abide by in my relationships with God and others:

- 1 Remember that the God of the Covenant—and no other “god” or person—was who saved me, and He will always be there for me, in His **faithfulness**, when others forsake me. When I put Him first, He will take care of me in bad situations. I don't need to be rude/vengeful/belligerent to others because He is the one who will rescue me (Ex. 20:1-3).
- 2 God is my only source of **joy**, and he should be the only example I need to follow in all things, even my relationships (Exodus 20:4-6).
- 3 The Bible teaches us to emulate God's character because we are His ambassadors and “living letters” to the world (2 Cor. 5:20; 3:2). So the third principle of the Decalogue reminds me that I should not take His name (i.e., His character) in vain. In all my human relations, I should not knowingly misrepresent the wholesomeness (the idea comes from the parallel concept of the Hebrew word **“shalom”/peace**) of His character in my human relations and with the created order (Ex. 20:7).
- 4 I will submit to His will all week long, conscientiously serving Him and others, so I can enter into His rest and commune with Him and His family (the believers who abide by His covenant) on the Sabbath (Ex. 20:8-11).
- 5 God wants me to have **benignity/kindness** (moral goodness, integrity) and respect those with authority over me in order to be respected and to live a long/plentiful life (Ex. 20:12).
- 6 God wants me to demonstrate to others the same **love** he demonstrates to me by recommending every act and attitude that can harm or hurt others physically, emotionally, and spiritually (Ex. 20:13, cf. Matt. 5:21-26).
- 7 The Lord invites me to have **patience/long-suffering/longanimity** in my more intimate relationships, upholding my covenants as He upholds His (Ex. 20:14).

PS: The words in bold and underline represent the principles of God's character as described by the fruits of the Spirit of Galatians 5.