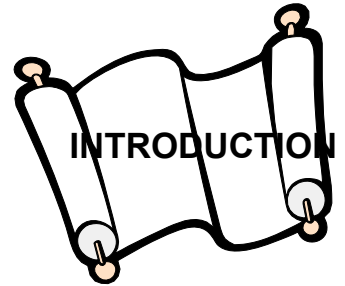


10 COMMANDMENTS

BY JERRY SCHMOYER

Ex. 20:1-2 And God spoke all these words: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."



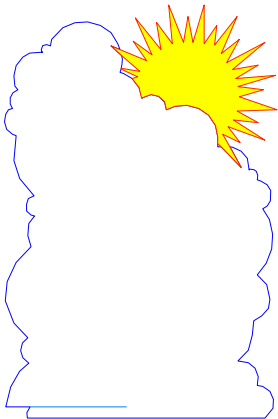
In Pine Island, Minn., a man must remove his hat when meeting a cow. In Berea, Ohio, every animal on the streets after dark must wear taillights. Crocodiles can't be tied to water hydrants in Michigan. These are just a few of the foolish laws man has made. God makes, laws, too -- but no foolish ones! God's laws are summed up in the 10 commandments.

The 10 Commandments weren't given to earn salvation (Romans 3:20) or even bring a higher level of spirituality to those who keep them (Galatians 5:18). They were given to show man's sinfulness and inability to keep God's perfect standard. Put some place or activity off limits to a child and what immediately happens? He wants to do that right away. Remove an unused or dangerous toy from a child and that is the very one they will want. It shows an innate lack of self control. The law was given to show sin (Rom. 3:20; 7:7). Like a dentist's mirror, it detects decay but can't correct it. Like a mirror, it shows dirt but can't remove it.

While man's inability to keep these laws shows his sinfulness and need of God's mercy, the laws themselves aren't arbitrary but, like all God does, are for our benefit. While unbelievers think they have freedom by rejecting all God's laws, they really lose all their freedom to bondage, guilt, bad habits and severe consequences of sin. By obeying God's laws we have true freedom from sin. Think of it this way. Suppose you were going to have to live in a minefield (an apt description of this world), and someone offered to put markers around the mines so you could avoid them. Would you turn down such an offer because it would infringe on your freedom to go anywhere you wanted? That's the way God's laws are. They don't take away freedom, they preserve it when obeyed. Adam and Eve rejected the marker and stepped right on the mine when they ate the fruit.

While it is true that we aren't under the law but are under grace (Romans 6:14-15; I Cor. 9:20), the law is still a true revelation of God's warnings about what to avoid in life. Jesus reiterated 9 of the 10 (all but Sabbath worship). What is important is that we obey them for the right reason -- love, not legalism. A widower hired a woman to take care of his house and children. He gave her a list of things to do each day and she did them to earn her paycheck. Eventually they fell in love and married. She continued to do the same housework as before but without a list and paycheck. Her motive changed to one of love. That's why we are to obey God's laws and principles (I Cor. 13; Deut. 30:20). Love is far greater than the law (Rom. 13:9-10; John 15:10,12; Gal. 6:2; 5:14). But love without obedience to God's Word is empty.

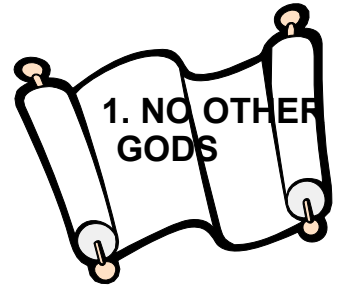
What is your motive for obeying God? Why do you go to church, read your bible and pray? Is it just for what you'll get out of it, to avoid feeling guilty, or keep from God's discipline? We want our children to obey us out of love for us, and our heavenly Father wants the same from His children. Watch your motive, search your heart. Obey God, but do it out of love!



10 COMMANDMENTS

BY JERRY SCHMOYER

Exod 20:1-3 And God spoke all these words: I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. "You shall have no other gods before me.



Have you noticed that God never tries to prove his existence in the Bible? He always assumes anyone with an open mind will come to the conclusion that there is a God. Who created everything? My watch tells me there must be a creator of it, it couldn't just appear from non matter and come into being by chance. The same with the world. Where would an emotion like love come from if there was no supreme cause behind it? Thus God doesn't even debate the atheist. Nor does he use proof to refute the agnostic who says there is no way of knowing if there is a God. He is speaking, so man can know! This also disproves deism which says God doesn't get involved with man. God says He delivered them from Egypt by His direct involvement. Man himself didn't do it (humanism). God then adds they are not to have any Gods before Him. This is against polytheism (many gods) and pantheism (nature is God).

"No other gods BEFORE me" is used of taking a second wife while still married to one. It meant a breach of an exclusive personal relationship and it makes God jealous (as any wife would be if her husband brought home another wife!). God demands 100% faithfulness.

What do we put before God today? Some worship nature, "Mother Earth" or mother nature, and don't give God His credit for it. Others rely on knowledge, intellect, wisdom and education to meet their needs. Many today make health and fitness the prime objective in life. Still others live for popularity, success, recognition and power. A more subtle substitute is our family and loved ones, putting their opinion and approval before obedience to God and relying on them to meet our needs more than God. In our culture today many put their trust in their money and possessions to provide their physical and emotional needs. It seems man does anything and everything to keep God from being god. People will give credit to chance, luck, coincidence, fate and fortune but not God. Today even angels are recognized and treated as gods but the Bible says that is strictly forbidden (Rev. 19:10; 22:9). It is really Satan who wants to be recognized and who accepts the tribute given to anything other than God (I Cor. 10:19-21). Having him in the place of God is also forbidden (Mt. 4:10; Rev. 14:9-11).

