



The 10 Commandments Full Collection

PDF Transcript

On-Screen Text: BibleProject

00:00-00:04

The 10 Commandments as Wisdom

00:04-05:03

Chapter 1: Commands Are for Life

00:04-01:02

Jon: We are gonna talk about the 10 Commandments.

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: These are the most well-known rules in the whole Bible, maybe the most famous rules in all of human history.

Tim: Yeah. They are really famous. But if we take time to look deeper, what we're gonna discover is that the 10 Commandments are actually not just rules.

Jon: Really?

Tim: Yeah. In fact, every command in the Bible is way more than a command.

Jon: What do you mean?

Tim: So let's think, for example, about the first time in the Bible that God tells anybody to do anything. It's what God says to humanity when he creates them in Genesis 1.

Jon: "God blessed them, and said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the land ...'"

Tim: That's right. But notice, it's not actually called a command. It's called a blessing.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So this first command sets the tone for all of the commands to come.
Every command in the Bible is an invitation to find life.

Chapter 2: The Quest for Wisdom

01:02-03:31

Jon: That's nice. But how? Right? Like, don't we need rules to tell us how to find life?

Tim: Sure. But rules only get you so far. I mean, what we really need is a way to discern between right and wrong, and good and bad, in any of life's complicated situations. And this is what the Bible calls wisdom.

Jon: Okay. How do I get wisdom?

Tim: Okay. So now we have to check out the second command in the story of the Bible. And what you see is it is all about a search for wisdom.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So this is after God puts the human in the garden. In Genesis chapter 2, we read this—

Jon: “Yahweh God commanded the human, saying, ‘From every tree of the garden you will surely eat...’”

Tim: Which, real quick, includes the tree of life.

Jon: Nice.

Tim: So enjoy the tree of God's own life that will never end.

Jon: Great! Eat up! I like this command.

Tim: But it continues—

Jon: “... but from the tree of knowing good and bad you will not eat from it, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die.” Huh. Okay, so here's a tree. It teaches good from bad, but don't eat it. What's going on?

Tim: Yeah. This story is super dense and it's a riddle. It's inviting us to meditate on what is the command really all about. Now, let's turn the command over. There's actually two parts to this command. We have this negative command: not eating from the tree of knowledge. But notice that is matched, or balanced, by this positive invitation to eat from the tree of life.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: I mean, the whole premise is that all the trees look beautiful and good.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So how do I know the difference between the tree that will kill me and the tree that brings life? It is only because God's telling me.

Jon: Okay. So real wisdom comes from listening to God's voice and that leads to life, instead of taking wisdom on my own terms, which leads to death.

Tim: Exactly. That's what the story is saying.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And it's this story that is setting the stage for every command to come in the Bible. And there are a lot of commands coming in the Bible—

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Like hundreds. Rules and statutes and laws. But every one of them is actually just like this first command, which is an invitation to hear God's voice and find life.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: To do that, we have to meditate on the commands, turning them over, and pondering how each one invites us to discover life and the wisdom of God within the command.

Chapter 3: Meditating on God's Commands

03:31-04:14

Tim: This is actually what the author of one of the psalms is trying to tell us.

Jon: "How good is life for the one ... who delights in the *torah* of the LORD. And on his *torah* they meditate day and night."

Tim: *Torah* here means "instruction" and is often translated as "law."

Jon: "They will be like a tree planted by streams of water which yields its fruit in its season."

Tim: Yeah. This is so cool. So living by God's wisdom doesn't just mean that I get to eat from the tree of life. It's that I actually become a tree of life to others. It's inviting us to live in a radical and bold way that brings us life, but also shares that life with others.

Chapter 4: Invitation to the 10 Commandments

04:14-04:41

Jon: Yeah. So this is the invitation with the 10 commands.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: We get to meditate on them and find life.

Tim: Yes. Yeah. And we can think of them as just a list of 10 rules, you know, like a moral checklist. But if we take time to meditate on them, turn them over, we will discover just a whole universe of wisdom and life in every single one of these most famous rules in the Bible.

[Musical Break]

04:41-04:46

On-Screen Text: The commandment of Yahweh is radiant, giving light to the eyes. - David

04:46-05:03

1st Commandment: No Other Gods

05:03-10:47

Chapter 1: A Covenant Offer

05:03-06:46

Tim: The 10 Commandments don't come out of nowhere. They are what God says to Israel after he rescues them out of Egypt and then brings them to the foot of Mount Sinai. And God's offer is this, "Listen to my voice. Keep my covenant."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: The terms of this covenant are gonna set you apart. It's gonna be a holy nation, set apart. It'll be a priestly kingdom. And then my representatives to the nations. So that's God's offer, and the 10 Commandments are the first of these terms of the covenant.

And they begin this way, Exodus 20, verse 2: "I am Yahweh your Elohim, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery."

So notice what we begin with is who God is to the people. This is a family whose fundamental identity is "we used to be slaves." So we are a liberated people, and Yahweh is our liberator. Which means that one way to think about the 10 Commandments is it's like a freedom ethic. It's the ethic of the free.

Jon: How to live as a free people.

