

The Ten Commandments for Christmas

The Ten Commandments are Biblical rules for life. So how can we apply them to the holidays?

1. Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods Before Me.

We've all heard that "Jesus is the reason for the season." Yet, so often, we get busy with holiday plans, and thanking the Lord for coming to earth gets lost. During the Christmas season, take time to worship Him every day.

2. Thou Shalt Not Make Unto Thee Any Graven Image.

Never let "Santa Claus," gift giving, holiday traditions, or anything else be more important to you than the One Whose birth we celebrate during this season.

3. Thou Shalt Not Take the Name of the Lord Thy God In Vain.

Think about the meaning of the carols you sing, and reflect on the holiday greetings you give. It's not just cursing that belittles God's name. Being careless with His name belittles it, too. When we sing carols, or post Christmas greetings using God's name, our attitude should reflect a sincere reverence for Him.

4. Remember the Sabbath Day to Keep It Holy.

During the Christmas season, we have the opportunity to teach our family what it means to keep the Sabbath, as well as Christmas, holy. What traditions could we establish to make Christmas and the Sabbath more holy? A thought: As Christmas draws near, it can be easy to sacrifice a Sunday dinner for a quick trip to the mall. Make it a priority to keep the Sabbath as a day of rest, even when the Holiday sales beckon.

5. Honor Thy Father and thy Mother.

What priority do we give in choosing a gift for our parents? They deserve honor. It may take some time and creativity, but their gifts should receive more attention than those on the larger list. Perhaps it would be especially meaningful to present a photo album of the last year, a poem, a letter, or a plane ticket to visit you. Teach your children to value their grandparents, and

you, by helping them to choose or make special gifts. One day, your children may honor you in a similar way.

6. Thou Shalt Not Kill.

Teach your children to respect life throughout the holidays. When we care for "the least of these," we are showing that we respect life. Serving in a homeless shelter, or providing groceries for a family in need, are examples of good ways to show respect for others. And, be sure to explain to your children what you're doing, and teach them to care by your own example.

7. Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery.

Too often our marriages get put on the back burner through the holidays. The gift of your mate should be one of the best reasons for celebration. Take time to have a date night, and show your children that you value your marriage enough to devote time to it, even in the craziness of the Christmas season.

8. Thou Shalt Not Steal.

Sometimes we "rob Peter to pay Paul," by putting Christmas gifts on credit, or buying things that are not on the budget, especially when we don't know where the money will come from to pay off those credit cards in January. Establish a budget for the holidays, and spend only what you can afford. Don't forget to give to God what is God's. All too often, Christ is not even on our Christmas list.

9. Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness Against Thy Neighbor.

If you can't afford to buy gifts, or if you want to keep the holidays free from too many parties that will keep you from family, be honest, and tell the hostess or the potential gift recipients.

10. Thou Shalt Not Covet Thy Neighbor's House.

There will always be others who have more, get more, and do more. Be content with what you have, and decide to make this Christmas season a time of true worship.