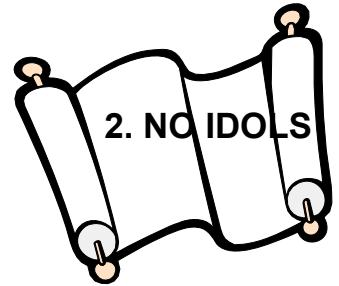


A very interesting verse about this is Philippians 3:19: "Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things." How can a person's god be his stomach? Easy. We use our physical appetites to meet needs that should be met in other ways. Food, sex, pleasure, clothes, drugs, etc., all become more important than God and substitute for Him. We turn to these to make us feel better or find enjoyment. Thus our stomachs (appetites, desires) come first in our lives, before God. What is the biggest rival God has in our lives? It is self. Self comes before God. We make ourselves our god -- what we put first and live for, whom we think about and try to please. How foolish this is! No wonder something is lacking. Only God can be God. Make sure you love Him with your total being (Deut. 6:5).

10 COMMANDMENTS

BY JERRY SCHMOYER

Exod 20:4-6 "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand of those who love me and keep my commandments.



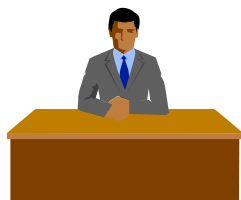
Does this commandment mean we aren't to take pictures or enjoy sculpture? I don't think so. Its our attitude to these things, worshipping them as God, that is wrong. God Himself directed the making of likenesses in the tabernacle and with the bronze serpent. What God is concerned with here is us putting something before Himself (I John 5:21; Acts 15:29; I Cor. 8:1-10; 12:2; II Cor. 6:16). This is because God is a jealous God. What husband or wife wouldn't be hurt and bothered if their mate was only 90% faithful, or 99% faithful? The same is true of God. God doesn't want to share our love and affection with any person, place or thing. Can you blame Him? God is jealous for the truth of His own nature (no image adequately represents Him), for the character of His people (submitting to an inferior object makes them inferior), and for the influence of His people upon the world. The Hebrew word for 'jealous' also has the idea of 'zealous.' No one who truly loves his or her mate can endure sharing them with another man.

Put yourself in God shoes. He created us and that which we worship. No wonder He is bothered when we choose when He made over Him! God won't be a part-time God, He won't share space with any one or any thing. Can you blame Him?

When we put anything before God in any part of our lives it is an idol. When we put something before God in our lives we influence our children to do the same. Then they, too, are punished. God is fair to children (Deut 21:15-17; 24:16; Jer 31:29,30). What 'idols' do you have in your life? What idols do your children have? Could they have gotten them from you?

Things today which we put before God are relationships (mate, children, parents, friends, etc.), possessions (all in total or favorite special ones), 'toys' (computer, boat, car, house, jewelry, books, hobby, etc.) or position (job, social position, prestige, etc.). Only God can truly meet our inner needs for love, acceptance, belonging, meaning and significance. Turning to anything else is like drinking salt water to quench thirst.

Search your heart. Make sure God has all of it. Don't make Him jealous!



10 COMMANDMENTS

BY JERRY SCHMOYER

Exod 20:7 "You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."



Did you know that the average person speaks about 30,000 words a day. That's enough to fill 132 large, 400 page books in a year and an entire library in a lifetime! The awesome thing is that God keeps a record of every word we say! That's because what comes out of our mouth shows what is in our heart (James 3:5,11-12; Matthew 12:36-37). Of all our words, those about God are the most important. That's what commandment 3 is all about.

"Misuse" ("take in vain" KJV) means "to take lightly." We aren't to take God's name (person, character, reputation) lightly. There is a strong consequence for this - stoning to death (Lev. 20:10; 24:15-16). For this reason the Jews never said God's name and to this day no one is still sure how God's name YHWH is pronounced! Not saying God's name at all is one way to not use it lightly, but the commandment refers to much more than that!

Profanity, of course, is forbidden by this commandment, but it wasn't mainly given against profanity. The Jews nor others around them never used the name of their gods in curses. Even today pagans in other countries don't use the names of their gods in curses, either. Even unbelievers know that is offensive and embarrassing, much less senseless. More subtle is what we use as socially acceptable profanity today. It is said with the same heart attitude and resembles 'hard core profanity,' but is often used by Christians. These include words like heck (for hell), darn (for damn), gee (for Jesus) and gosh/golly (for God).

Taking God's name frivolously is done when we use His name in phrases such as "Good God," "God Almighty," "God in heaven," "so help me God," "may God strike me dead," "God as my witness," "God-forsaken," etc. Jesus clearly says our "yes" should just be "yes" and our "no" just "no" (Matthew 5:33-37; James 5:12).

When we laugh at jokes about sacred, holy things we are taking God and spiritual truths lightly. Ask yourself, "Would Jesus sit here and watch this show with me?" Jokes about Bible people, ministers, and Godly values take God and His name/reputation lightly.

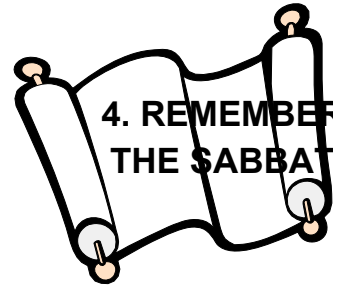
The biggest danger for us, though, is taking God and spiritual things loosely in our hearts and lives. We carry the name of Christian but take lightly our responsibility to be witnesses and examples of His. We listen to sermons about God and spiritual truths with only half of our attention. We partake of the Lord's Supper light-heartedly, we pray while our mind wanders, we thank God for our food without hardly meaning what we say, we repeat the same prayers over and over as if pure repetition will somehow do something. We sing "My Jesus I love you," "I surrender all," and "Have Thine own way," but the words are empty.

Actually this commandment is best understood in a positive, not negative sense. "Do take God seriously." Use His name thoughtfully. Be earnest about things concerning God. Have a solemn attitude about spiritual truths. As the Psalmist says, "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer" (Psalm 19:14).

10 COMMANDMENTS

BY JERRY SCHMOYER

Exod 20:8-11 "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."



A man with \$7 in his pocket saw a beggar and gave him \$6. As he was walking away the beggar jumped him and stole the other dollar. What do you think of someone who would do such a thing? Suppose the man was God, the beggar was you, and the dollars were days in the week. God has given you 6 but, not satisfied with that amount of time, you take the 7th day as well. This is what the 4th commandment is talking about.

Before going any further let me say that, while the commandment applies to the Jews observance of Saturday, there is a principle we can use in applying it to our Sunday. The Jews observation was very legalistic, focusing on exterior do's and don'ts. They criticized Jesus for healing and eating raw grain on the Sabbath. What is allowed and what isn't on Sunday today?