Tim: Yeah. Also this thing of "I am Yahweh your Elohim." I'm yours. There's a phrase that's going to get repeated throughout Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, and the prophets, this phrase where God will say, "I will be your God, and you will be my people." And this is really similar to the well-known phrase from the Song of Songs, "I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine." This is covenant language.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So there's no command here. The first words of the 10 Commandments are not a command; they're just a statement.

Chapter 2: The Meaning of “Before Me”

06:46-08:11

Tim: So with that in mind, let’s now hear the first actual command of the 10 words.
“There will not be for you any other *elohim* before me.”

Now, that little phrase “before me,” *‘al peney* or *‘al panai*, is a very common prepositional phrase. This is the grammar term to refer to something being in a physical location, like right in front of you. It most literally means “in front of my face.” But this phrase also can mean “against the face.”

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So let’s say you have a hostile army coming towards you. They are also before your face.

Jon: Before your face, but they’re coming against you.

Tim: Against your face.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Yeah. Okay.

Tim: So this phrase *‘al-peney* also—this is going to be confusing to us—can be used not in the sense of in front of you, but in the sense of beside you.

Jon: Hmm?

Tim: It is sometimes used in the sense of “instead of.”

Jon: It’s very flexible?

Tim: It’s very flexible. But you can actually plug this idea of “no other *elohim*” into every one of those meanings, and it works.

Jon: So don’t put anything else in front of me, beside me, against me, instead of me.

Tim: “There will not be for you any other *elohim*...” No thing else is your life.

Chapter 3: Other *Elohim*

08:11-09:04

Jon: Okay. And *elohim* is the Hebrew word that just means “spiritual being.”

Tim: Yes. And it is used to refer to the one God of Israel, the creator of all, but then also to other spiritual beings, real or imagined.

Jon: We do know that there’s other spiritual beings. We call them the host of heaven.

Tim: Yeah, and then they're also called by other titles in the Bible. So messengers, that is, angels. You have the divine council members, like the sons of God. Spirits, this is the class of creatures that are spiritual beings. Deuteronomy 10:17, Moses says, "Yahweh your Elohim, he is the Elohim of *elohim*."

Jon: Yeah, he's in a class of its own.

Tim: Yes. Any other spiritual being other than Yahweh isn't on the same rank as Yahweh and is not worthy of your ultimate loyalty and allegiance.

Chapter 4: Spiritual Powers Today

09:04-10:21

Jon: Okay. In our context, we kind of dismiss this idea, almost too much, of other spiritual powers.

Tim: Yeah. But we do actually still have these higher powers, higher ideals that command our loyalty. And when humans give our imaginations and desires and allegiances to anything that's not the source of all reality, it will eventually lead us on a path that dehumanizes us and other people. I guess it's easy to see that with sex, for example, or with money.

Jon: With greed.

Tim: Yeah, or with power. When those become ends in themselves, it leads to our destruction.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: It is possible to live your human existence in a lie, thinking that someone or something or some power has a claim on me that actually doesn't. But when I get in touch with the one who truly has a claim on my life, because they're the author of my life, then I'm living in the truth, and I'm living in the road to freedom.

That's a concept that we're watching come into birth right here as we hear God say these words. These are world-shaping words. And it's just the first command.

[Musical Break]

10:21-10:26

On-Screen Text: No one is able to serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other... - Jesus

10:26-10:47

2nd Commandment: No Idols

10:47-16:50

Chapter 1: What Are Idols?

10:47-11:41

Tim: The second command, “You will not make for yourself an idol or any likeness of what is in the skies above, or on the land beneath, or in the waters underneath the land. You will not worship them. You will not serve them.”

The first idol that is made in the story of the Bible, that we know the shape of it, is of a little cow, of a calf. And in terms of archeology, little molten, molded calves or bulls are one of the most common ancient statues. It was either deified and worshiped or used as a representation of divinity.

Jon: So it becomes the thing by which now I have access to this other, greater thing.

Chapter 2: Creating a Form of God

11:41-13:32

Tim: Yes. So why would the biblical authors think that this is a huge problem?

There’s one passage in Deuteronomy 4 where you get closest to, like, a reason why. And it’s Moses retelling the story of what happened at Mount Sinai when Israel heard God speak the 10 Commandments.

He says, “So watch yourselves carefully, because you didn’t see any form on the day that Yahweh spoke to you at Mount Horeb from the middle of the fire.” So watch yourselves, “so that you don’t act corruptly and make a graven image for yourselves in the form of any carved or shaped figure.”

Also, watch yourselves “so that you don’t lift your eyes up to the skies and see the sun or the moon and the stars, the host of heaven, and be drawn away and worship and serve them ... But Yahweh has taken you all and brought you all out of the iron furnace, from Egypt, to be a people of his own possession.”

Jon: Okay, yeah. You didn’t see God in any form. And you’re going to have this impulse to try to create a form of God. There’s something dangerous and misguided about trying to create a form to contain Yahweh God.

Tim: There you go. Because remember, Yahweh means “the one who is.” There is just one source of all reality, and that “one who is” is so above and beyond our imagining. And when we reduce that one, God, to something within creation, it diminishes who God is, and it begins to, like, deform our imaginations.

Chapter 3: The Sun, Moon, and Stars

13:32-14:06

Jon: Okay. But all of a sudden, he starts talking about the stars in the sky.