While there is no easy or universal answer to that, there are principles to help us find what God would have for each one of us. Understanding God's purpose of the day of rest will help us understand how it applies today. For one thing, it was a day to honor God and focus on Him. Also, it was a day of rest and renewal physically, emotionally and spiritually. Nothing can keep going at full speed, everything needs 'down' time. Children grow in spurts, animals hibernate or go dormant, all nature comes to a stop in winter. Its been a proven fact that people and animals can accomplish more working 6 days and resting one than they can working 7. Society today ignores this principle, and that leads to the high rate of stress, anxiety, heart problems, etc. Instead of having a day of rest today, we take vacations in the summer, but that is too little too late.

Still, it is more than physical rest we need. We need a time of emotional and spiritual refreshment, time with loved ones, time with God, time to heal and recharge our spiritual and emotional batteries. A batter can't be constantly drained. A bow cannot be constantly strung taunt. Each of us must find, no each of us must MAKE time for this or we will never have it. Life is a marathon, and running it like a dash just won't allow us to cross the finish line. We must pace ourselves. The One who created us knows how His creation performs best, and we will do best to go by His directions. Don't give in to the temptation to steal time on Sunday to accomplish work that should be done other days.

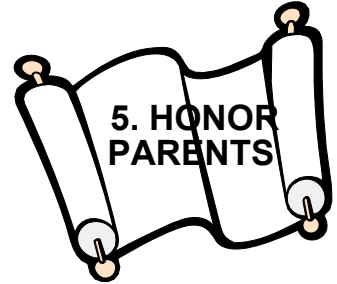
So, what is 'work' and what recharges our batteries physically, emotionally and spiritually? There is no set rule, for that differs for each one. It depends on our conscience, our testimony to those around us, our example to our children, and our own needs and joys. God will show you (if you seek His will) in how to honor Him and yourself on this special day.

10 COMMANDMENTS

BY JERRY SCHMOYER

Exod 20:12 "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you."

What a commandment this is for today! With child abuse and even parent abuse (children harming or killing their parents) so common, how does this apply? How are we to honor and obey parents that we don't respect or trust? What does it mean to honor and obey?



"Honor" means "to attach weight to." Its the same word used of wives being to their parents. It was given to a culture where parents who weren't raising their children correctly were severely and quickly disciplined. It presumes parents are trying their best. What about when they aren't? What about today with all the hurts, abuse, dysfunction and rejection? Eph. 6:1-3 and Col. 3:20 repeat the same command, although we aren't under the law (death penalty for breaking it: Ex. 21:15, 17; Lev. 20:9). But what about today? Parental failure is no justification to break the command, but we must understand what the command means.

God's authority to parents is just to represent Him (the same as a husband over wife and government over citizen). It is delegated authority, used only as they are functioning in God's role, not in any way opposing or going against God. An army sergeant has authority over a private in his unit, but not to command him to paint his house or to join a revolt against the government. God doesn't give total authority, but authority to represent Him. When His interests aren't being represented (and it must be very clear, obvious-to-everyone anti-God activity) then we aren't responsible to obey. A person not living at home is under his own authority. Someone living at home but paying his rent and own expenses must respect his parent's right to a peaceful life, but is independent. Still, all children (whatever age) are to respect their parents for the good they have done, have compassion and love (we are commanded to love everyone, even our enemies, although we aren't commanded to like them), have no bitterness or resentment (God has a reason for putting us in the families of His choice, and all things work together for good for God's children), but leave any kind of revenge to God (Rom. 12:19). We are to help them to the extent we are able. In fact, family is to care for family before the government or church is to help (I Tim. 5:4,8). Also, we are responsible to listen to their advise and counsel in areas where they have understanding through experience.

Those of us who are parents want to be parents that our children can easily respect and honor. We can only be this way with God's help and continual prayer. We must teach them the Bible, how to work, and self-control. We must set limits and lovingly but consistently keep them (Prov. 22:15; 23:13). We must set a godly example in all we say and do, remembering we are setting an example of God for them. Each child sees their parent as 'god' - someone having total, final authority over every area of their life. A child is helpless, totally dependent on a parent, just as adults are on God. If a child sees his parent as loving but firm, consistent but showing mercy, then he will see God the same way. If there is fear, guilt, rejection, resentment, insecurity, or perfectionism built into a child, then they will feel the same toward God. What an awesome responsibility this is for all of us, yet what a privilege to be used of God in that special way. Children are fragile, so handle with prayer!

10 COMMANDMENTS

BY JERRY SCHMOYER

Exod 20:13 "You shall not murder."

This is the shortest commandment, but perhaps the strongest. It is innately built into the conscience of all peoples in all places at all times. The whole understanding of it revolves around the word 'murder.'

'Murder' refers to taking the life of someone for a reason disapproved by God. This, therefore, does not apply war (God sent the Jews to war many times), capital punishment (which God commands, even before the law - Gen. 9:6), self defense (Ex. 22:2), accidental murder (Numbers 35:11-12) or killing of animals for food (Genesis 9:3). Since man is created in God's image man is special. This commandment against murder is to protect that specialness. Animals don't have that specialness about them, nor do they have a soul as a person does. These are ways this commandment does not apply. They how does it apply?



First, it applies to **INTENTIONAL MURDER**. This includes **homicide**. Great progress has been made in civilization, but the murder rate still continues to climb! Movies and TV often glamorize violence and murder. The first sin outside Eden was murder, and the Bible says Satan was "a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). This can be done by committing the act itself (Cain of Able), by instigating someone's death from a distance (David of Uriah), or consenting to another's death (Saul of Stephen), or not preventing a death when possible (Pilate of Jesus), or taking away what is necessary to sustain life (Abraham sending Hagar into the desert), or of not helping dying person (good Samaritan). Also included under intentional murder is **suicide** for God does not give us the right to take our own life. Satan is behind this, as with Judas. Even when in pain (euthanasia) we don't have the right to speak death. We don't have to use heroic means to prolong life, but we aren't to hurry it up. All that is in God's hands. The final way this applies is in **infanticide**: allowing unhealthy babies to die or aborting them before birth. All of this is intentional murder, but indirect murder also breaks Comm. 6.

INDIRECT MURDER applies to that done by **cruelty** to another which cuts into their life span. Physical or emotional abuse applies here. **Corruption** of others by influencing them to drink, use drugs, drive recklessly, eat wrong foods, etc., also applies, as does **carnality** (worry, smoking, drinking, lack of rest, overwork, stress, etc.). Then, too, there is **carelessness**: bad driving, smoking in bed, careless hunting practices, or not keeping your property safe for others (Ex. 21:28-29). These, too, are causes of taking someone's life. However there is something that lives longer than a body and that is a soul. Murdering a soul is even worse!

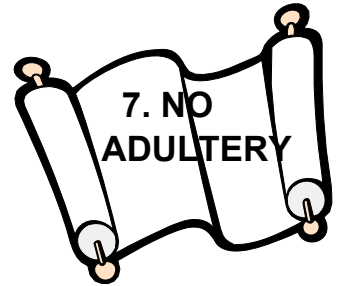
INVISIBLE MURDER of another's soul by misleading them, turning them from salvation, has eternal consequences. Murdering your own soul by rejecting salvation brings eternal condemnation. Jesus says that hate is as bad as murdering someone (Mt. 5:21-22). An attitude of hate is as bad as murder because the same sin is in our heart (Mt. 15:19; I Jn. 3:15). Words of criticism, slander, jealousy, gossip, or anger murder things more important than a person's body. Words said in anger cause death of love, sensitivity and closeness. The Jews considered gossip worse than murder because it killed a reputation which lasted longer and was more precious than life itself. Be careful you don't break this commandment in any way.

10 COMMANDMENTS

BY JERRY SCHMOYER

Exod 20:14 "You shall not commit adultery."

In 1623 Baker and Lukas printed an edition of the Bible that has been called the 'Wicked Bible' because they left the word "not" out of Exodus 20:14. They were heavily fined and the whole edition was burned. In today's word that is the preferred rendering! We live in a world that has totally gone wild sexually. Homosexuality, incest, pornography, living together, transvestites, etc., abound everywhere. Joyce Brothers says: "Under certain circumstances an affair can add to a marriage." But God says "You shall not commit adultery." Who is right? God, of course!



God created sex as His wedding gift to a husband and wife. He invented it, and that was before there was any sin. This special union of two becoming one (Genesis 2:24; I Cor. 6:15-18) shows what happens when a person accepts Jesus as Savior -- they also become one. It pictures Jesus' relationship to His Body, the church (Ephesians 5). That is why Satan has tried so hard to destroy this special gift. God says that sex with anyone other than your marriage mate (of the opposite sex) is sin. That includes sex before marriage. God was so serious about this that the penalty was death by stoning (Leviticus 20:10).

Jesus takes this whole area of adultery further and says that the mental attitude of **lust** (adultery in ones mind) is as bad as the act itself (Mt. 5:27-28; II Pt. 2:14; Isa. 3:16). In this day and age we can't always help what we see or what thoughts pop into our minds, but its what we do with them. You can't keep birds from flying over your head but you can keep them from roosting in your hair! This means watching what we see on TV or in the movies, read, listen to, etc. It also means not being guilty of enticing another by immodest dress, actions or talk.

Sexual sins are so bad because they are against our own body (I Cor. 6:18) as well as someone else's body. It scars the soul of both people and separates from God. It cheats your mate (present or future) by giving away something that is theirs before they even receive it. It defiles the conscience, kills true affection, blinds the mind, obscures and extinguishes reason and understanding, and leads to others sins (jealousy, greet, lying, deceit, etc.). As David admitted after his sin with Bathsheba, lust/adultery is mainly a sin against God (Psalm 51:4).

How can we **safeguard against sexual sins**? Make the DECISION to accept Jesus as Savior. Without his help you're doomed. Then DEPEND on Him for help for you can't do it in your own strength. Grow in DEVOTION to God and mate, letting His Spirit increase your love for both. Work at DEVELOPING your marriage and feeding your love. DISCIPLINE yourself by avoiding what you know will tempt you and making yourself accountable to a mature believer of the same sex. Remember, with DETERMINATION to obey God and rely on His strength you will be able to have victory. Watch excessive eating or drinking, for any form of lust (even materialism, clothing, jewelry, etc.) can easily open the door to other forms of lust. Fasting can help lust because God can teach self control over physical desires through it.

When Jesus dealt with the woman caught in adultery He quickly forgave her, and He will forgive us when we stumble into sexual sin. Remember, though that He told her to go and sin no more (John 8). That is His message to us. Lust isn't a sin to be taken lightly. It is one of Satan's most successful traps to sin and destruction today. Enjoy sex as God created it only.

10 COMMANDMENTS

BY JERRY SCHMOYER

Exod 20:15 "You shall not steal."

By tempting Eve to take fruit from the forbidden tree, Satan was appealing to her greed and trying to get her to take something that wasn't hers -- to steal. When we think of this commandment we think main of not **STEALING PROPERTY FROM SOMEONE ELSE**. While the commandment certainly includes this prohibition, it covers much more.



"Pilfering" from hotels & motels (extra soap, towels, pens), restaurants (extra sugar or food), or work (pencils, supplies) is stealing, as is dishonesty in reporting income tax. All of this is serious business. God said stolen property had to be returned 5-fold (Ex. 22:1).

Stealing means **depriving someone of their legal property**. This can be done by not helping them protect their property, by damaging property or their business/ability to earn an income. Overcharging is stealing (Dt. 25:13-15) or misrepresenting property you are selling to make it more appealing (or keeping back information about it). Wasting time and not doing a full days work (for employees) or not paying a fair wage (for employers - James 5:4) is also depriving others of their property.

Gambling is including here - trying to get something for free. Eph. 4:28 says withholding material possessions we can spare from those in need is stealing from them, for God gives us surplus to share.

Of course we can steal **immaterial things** from people, too, such as their reputation (gossip), purity, peace, character or faith. These can be done directly by words or actions to them or indirectly by example. Jeremiah 23:3 says stealing faith from the heart of others is worse than stealing things.