Tim: Right. We're meditating on an important idea from the seven-day creation narrative, that on days four and six, God makes two categories of rulers.

The first rulers are the rulers of the sky, and it's exactly these three: the sun, the moon, and the stars. And they're called 'ot in Hebrew, "signs" or "symbols" that actually do reflect something really important about the one who is, but they are not the one who is.

Chapter 4: Humans Are the Image

14:06-15:02

Tim: You also have the rulers below. But notice what Moses says here, "The LORD has taken you all," the Israelites, "and brought you all out of the iron furnace ..." Egypt is described as a furnace. And this, I think, is a very subtle reference to the fact that Israel is to imagine themselves as the molten image of God, the actual molten image of God.

Jon: Guys, you're the image.

Tim: You are the image. That's right. Humans shouldn't make images of God because God already made an image of himself, and that is—

Jon: That is humans.

Tim: Humans.

Jon: And it's not a statue of humans. It's just humans.

Tim: The living, breathing humans. That's right.

Jon: The living, breathing humans are God's image. If you want to find connection to Yahweh God, it's other humans. That's pretty profound.

Tim: It's very profound.

Jon: Yeah.

Chapter 5: A Passionate Elohim

15:02-16:24

Tim: So then you get, "because I, Yahweh your Elohim, am a passionate Elohim ..." What God means is, I am passionate for the well-being of my creation. And anything that harms or reduces it, Yahweh is on a mission to get rid of that, "... visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the threes and the fours for those who hate me, but showing loyal love to thousands for those who love me and keep my commands."

What it means, in essence, is that God will allow people to make their bed and sleep in it over the course of many generations. But for those who love God and keep his commands, there will be a reciprocity of infinite generations, thousands of generations, which is basically saying—

Jon: Uncountable.

Tim: Uncountable. Like loyal love from God that's reciprocated by love from humans and honoring God's commands? Now we're talking about what creation is all about.

So put it all together. Every human, male or female, rich or poor, slave or free—every human is an image of God, the unique vehicle of the way divine goodness is present in our world. So don't make an image. Be a faithful image of God.

[Musical Break]

16:24-16:30

On-Screen Text: Therefore, since we are God's offspring, we should not think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by human skill or imagination. - Paul

16:30-16:50

3rd Commandment: Do Not Carry the Name in Vain

16:50-20:32

Chapter 1: Carrying Yahweh's Name

16:50-17:53

Tim: So we're gonna look at now the third word, "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain..." The most literal translation would be as follows: "You will not carry," so Hebrew verb *nasa'*, which means "to pick up and carry."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: "You will not carry the name of Yahweh your Elohim in vain, for Yahweh will not declare innocent the one who carries his name in vain." This whole thing is about God's name.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: In the Hebrew Bible, God's name is spelled with four Hebrew letters: *yod, heh, vav, heh*. And the most ancient pronunciation that we're pretty sure we can recover of it would have been Yahweh. It means "the one who is." It's such a rad name. It's like the coolest name ever.

Jon: That's—that's a good name.

Tim: “The one who is.”

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So Yahweh’s name is like the greatest name because he’s the creator of all things.

Chapter 2: Carrying as Representing

17:53-19:18

Tim: Now, here’s something interesting. When God says he’s going to guide the Israelites through the wilderness, God says, “I’m gonna send a messenger to go with you.” It gets translated “angel.” And then God says, “You know, you should be careful around that messenger ... my name is in him.”

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So how you treat him is how you treat me. So in other words, when God gives his name or attaches his name to others, it becomes a form of representation or a way that you encounter the God who is above and beyond.

So when the priests go in and out of the tabernacle, one of the special things that they wear is this chest plate with these gold settings in which are set 12 gemstones. On the gemstones are etched the names of the 12 tribes of Israel.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And this is all symbolism that this priest is a representative. When the priest goes in with those names etched on the stones, it’s as if all of the people of those tribes are walking into the tent.

So two times in Exodus 28, that’s called “Aaron carrying their name before Yahweh.” So what Aaron is to do for Israel, Israel is supposed to do with Yahweh’s name—to carry the name. It’s a risky move to attach your name to something.

Jon: Yeah. It’s an intimate move.

Chapter 3: The Meaning of “in Vain”

19:18-20:10

Tim: Yeah. And the risk is that Israel will carry the name of Yahweh in vain. It’s the Hebrew word *shav’*. It can refer to—mmm—something that doesn’t fulfill its purpose.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So for example, in Psalm 127, “Unless Yahweh is building up a house, the people who build a house are building for *shav’*,” for no purpose. It won’t actually succeed.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: It won't be what it's made to be. So God has attached his name to you for a purpose, to represent him.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So carry the name of Yahweh faithfully. So represent the character and the story of Yahweh with your whole life and being. And how are we supposed to do that? Well, that is what the rest of the 10 Commandments are all about.

[Musical Break]

20:10-20:15

On-Screen Text: Our Father in the skies, may your name be recognized as holy. - Jesus

20:15-20:32

4th Commandment: Remember the Sabbath

20:32-25:46

Chapter 1: The Meaning of *Shabbat*

20:32-21:17

Tim: Number four.

Jon: Number four.

Tim: Which literally is "Remember the day of *Shabbat* ..." *Shabbat* means "to stop."

Jon: Hmm. Okay, so "remember the day of stopping."

Tim: Yeah, "to treat it as holy."

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So there's a 24-hour period that in your mind, you're to recognize that one's different, and how you behave in that 24-hour period should be different.

Jon: And that's treating it as holy.

Tim: That's treating as holy. Okay.

Jon: Alright.

Tim: How exactly? "So for six days you'll labor and do your work, but the seventh day is a *Shabbat* of Yahweh your Elohim. On it you will not make or do any work."

Jon: Okay.

Chapter 2: Seven People and Seven Days of Creation

21:17-22:57

Tim: You get a list of who it is that's supposed to honor the holiness of this day of *Shabbat*. It's you, your son, your daughter, your male slave, your female slave, your cattle, and the immigrant who's in your gates.

Jon: Is that seven?

Tim: Seven.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Of course.

Jon: Of course.

Tim: So seven is the Hebrew word *sheva'*. It's spelled with the same letters as the Hebrew word *sava'*, which means "to fill up" or "to satisfy."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: "Complete." And the last line of the command, "Therefore Yahweh blessed the day of *Shabbat*, and he made it holy."

Jon: Right. And this is referring to Genesis 1.

Tim: Mhm. We'll recall that "in six days Yahweh made the skies, the land, and the sea, and all that's in them ..."

Jon: When God ordered all of the cosmos—

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: He was laboring in some way?

Tim: Yeah. Okay. So God generates out of generous love something that is not God, but that is wholly contained within and sustained by God. Each day opens with "And God said ..." Then God is making or doing something. And then it ends with saying, "And there was evening and there was morning ..." One, two, three, four, five, six, "and he rested on the seventh day ..."

Jon: Day seven doesn't get that final marker, "and there was evening and morning ..." on the seventh day.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: It's a day that doesn't end.

Tim: It's the day that doesn't end.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: This great day of unity and completeness and blessing and sharing in the harmony and *shalom*. Coming into rest—a state of rest—within the generous love of God.

Jon: Hmm.

Chapter 3: Reenacting the History of the Universe

22:57-24:02

Tim: And what if, because that's such a long journey—

Jon: Yeah. When is it again?

Tim: The universe—

Jon: When is it going to happen?

[Tim laughs]

Tim: Exactly.

Jon: Can I put it in my calendar?

[laughter]

Tim: Yeah. So what the fourth command is about, it's about Israel is to structure its actual life rhythms along that storyline and then reenact the whole history of the universe every week. So that six days of labor culminating in a seventh day of rest becomes a way of participating in the grand story of what God is doing and has in store for all of creation.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: I'm an image of God. I'm called to discover the vocation that God has for me and that he's instilled within me. But our work is not ultimate. It's not actually what has the final word about where this universe is going. So I can stop and just enjoy the good things that God's given me.

Jon: Wow. Yeah.

Chapter 4: Different Days

24:02-25:24

Tim: In Jewish tradition, as far back as we can tell, the seventh day begins on what today we call Friday at sundown, so from Friday to Saturday. But then Jesus rose from the dead on a Sunday.

Jon: Day one.

Tim: Day one of the new week. A hugely important day because it marks the dawn of new creation. So the earliest Jewish communities that followed Jesus now had two days they wanted to celebrate as holy. And there were arguments about which day was truly honoring God, and it got contentious. But the Apostle Paul saw all this coming, where he talked about, "Hey, different ones of you are going to treat different days as sacred and holy," surely referring to the Sabbath.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And he trusted that the Spirit of God would guide individuals and communities to use wisdom and to honor the days that they felt they needed to honor.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So this command is for us. Remember the Sabbath, keep it holy, and let's be generous to each other as we, as we follow Jesus. Because I think what we all care about is the meaning of the Sabbath.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: There is coming a time of rest, and you can stop and enjoy a taste of that future rest right here in the present.

[Musical Break]

25:24-25:30

On-Screen Text: So a Sabbath rest remains for the people of God. - The Letter to the Hebrews

25:30-25:46

5th Commandment: Honor Your Father and Mother

25:46-31:06

Chapter 1: The Hinge Between God and Neighbor

25:46-26:39

Jon: So we looked at commands one through four—

Tim: Yes.

Jon: And we've pointed out that all of these are emphasizing your relationship with God.

Tim: Yeah. Honor me alone. Don't make any physical representations of God. Don't carry the name of Yahweh your Elohim for a futile purpose. And honor the seventh-day rest. That's commands one through four—humans relating to God. What's interesting is commands six through ten—don't kill, don't adulterize, don't steal, and don't bear false witness, don't covet or desire what isn't yours—those are all very clearly, like, about you and other humans.

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And then in between them is command number five, the hinge between how you relate to God and how you relate to your neighbor.

Chapter 2: A Unique Relationship

26:39-27:23

Tim: “Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be prolonged in the land which Yahweh your Elohim gives you.” How you relate to God is really connected to how you relate to these two humans.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Notice the “your” is repeated. Your father, your mother, your Elohim. Your father and your mother are the ones who gave you life. And your Elohim is the one who gives you a land where you can have life.

Jon: Right.