It is possible to **STEAL FROM GOD**, too. When we don't give ourselves to Him and serve Him we are stealing what is His (I Corinthians 6:19). When we don't give Him His fair share of our material possessions God says we are robbing Him (Malachi 3:8).

There are three ways of **gaining property**, two legal and one illegal. You can receive it in payment for work or when freely given you as a gift, or you can steal someone else's. That is the temptation -- getting something we haven't worked for or been given. It comes from an attitude of greed and lack of contentment. It says the end (having the possession) justifies the means (stealing).

The parable of the good Samaritan (Luke 10:30ff) shows three attitudes we can have to things. The thief believed "What's yours is mine and I'll take it." The priest and Levite who ignored him felt "What's mine is mine and I'll keep it." The Samaritan, however, lived by "What's mine is mine but I'll share it with you." Which is your attitude?

10 COMMANDMENTS

BY JERRY SCHMOYER

Exod 20:16 "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."

"Do not lie to one another" (Col. 3:9) is a basic rule in any cooperative endeavor: marriage, government, friendship or employment. Deception ruins whatever it touches.



THE FATHER OF LIES is Satan (John 8:44). He started in Eden by lying to Eve about God (withholding good from her). Then he lied to God about Job (he only serves God for what he can get out of it). He inspired the religious rulers to come up with lies to condemn Jesus (Matthew 26:59). Satan is the father of lies, and he has a large family!

THE FAMILY OF LIARS all areas covered by deception, for that is what lies are. PERJURY is the specific issue with this commandment (Ex. 23:1). LYING includes out-and-out lies as well as "white" lies (really no such thing, all sin is black). We deceive to alter circumstances and make life easier for us. It is motivated by selfish interests, changing the way God sovereignty has things set up. We deceive to get out of consequences of sin. God hates this (Prov 12:22; 19:5). Hiding behind the truth, and using it to hurt someone unnecessarily, is also sin. HALF-TRUTHS deceive. Salesmen and politicians can be very guilty of this. MISLEADING is also sin. It uses the truth in a way as to deceive. Body language (non-verbal communication) does this, too. HYPOCRISY is deception by life instead of words. GOSSIP and SLANDER are lies spread with malicious intent (even if there is truth to the words, the motive is sinful, but usually the facts aren't presented honestly from both sides). God hates gossip (Prov 26:20; I Tim 3:11; Titus 3:2; Prov 18:8; 26:22; Ps 101:5; I Cor 6:10). FAULTFINDING is similar, for it doesn't honestly consider the other person side of things. INSINUATING is meant to deceive (John 8:41) and breaks this commandment. So does INSINCERE FLATTERY, for it is just used to manipulate and gain an advantage. It isn't honest (Prov 26:28; Ps 55:21). We are commanded to encourage and build up, but to do so honestly. Even LISTENING can deceive when our silence implies agreement or consent to something we really don't agree with). All these, and more, are part of Satan's family of liars and deceivers.

FOLLY OF LIARS ... Deception is usually done for short-term benefit to the one deceiving. However someone is always hurt in it, if they realize it or not. Deception uses others for our own ends. It hurts others and us (Prov. 14:8). God hates it (Prov 6:16-19). A person is never more like Satan than when deceiving, and never more like God than when telling the truth!

FATE OF LIARS is the lake of fire (Rev. 21:8, 27). That is where this family will end up! While looking for a self-benefiting, easy way the end result is destruction. Short-term 'gain' brings long-term misery!

Be aware of what you say, how you say it, and why you say it. Do not say what is untrue (Ex. 23:1), unnecessary (Prov 11:13) or unkind (Prov 18:8). Ask God to set a guard by your mouth to protect against anything deceptive coming out (Psalm 141:3), and to control your mouth (Ex 4:12). Better yet, make that your heart He changes, for our words just show what is in our heart (Matthew 15:19). Ask God to change you heart, the your talk won't deceive!

10 COMMANDMENTS

BY JERRY SCHMOYER

Exod 20:17 "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."



While the song says its LOVE that makes the world go 'round, it doesn't take long to realize that, for most people, the motivating factor in their life is GREED. The last commandment forbids this. It says to not "covet" (a strong controlling desire). To be motivated to want to better ones' self, to see something someone has (things, skills, relationships, etc.) and be encouraged to work to that end for ones' self -- that isn't wrong. But to be discontent with what we have, envious or jealous, feeling sorry for self, anything that brings sinful feelings or attitudes, that is wrong.

This tenth commandment is different from the first nine in that they refer to outer actions (something black-and-white, easily measurable) while this one refers to an inner attitude. God looks at the heart (I Sam. 16:7; I Ki. 8:39; I Chron 28:9; Heb. 4:13). Sin starts as a heart desire (James 1:13-15). Thus this commandment is impossible to keep. Even Paul, who in the flesh could keep the first nine, was defeated by this and therefore saw his need for Jesus (Rom 7:7).

Covetousness comes from sin within (Mk. 7:21-22), as seen with Judas. It is based on pride and selfishness. Satan's lie is "Get all you can for yourself, you deserve it!" However things never satisfy, no matter how much we have (Luke 12:15-34). Greed is never satisfied! It is a trap that leads to other sins (I Tim. 6:9-10): lying, stealing, lust, deception, using others, even murder. It makes idols (Eph. 5:5) of things (or relationships or skills, whatever it is you covet). It leads to eternal condemnation (Eph 5:5; I Cor. 6:9-10; Mark 10:17-30) for when a person's heart is wrapped up in attaining more things, it doesn't belong to Jesus!

We always hide our greed, disguise it, even convince ourselves we aren't greedy, giving some other pretext for it (I Thes. 2:5). Look at your heart, though. What occupies your thoughts? What does your mind drift to in quiet times? What do you look to for satisfaction and meaning in life? How do you measure your 'success' (or lack of it)?

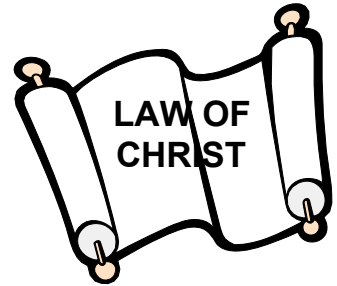
The Bible is full of examples of covetousness: Eve, Cain, Lot, Achan, Ahab, rich young ruler, foolish rich man, Judas, Ananias & Sapphira, Felix and many more.