Tim: So how I relate to somebody who generated and sustained my existence, that’s a unique relationship, and that needs to be treated in a special way.

Jon: Yeah.

Chapter 3: The Meaning of “Honor”

27:23-29:33

Tim: And that special way is called honor. It comes from the Hebrew verb *kabbed*. It means “to be heavy, to have physical weight.”

Jon: Okay. Weightiness or, like, gravity.

Tim: Totally. It’s important.

Jon: Yeah. It’s meaningful.

Tim: So you treat them as having significance. So for example, here’s Proverbs 14:31. “The one who oppresses the poor taunts his maker.” Acting unfairly towards someone who has less than you, you are making fun of his creator.

Jon: Wow. That’s heavy.

Tim: Staggering implications. But then, “The one who is generous to the needy honors him.” You’re saying, “You’re worth having something.” But then also you are honoring the creator of that person. So honoring your parents is about respecting them.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: However, honoring can and does refer in the Hebrew Bible to sharing and generosity and economic support. So what is very interesting is that is certainly how Jesus took this command right here. He says, "Listen, Moses said, 'Honor your father and mother.' But you say that if anyone says to his father and mother, 'Hey, Mom and Dad, I know you were expecting to get support from me in your old age, but the money that I set aside to do that for you, I dedicated it as a gift to God to offer to the temple. Sorry.'" And so there apparently was a loophole where what you give to your parents could be lessened to prioritize that money as a gift to God.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And Jesus is like, "That's so backwards." Jesus is pretty frustrated. Honoring your father and mother, I think for Jesus, is how you honor God. They cared for you and generated you, and you can reciprocate that care for them. And something about that reciprocation of care results in prolonged days in the land.

Chapter 4: Multigenerational Life

29:33-30:44

Jon: How does a community have long, multigenerational life?

Tim: Yeah. It's through reciprocal care within the community. So our parents gave us life when they were young, and we can help sustain their life when they're old. And it's this reciprocity of care. This is the only command in the list with a promise.

Jon: "So that you'll have long life in the land."

Tim: Yes. And for Jesus, this command wasn't just about our own biological fathers and mothers. I think what made the early Jesus movement so socially powerful was how they created a sense of family bonds beyond the actual physical lineage and kinship. And so Jesus actually wants us to expand the scope of the 5th Commandment. The people of God are to esteem the elderly and take care of widows and honor all those who gave us life. And when we do that, we honor God, and we create a community that thrives.

[Musical Break]

30:44-30:49

On-Screen Text: Children's children are a crown for the elderly, and parents are the glory of their children. - Solomon

30:49-31:06

6th Commandment: Do Not Kill

31:06-34:51

Chapter 1: The Meaning of *Ratsakh*

31:06-32:37

Tim: All of our contemporary English translations render this sixth command as, “You shall not murder.” Two words in Hebrew. *Lo’* is the Hebrew word for “not” or “no.” And then it’s just the single verb, *ratsakh*. So the word *ratsakh* is used in 1 Kings chapter 21 to describe when Ahab took the life of this guy, Navot, to get his land.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So *ratsakh* can describe premeditated murder, but almost half of the times that *ratsakh* appears, occurs talking about the cities of refuge.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And so these are six cities in ancient Israel that were set apart as, like, an asylum so that a *rotseakh*—the killer, who has struck a person unintentionally—can flee there.

Jon: Hmm. We wouldn’t call that “murder.”

Tim: No.

Jon: We’d call that “manslaughter.”

Tim: Exactly. So I think our English word “kill” can refer to intentional or unintentional.

Jon: So don’t kill.

Tim: Yeah. Because that is what *ratsakh* means—just ending a life, unrelated to purpose or premeditation.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: Apparently, a human life is so valuable that it’s worth this kind of blanket prohibition—don’t end a life. Don’t do it.

Jon: There’s something so foundational and important and valuable about life that the baseline is, you do not take it.

Tim: Do not do it. Yeah.

Chapter 2: Complexities of the Command

32:37-33:57

Tim: However, after the 10 Commandments, we also get another collection of commands to ancient Israel—this is in Exodus chapters 21 to 23—and these fill out and expand the 10 words. And there we find more laws about killing that qualify the sixth command.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: So what if you accidentally kill someone? What if you're defending yourself or your home?

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: You know, these commands get into all of these complexities.

Jon: Okay, but the first time the topic of killing comes up, it's a simple two-word prohibition: Don't kill. Don't do it.

Tim: Right. So there's something about the value of human life that should always make us slow down and just stop and make sure that the first priority that we have is protecting life. It's like the baseline. And so maybe, you know, it's just good to say you and I are not, in this moment, trying to make official declarations about legitimacy of capital punishment.

Jon: Yeah, or when you can defend your family.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Or—

Tim: That's right.

Jon: What does it mean to be a soldier? And all that stuff.

Tim: Yeah, that's downstream. And you got to think that through. Like, we all have to think those questions through in our communities, in our context. In other words, the sixth command is a form of wisdom literature.

Chapter 3: Protect Life

33:57-34:28

Jon: Hmm. Okay, so flip this command around, and it's a charge to protect life.

Tim: Yeah. The purpose of God's commands is for life, and the sixth command here—of the 10—just makes that perfectly clear. It's meant to direct that the best of our thinking, the best of our energies, our greatest wisdom and moral conviction is most aligned with God when we aim all of that at the preservation and the flourishing of life.