What is the **SOLUTION** to covetousness? First, one must have a COMMITMENT TO CHRIST (II Cor. 5:17). Jesus was never covetous and we are to follow His example. It is only as He rules on the throne in our lives and God's Spirit indwells and empowers us that we will have the strength and ability to not be controlled by covetousness. Then comes a CONTENTMENT IN CHRIST (Heb. 13:5). As Paul says, contentment is something that must be learned (Philippians 4:11-12). From the moment of birth, every human who comes into the world is self-centered, impatient, unsatisfied and wanting more. But the flesh can never be satisfied! We must bring every thought into captivity to Jesus Christ (II Cor. 10:5), including covetousness. Life is a continual process of trying to have victory over the flesh, including covetousness. It will be there as long as we live, but with Jesus' help we can recognize it for what it is. "Beware of covetousness" Jesus said (Luke 12:15) and those words still apply today.

10 COMMANDMENTS

BY JERRY SCHMOYER

We are not under the Law today. The law was given just to Israel (Lev. 26:46; Rom 2:14; 9:4) and is now done away with (Romans 6:15; Gal 3:13). The Ten Commandments are part of the law (613 laws actually).



While we as Christians don't put ourselves under the Old Testament law, we do put ourselves under our own man-made laws. Called legalism, it becomes a short-cut to spirituality (actually to hypocrisy and outer conformity). Fear is the motive, and things are done to impress and please God and others. Everything is decided, individual freedom is limited, and there is great peer pressure to conform. The issue isn't if the things are right or wrong in themselves, but the reason/motive for doing (or not doing) them. Our reason for living a holy life must be because God loves and accepts us and we want to please Him, not out of fear of rejection or trying to earn blessing.

Since we aren't under the Old Testament Law, or any manmade law systems, how are we to know what God would have us do? What are we to do/not do to live a holy life? The following, called the **LAW OF CHRIST**, has proven very helpful to me. Look at it carefully.

1. POSITIVE COMMANDS. If the Bible says we are to do something (pray, gather with other Christians, forgive, witness, give of our time and money, etc.) we only must obey.

2. NEGATIVE COMMANDS. If the Bible forbids something (gossip, worry, lust, immorality, greed, dishonesty, violence, addictions, etc.) we aren't to wonder if we could do it.

3. RULES FROM CHURCH LEADERS. If those in spiritual authority made decisions about what they feel those under their care should or shouldn't do in their time and place, then those under them are to obey what they say (Eph 4:11-12; I Tim 3:5; Heb 13:7,17).

4. PRINCIPLES. These help us find answers to things not covered by the above, things like dancing, movies, TV, food items, entertainment, use of spare time, Sunday activities, etc.

a. Will it hold me back in my Christian life? Heb. 12:1 Many things in and of themselves are good (exercise, for example) but if out of place can hold one back in their walk with Jesus (as over-involvement in sports or exercise can).

b. Is it a habit? I Cor 6:12 While nothing is Unlawful for the Christian, many things aren't helpful. Coffee, soda, and chocolate can become habits which control us, and we aren't to be controlled by anything but the Holy Spirit.

c. Does it have a good influence on other Christians? I Cor 8:7-13 While we can't let others manipulate us with their opinions about these doubtful areas, we are to be sensitive to the Christian we would genuine influence in a sinful direction by our example.

d. Does it have a good testimony to unbelievers? Col 4:5 The world often has strange ideas about how Christians are to live. We certainly can't please everyone, nor should we try, but we must be alert to anything that would lead a genuine seeker away from Christ.

e. Will it display Christ? What would Jesus do? I Cor 10:31 This is the final determining factor, and of course we won't all always have the same answers. What would Jesus do? Would I ask Him to do it with me? That is the clincher.

God promises wisdom to those who seek (James 1), but we must seek it from Him.

THE TEN WITNESSES

(James 2: 10) "For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all."

A man by the name of 'Frank' was driving home one Friday after work when he noticed a blue light flashing behind him. He quickly did a mental check: "My seat belt is on, I'm not driving too fast, my tag has not expired, why would a cop be stopping me?" He pulled over to the side of the road and fumbled for his drivers license, registration, and proof of insurance that he knew the officer was going to ask for. "Are you Frank Logan?", the police officer asked when he walked up to the side of the car. "Yes, sir, that's me. What's wrong officer? I wasn't speeding! How do you know my name?" "No, you were not speeding. I stopped you to deliver this summons appear in court Monday morning at 8:00 A.M." As the officer walked away, Frank's mind began to race back to try and remember why he would be getting a summons to appear in court. All the way home he tried to come up with a reason as to "why" he was in trouble, but could think of no reason. When he got home, he confided in his wife, but neither of them had a clue about the summons. Frank began to worry, and continued to do so all weekend long. After a sleepless night Sunday, Frank got up, got dressed and headed down town to the courthouse. He didn't want to be late. He glanced at the summons, to verify what floor the courtroom was on and stepped on the elevator and pushed the button for the fourth floor. His stomach was beginning to feel a little queasy, but he guessed a sleepless night and no breakfast was to blame. He found the huge doors to the courtroom, pushed them open and walked inside. The bailiff grabbed him by the arm as the huge doors slammed shut behind him, and he was escorted to a long table down front with nothing on it but a yellow legal pad. He wondered why the courtroom was so full at 8:00 in the morning, and why they were all looking at him. A serious looking man, sitting at the other table, was flipping through a large book and jotting down notes. Every once in a while, he would look at Frank, shake his head, and write some more information down. From a side door, ten men walked in and filed into the jury box. Each had the look of death on their faces. Frank was beginning to get a little worried that maybe they had summoned him by mistake. Maybe someone else was supposed to be sitting at this table with nothing on it but a yellow legal pad. Someone, maybe, that had done something terribly wrong. How could he convince them it wasn't him? The noise of whispers and low talking was getting pretty loud when all of a sudden the bailiff cried, "All rise! The Honorable Word of God presiding." From a door behind the large, oak, judge's bench, a man with a long flowing white beard, wearing a long black robe, and carrying what Frank thought was a Bible, entered the courtroom, sat down, slammed his gavel down on the desk and said, "This court will come to order! Let the trial begin!" Frank began to stand to his feet, "Your Honor, I think there has been some mistake here..." But before he could finish his sentence, the man at the other table, who Frank has concluded was the 'Prosecutor,' jumped to his feet and said, "Your Honor, there has been no mistake. This man, Frank Logan, has been charged with breaking the "Ten Commandments" and we plan to prove beyond a shadow of a doubt that he is guilty and call for the maximum penalty of death and separation for eternity in a burning lake of fire!" Frank fell back into his chair. He couldn't believe what he had just heard! The blood had drained from his face, his heart was pounding, his mind was racing. "There's got to be some mistake," he kept telling himself. "Surely they will see that I'm not guilty of what they are accusing me of!" "Your Honor," the prosecuting attorney began, "I have arranged for ten witnesses to testify this morning. I have asked them to sit in the jury box so all can see and hear their testimony concerning Frank Logan."