[Musical Break]

34:28-34:33

On-Screen Text: How good is life for the peacemakers, because they will be called children of God. - Jesus

34:33-34:51

7th Commandment: Do Not Commit Adultery

34:51-39:40

Chapter 1: The Meaning of Adultery

34:51-35:14

Jon: We are at word seven of the 10 Commandments.

Tim: Mhm. Which is, “Don’t commit adultery.” Two words in Hebrew, *lo’ tin’aph*, from the Hebrew root *na’aph*. What it means is to have sex with someone that is in a marriage covenant with another person. And then it raises a question of, well then, why does that matter?

Jon: Yeah.

Chapter 2: Marriage in the Beginning

35:14-37:20

Tim: So Genesis 1, verse 27, “God created *’adam* (human) in his image. In the image of God, he (that is God) created him (that is humanity); male and female he created them.” The phrase “image of God” has gotten swapped out for “male and female.” So one of the ways humans image God is that we are different, but yet also one. The second story that really focuses on this is then in the Eden narrative, where you have a singular human, an *’adam*. But then, when God puts the human in the garden to work it and to keep it, God says, “... It is not good for the *’adam* to be alone.” So what God says is, “I will make an *’ezer kenegdo*.” So the word *’ezer* means “the one who brings about deliverance from the bad situation,” so “rescuer.”

Jon: Mhm.

Tim: And the phrase *kenegdo* means “corresponding to.” So a delivering ally that matches, but not matches by being identical, matches by being precisely different. So God becomes an anesthesiologist—

[both laugh]

Tim: —knocks the human out—

Jon: Puts Adam to sleep.

Tim: —with a deep sleep, and takes one of his sides.

Jon: The one becomes two.

Tim: And when the human wakes up, and he sees, and he's like, "Oh my goodness, this is bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called *'ishah*, woman, because she was taken from *'ish*, man." And then the narrator steps in, in Genesis 2:24, and says, "Okay, dear reader, this is the reason why a man leaves his father and mother and then joins"—literally clings, grabs onto—"his wife, and they become one flesh."

Jon: Mhm. The two will become one flesh.

Tim: Mhm. "One flesh" is a way of talking about a family bond.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: There's something really special, important, that God's behind.

Chapter 3: Marriage as a Symbol of God's Covenant

37:20-38:41

Tim: It is also interesting that marriage is one of the main metaphors to talk about God's covenant with Israel.

Jon: Right.

Tim: This has to be why the Apostle Paul sees sex and marriage as having cosmic implications.

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: Most famously is in his letter to the Ephesians, where he says, "... husbands are to love their wives ... because when they love their wives, they love their own bodies." And he's for sure meditating on the—

Jon: One flesh.

Tim: —the Eden narrative, that the two are one. And then he starts talking about the Messiah and the church. The Messiah loves the church.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: You're like, "What?" And he says, "This is a great mystery."

[Jon laughs]

Tim: Now, just to clarify, the mystery I'm talking about?

Jon: Yeah, explain this mystery to me.

Tim: Well, Paul says that when he reads in Genesis about the two, the man and the woman, becoming one, that it's ultimately a picture of Jesus and his people. That is, God and humanity becoming one.

Jon: Okay, so that's what human marriage is meant to symbolize.

Tim: Apparently, yes. Yeah, marriage is a picture of God's relentless love and loyal pursuit to become one with his human creatures, with his partners. It's remarkable.

Jon: Yeah.

Chapter 4: Protect and Honor Marriages

38:41-39:23

Tim: Okay. Flip over "Don't commit adultery." If you see a married couple in your community, their marriage is the most important context where they're learning to become fully loving human beings towards each other. Protect that. Help them. Honor that. That's where they're working it out.

Jon: And of course, I guess we're not saying in all your other relationships then, love doesn't matter.

Tim: Exactly. Yeah.

Jon: But there's this focusing.

Tim: There's this focusing in a marriage covenant that is unique. It's significant. It's difficult. Don't shatter the marriage of another couple because of your sexual desire. Don't commit adultery.

[Musical Break]

39:23-39:27

On-Screen Text: Let marriage be honored by all. - The Letter to the Hebrews

39:27-39:40

8th Commandment: Do Not Steal

39:40-43:46

Chapter 1: A Triad About Your Neighbor's Stuff

39:40-40:13

Tim: We're gonna talk about the 8th Commandment, "Don't steal."

Jon: Right.

Tim: Commands six, seven, and eight are the three commands that are just two words in Hebrew: *lo' tirtsakh*, *lo' tin'aph*, *lo' tignov*. So "You will not kill," "You will not commit adultery," "You will not steal." They're like a little triad.

Jon: It's a little package.

Tim: Yeah. These three are all about things that belong to your neighbor that are not yours: their life, their marriage, their stuff.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: And you need to honor that.

Jon: Hmm. So don't steal.

Chapter 2: Everything is a Gift From God

40:13-41:47

Tim: Yeah. Now, the sole purpose for stealing is you want to benefit from something that you are not currently benefiting from. So "I want that. I'm gonna take it."

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But everything that my neighbor has is God's gift to them. And one way of thinking about stealing then, it actually stems from this probably unconscious belief that I think that God should have given that gift to me.

Jon: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Tim: That should be mine.

Jon: Maybe God made a mistake.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: But it's fundamental to the story of Israel that everything that they have in the land is given to them as a gift of God. Deuteronomy 8, verse 7, "For Yahweh your Elohim is bringing you into a good land ... a land of wheat and barley, of vines and fig trees and pomegranates, a land of olive oil and honey, a land where you'll eat food without scarcity, in which you'll lack nothing ..."

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: And "When you've eaten and are satisfied, you will bless Yahweh your Elohim for the good land that he has given you." All of that is, first and foremost, described as a gift of God. Yeah.

Jon: Okay. There's a simplicity and a beauty of just saying, "God has a purpose for what he's given to each of us. It's all a gift, and I can be content with that."

Chapter 3: Stewarding Other People's Stuff

41:47-43:24

Tim: Yeah. Let's pull our next move, which has typically been to try and invert, or reverse, the law from a negative into a positive.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: Is there something deeper about a responsibility I have towards my neighbor and their stuff? Deuteronomy 22, “You will not watch the ox of your neighbor or his sheep going astray ... You will certainly return it to your neighbor.”

Jon: Yep.

Tim: Don’t ignore it.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: “Now, let’s say your brother”—that is your neighbor—“doesn’t live near you. Or let’s say you don’t know who he is. You should bring it into your house and keep it with you until your brother comes looking for it. Then, give it back to him. This is also what you should do with his donkey, and this is also what you should do with his garment.”

Jon: Hmm.

Tim: “And this is also what you should do with any of the lost property of your brother that you find. You are not allowed to withhold your help.”

Jon: Hmm. So you’re saying, flip it over.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Instead of asking myself, “Can I be content with what God’s given me?”

Tim: Mhm.

Jon: I can actually ask myself, “Can I help be a steward of other people’s stuff with them?”

Tim: Yeah. Help them steward their stuff.

Jon: That’s like the extra-generous mindset.

Tim: Totally. Yes. You really have to believe that God has given me what I need and more, and that God has given my neighbor what they need and more.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: And I’m gonna help them be good stewards of what God’s given to them.

[Musical Break]

43:24-43:28

On-Screen Text: Just as each of you has received a gift, use it to serve one another. - Peter

43:28-43:46

9th Commandment: Do Not Bear False Witness

43:46-49:01

Chapter 1: Bearing Witness

43:46-44:40

Tim: Command number nine of the 10.

Jon: “You will not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

Tim: The way we normally summarize the meaning of the 9th Commandment is we flatten it out.

Jon: “Don’t tell lies.”

Tim: Yeah, “don’t lie.” But instead, it’s “bearing false witness.” So first of all, “bearing witness.” Here in the command, it’s *ta’aneh*. It’s from the Hebrew verb *’anah*, which is a fixed little phrase used to refer specifically to, like, legally or publicly making a declaration. It’s like, put your hand on the Bible.

Jon: Yeah. Courtroom setting. But ancient Israel didn’t have courtrooms like we have courtrooms, right?

Tim: Yes. They had city gates where the elders of a town come together.

Jon: Okay. This was the public forum where you would have people come and say, “Okay, what’s your side of the story? What’s your side of the story?”

Tim: That’s it. You’re being called upon to represent your version of what you saw or witnessed or experienced.

Chapter 2: False Witness

44:40-45:34

Tim: And then the kind of witness that you are bearing—“false” is how it gets translated—is the Hebrew word *sheqer*.

Jon: *Sheqer*.

Tim: *Sheqer*. A *sheqer* presents itself as one thing, but in reality, it’s not that thing.

Jon: Hmm. It’s like an illusion?

Tim: It’s an illusion. Something that betrays. It’s masquerading. You put forward, “I’m a truth-teller. I’m trustworthy. I’m one thing.” But in reality, it’s another. So you can just have words of *sheqer*, or you can do *sheqer*.

Jon: Because the move could have been, “Don’t lie.” But there’s something about the way that this command is written to say, “Actually, I just really want you to focus on the communal aspect.”

Tim: Yeah. This is about presenting something false publicly. So these are the types of lies that affect a whole community. And that is so important, it gets its own spot in the 10 Commandments.

Jon: Yeah. Why is it so important?

Tim: Yeah. It's a great question.

Chapter 3: False Witness Leading to Violence

45:34-47:57

Tim: So after the 10 commands, later in Exodus chapters 21-23, there's many more commands that fill out the values at work in the 10. And in them, this idea of bearing false witness is connected to violence.

Jon: What does that look like?

Tim: Yeah. Okay, here's an example from Exodus 23, verses 1 and 2. "Don't spread a false report. Don't join your hand with a wicked man to become a witness of violence."

Jon: Become a witness of violence. What does that mean?

Tim: Yeah. So it's describing speaking falsely about someone in public so that they get accused and punished, maybe even killed, which is what Exodus 23 goes on to say. "Stay away from a false charge, so that you don't bring death to an innocent or an honest person ..."

Jon: Ah, I see. So then you can join hands with others to be a witness of violence.