"With your permission, I'd like to call witness #1 to his feet and ask him to give his name and then tell us what he knows about Frank Logan. The first witness rises to his feet and says, "Your Honor, my name is 'Thou shalt have no other gods before me' and all of his life, Frank Logan has put other gods ahead of the Heavenly Father" Frank jumps up and says, "Wait just a minute! I can prove I'm not guilty of this! I'm not some Hindu! I don't worship cows!" Witness #1, still standing, points his finger toward Frank and says, "Your Honor, this man's god is his work. He puts it ahead of his wife, his kids, his church, and God! All he thinks about is getting higher up on the corporate ladder, no matter who he has to step on to do it!" Before Frank could raise his voice in protest, the judge slams his gavel down and cries, "GUILTY!"

The prosecutor jumps up and calls witness #2. "Your Honor, my name is 'Thou shalt not make thee any graven images' and Frank Logan is guilty as charged concerning this offense" Frank begins to feel a little confident because he knows he has not been into 'idol' worship. He's heard about it, and read about it, but that's as far as it ever got! "Your Honor," Frank says, trying to sound legalistic in his terminology, "I object! On what grounds does this witness base his accusations?" "Your Honor," witness #2 continues, "when Frank Logan is not working, he is sitting at home in front of an image" called the TV. It consumes all his time, and fills his mind with wicked and evil thoughts. Every year, Frank Logan buys a bigger and better TV so he can spend more and more time bowing down before it! "It has decayed his family life. His wife sits in front of this 'image' all day and watches her 'shows', and when his children come home from school their minds are being trashed by the garbage this "image" puts out!" Frank tries to come up with an objection but too soon he hears the judge's gavel fall... "GUILTY!"

Witness #3 stands up and says, "Your Honor, My name is 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord in vain' and Frank Logan is guilty!" A hush settles over the crowd as all eyes are turned toward Frank to see if he's going to deny the accusation. With his head still down on the long table with nothing on it but a yellow legal pad, Frank makes no move to object because he suddenly remembers every curse word he had ever uttered in connection with God's name. He wishes he could take them all back. He wishes he could wipe the Bible verses, he had been taught in Sunday school as a boy, out of his memory but ... try as he may he still could hear: (Ex. 20: 7) "Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain. (Lev. 19:12) "And ye shall not swear by my name falsely, neither shalt thou profane the name of thy God: I am the Lord." (Matthew 5: 34) "But I say unto you, Swear not at all..." (James 5:12) "But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation." Once again the Judge's gavel falls, and in a thundering voice cries, "GUILTY!" By this time, Frank begins to think that maybe it would have been a good idea to bring a lawyer along.

Witness #4 stands up and says, "Your Honor, my name is 'Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy,' and to be quite honest, Frank Logan doesn't even know the meaning of the word 'Holy,' and the Lord's day to him is just another day." Frank sees a possible loop hole and says, "But Your Honor, Sunday is the only day I get to spend with my wife and kids!" "What kind of father would I be if I didn't spend time with them? That's our 'recreation' day as a family! You know, quality time together!" The prosecutor responds, "Let me say right here, Your Honor, there are many parents who are using their 'kids', their 'families' as an excuse not to worship God on the Lord's day. "Somehow, they feel justified in missing Sunday school and church as long as they have the excuse of 'family.' People using this excuse need to be

very careful. God may just take their 'excuse' out of the way so you can no longer use it!" "GUILTY!", the thundering voice of the judge is heard throughout the courtroom. Frank's palms are beginning to sweat, his mouth is dry and his head begins to throb. "I must be dreaming," he tells himself, trying to think clearly.

There seems to be something very familiar about witness #5 as he stands to his feet. Something from a long time ago... "Your Honor, my name is 'Honor your father mother' and Frank Logan does not!" "Your Honor, I object! What has my father and mother got to do with this? And I do so honor them! Why just last year I put out big bucks to get them into the most expensive nursing home money could buy!" "They are well cared for and I take offense to this ridiculous charge that I don't 'honor' them!" The prosecutor slams the big book he has been holding in his hands down on the table and says, "Is that right? Well, Mr. Frank Logan, let me ask you, When was the last time you laid eyes on your father and mother?" "It was last year when you shipped them off to that nursing home to get them out of your way wasn't it Mr. Logan?" Frank just sat there, shocked by the fact that it had been a whole year since he had seen either one of them. "Your Honor, it seems like it was only yesterday..." He stopped because he knew how feeble his excuse must sound. The prosecutor wasn't through with him concerning this witness from the past. "Your Honor, I submit to this court that Frank Logan hates his parents and wishes they were dead!" Frank jumps to his feet, "That's a lie! I'm not that kind of a person! Your Honor, I'm innocent of this charge! I love my parents, and nobody can tell me I don't!" The prosecutor opens his big book and turns the pages to the year 1965. It was the year the Beatles came from London to America and Frank so desperately wanted to go and listen to them in concert. "Your Honor," the prosecutor says, looking over his thin wired bifocals at Frank, "On August 14th, 1965, Frank and his parents got into an argument. Frank was 17 at the time, and he thought he was old enough to travel out of state with some buddies of his to attend a Beatles concert. "Frank's parents, who were Godly people, didn't think it was right for Frank to go to this concert, even if it was right across the street. "Your Honor, the argument ended when Frank's father said, 'your not going and that's that!' "Frank stormed out of the house, slamming the door behind him, and in a voice so low he thought only he could hear, he said, 'I hate them! I wish they were dead!'" The prosecutor slammed his big book shut. Tears were streaming down Frank's face. He had completely forgotten that argument with his parents. His mind races back and even though he doesn't want to admit it, he remembers all too well, that was exactly how he felt. He sits down and covers his face with his hands and begins to weep. The courtroom is silent except for that thundering voice and loud gavel... "GUILTY!"

Witness #6 stands to his feet. "Your Honor, my name is 'Thou shalt not kill' and Frank Logan is a murderer"! Frank could not believe his ears. He knows he has never taken the life of anyone! He wipes the tears away and stands to face his accuser. "Frank Logan," the prosecutor begins, "you had a brother once, and you killed him!" "You murdered him as sure as your standing here in this courtroom!" "Your Honor," Frank complains, "I do have a brother. I haven't seen him for over 10 years, but I know he's alive because we get Christmas cards from them every year. I don't like him, in fact I can't stand him, but your Honor, you've got to believe me when I say that I would never "kill" him!" Witness #6 opens the Word of God, and in a voice that sent chills up Frank's spine he read, "(Matthew 5:21) Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment. But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment. "(1 John 3:15) Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him." Before Frank could even begin to protest the judge cried, "GUILTY!"

Witness #7 stands to his feet and says, "Your Honor, my name is 'Thou shalt not commit adultery' and Frank Logan is guilty as charged." Frank thinks of his lovely wife and their 30 year marriage and remembers not one time when he ever cheated on her. "Your Honor, this is completely out of line! I've never been unfaithful to my wife and this witness knows it! "This is a set up, and sir, I want you to know that, sure, I've looked at other women, I've even thought about other women, I've even lusted after other women, but your Honor, I've never actually done anything. "I mean, your Honor, you know the old saying, 'I might be on a diet, but that doesn't stop me from looking at the menu,' right?" The prosecutor opens his big book and says, "May I refer the court back to the book of Matthew chapter 5, verses 27 and 28? "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart. "Let me say, Your Honor, the mentality of the world not too long ago was, 'It's O.K. to look as long as you don't touch!' But even that is a thing of the past! "Today's philosophy, though, seems to be 'It's O.K. to look--it's O.K. to touch, just as long as you protect yourself." "Listen, the Bible says it's not O.K. to look! And you all the men out there know exactly I'm talking about: Those sweaters that are just a little bit too tight and those dresses that fit so tight they leave very little for the imagination. "It's not O.K. to look! "Now the ladies out there may be thinking, 'Amen, Brother, you tell them. Let those sorry perverts have it!' "Look at Matthew 5 verse 28 real closely. Do you see it? The little word 'with' is talking about you! 'With her!' "Women who dress in such a way as to attract the stares, gawks, and lustful looks from men and boys, you are just as guilty as they are! "Some women have this idea that no preacher, no Sunday school teacher, or no one else is going to tell them what they can and cannot wear! 'This is MY body and if I want to show it off that's my business!' "Listen, ladies, the Bible says that if you claim to be a child of God, you are not your own because you have been bought with a price." (That price was the precious blood of Jesus!) Frank cannot remember all the times he has looked and lusted after other women. He hangs his head in shame as the Judge says, "GUILTY!" There is something that is starting to happen to Frank. A sense of awareness that he is indeed guilty. He remembers reading, or hearing a preacher say something like: "Therefore by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." (Romans 3:20)

Frank's mind is trying to remember other verses of Scripture when Witness #8 stands to his feet. "Your Honor, my name is 'Thou shalt not steal.' Frank doesn't even hear him. He remembers a verse that said: "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23) The Judge says, "GUILTY!",

and Witness #9 takes the stand. "Your Honor, my name is 'Thou shalt not bear false witness', and on many occasions, Frank Logan has lied about his neighbors." Frank doesn't object. He doesn't jump up and try to justify himself. He is thinking about another passage of Scripture; "Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." (Romans 3:28) Somewhere in the back of his mind he hears the Judge say, "GUILTY!"

The prosecuting attorney says, "Your Honor, I have one more witness to testify against Mr. Logan. With the court's permission I'd like to call Witness #10." As Witness #10 is standing, Frank is thinking real hard about the verses of Scripture in (Romans 5:6): "For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly." "Your Honor, my name is 'Thou shalt not covet,' and Frank Logan covets what other people have so bad that he robs God every week in order to buy a Florida Lottery Ticket! In fact, he has a wallet full of them right now hoping to win tonight's 50 million dollar drawing!" Frank knows he's guilty and the shame

is overwhelming. He sees himself as a wretched, lost sinner who deserves to be given the maximum sentence allowed by law. The prosecuting attorney jumps to his feet and says, "Your Honor, I believe we have shown, beyond a reasonable doubt that Frank Logan is guilty as charged." "It is our recommendation that he be sentenced immediately to an eternity of death and separation in the Lake of Fire, where the 'worm dieth not' and the fire is never quenched!" The Witnesses, all ten of them were on their feet crying "GUILTY!" The people in the courtroom were all standing to their feet crying, "Guilty!"

Frank was slumped over in his chair, all life had drained out from him. He was about to give up hope when all of a sudden, he remembered one more Bible Scripture that his Sunday teacher had taught him years ago: (Romans 10:13) "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." The Judge asked him if he had anything to say before the sentence was passed down. Frank stood to his feet, and with all the strength he could muster, he cried, "Your Honor, I call on Jesus!" And at the sound of that name, the Judge stood to his feet, the prosecutor stood to his feet, the ten witnesses stood up, everybody in the courtroom that day stood to their feet as from a side door, Jesus, the Son of God walked into the courtroom! A hush fell over the courtroom as the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world, walked over to where Frank had slumped on the floor in utter desperation. Jesus reached down, lovingly picked up Frank Logan and approached the Judge's bench and said, "Father, this is another sinner for whom I died!" And with that proclamation, The courtroom was instantly filled with cheers and shouts of joy for another lost sheep that now was found. (John 3:18) "He that believeth is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." (Romans 3: 20-31)