Tim: Yeah. So one person's false testimony can inspire a whole group to team up around a story about somebody that's not true.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: "Don't go along with the majority when it leads to evil, and don't give testimony in a dispute that goes along with the majority in distorting justice."

Jon: Yeah. Yeah, that's unfair, and it could totally devastate people.

Tim: Yeah. Especially when it's people who are socially vulnerable. "Don't let justice be distorted against a needy person in their dispute."

Jon: Yeah. If someone doesn't have money or connections, they can easily be taken advantage of.

Tim: Exactly. And so this is why, at the end of this little paragraph in Exodus 23, it names a group of people who are really vulnerable to false accusations. “Do not oppress an immigrant, because you know what it means to be an immigrant, because you all were immigrants in the land of Egypt.”

Jon: Huh. Yeah, and this ties all of this back to Israel’s story.

Tim: Yeah. They were a vulnerable group of enslaved immigrants in Egypt. And God is warning Israel so that they don’t end up doing to others what Egypt did to them, because that’s what inevitably happens when we bear false witness about other people in public.

Jon: Yeah. There’s a high value for being a person of truth and protecting those in vulnerable situations.

Chapter 4: Reinforce the Value of Truth

47:57-48:32

Jon: So flip it over, and how would we frame it?

Tim: Yeah. Hold up and celebrate and reinforce the value of truth-telling in our public setting.

Jon: To the benefit of everyone.

Tim: Yeah.

Jon: Especially the vulnerable.

Tim: Yes, that’s right. If Israel is meant to be the light shining in the darkness in the city on the hill, God really wants to have even their communal justice systems stand apart from the typical types of corruption and distortion that they’re liable to. That is what’s at stake in the ninth command.

[Musical Break]

48:32-48:37

On-Screen Text: Speak up for those who cannot speak, for the rights of all who are dying; Speak up and do what is just and right; defend the rights of the poor and needy. - King Lemuel

48:37-49:01

10th Commandment: Do Not Desire Your Neighbor's Possessions

49:01-51:59

Chapter 1: Do Not Desire

49:01-50:17

Jon: We are at the 10th and final of the 10 Commandments.

Tim: We made it. We're doing the 10th command, which is famously translated as "covet." "Do not covet..."

Jon: "Do not covet."

Tim: Now, that word is accurate, technically, but the word "covet" in English buries something that I think is really interesting that I want us to see.

Jon: Okay.

Tim: So the Hebrew word here is *khamad*, and it's the word "desire." "You will not desire your neighbor's house. You will not desire your neighbor's wife, or his male slave, or his female slave, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Jon: Desire.

Tim: Desire. Command 10 is different than all the others. All the other commands refer to behavior that is observable, actions that you can see. Desire is completely internal.

Jon: Yeah.

Tim: So in a way, the 10th command comes back and it addresses the thing upstream of murder and adultery and stealing and bearing false witness. Why would you do any of those things? Probably you have a desire that's driving your decisions.

Jon: It's the undercurrent for everything.

Tim: Mhm.

Chapter 2: Training Our Desires

50:17-51:38

Tim: Now, not all desire is bad, just like in the garden of Eden.

Jon: "Yahweh Elohim planted a garden in Eden ... He placed there the human whom he had formed. And Yahweh Elohim caused to sprout from the ground every tree desirable for sight and good for eating ..."

Tim: Yeah. So every tree in the garden is both desirable and it looks good. And that word “desirable” is the word *khamad*. So there’s one tree, then, that will be desirable in the garden, that will look good, and it’s going to kill you. Which is, of course, not good. So desire itself can lead to either life or to death. And I guess the question, then, raised by the tree is—How am I supposed to know the difference?

Jon: Yeah. You need to learn to listen to the wisdom of God.

Tim: Right. So it has to be significant that all of the wisdom of the 10 words ends right here with addressing human desire. And wisdom is all about training our desires to become more and more aligned with God’s desires. And this is just like what Jesus taught us to pray, which is, “May your Kingdom come, Father, and may your desire be done.”

[Musical Break]

51:38-51:42

On-Screen Text: My delight is to do what you desire, my God, and your instruction is in my heart. - David

51:42-51:59

Summary of the 10 Commandments

51:59-53:18

Jon: Alright, the 10 Commandments.

Tim: Or, the 10 Words as God calls them. These are not 10 rules to check off of a list.

Jon: Right.

Tim: These are 10 ways to hear God’s voice and wisdom that can lead us into a deeper, richer kind of life.

Jon: Yeah. Also, these all invite us into thinking about the story of the Bible.

Tim: Yes. It starts with—Who is the God of the Bible?

Jon: Yeah. And then—What does it mean that God made us to be his image?

Tim: Right. Can I represent God faithfully while trusting that he will lead all creation to its completion?

Jon: Yeah. And in the meantime, there’s this bold vision for what it means to be human.

Tim: Right. To honor those who have come before us, to preserve life, and to commit to love and also to generosity, using truth to protect the vulnerable. And then ultimately to align our desires with God's desire.

Jon: Hmm. Yeah, there it is: the 10 Words.

Tim: Mhm. Ten matters of cosmic importance that we can meditate on in our communities, so that we can discover God's wisdom together.

[Musical Break]

53:18-53:21

On-Screen Text: [Credits] Thank you to all our patrons who make this work possible.