

The Ten Commandments

Week 6

The Ninth and Tenth Commandments



Jesus, stretching forth His hand toward the disciples, said,
“My mother and My brothers
are these who hear the Word of God, and do it.”

Matt. 12:48-49; Mark 3:33-35; Luke 8:21; John 19:25-27;
TCR 306e

(with highlights)

Day One

Exodus 20:17

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, and his manservant, and his maidservant, and his ox, and his donkey, and anything that is thy neighbor's.

TCR 326. These two commandments have relation to all the preceding ones and teach and enjoin not only that evils must not be done, but also that they must not be lusted after. Consequently they teach that evils pertain not only to the external man but also to the internal, since he who refrains from doing evils and yet lusts to do them still does them. For the Lord says:

If anyone lusts after another's wife, he has committed adultery with her already in his heart (Matt. 5:27, 28).

And the external man becomes internal, or acts as one with the internal, only when lusts have been removed. This also the Lord teaches, saying:

Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees; for you cleanse the outside of the cup and of the platter, but inside they are full of extortion and excess. Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and platter, that the outside may be clean also (Matt. 23:25, 26).

And the same is taught throughout that chapter. The internals that are Pharisaical are lusts after the things that are forbidden to be done in the first, second, fifth, sixth, seventh and eighth commandments.

It is known that when the Lord was in the world, He taught the internal things of the church, and these internal things are not to lust after evils; and He so taught in order that the internal and external man may make one. This is the being born anew, of which the Lord spoke to Nicodemus in the third chapter of John. And no man can be born anew or be regenerated, and consequently become internal, except from the Lord.

So that these two commandments may have relation to all the preceding ones, since the things forbidden in them are not to be lusted after, the house is mentioned first, afterwards the wife, then the manservant, maidservant, ox, and donkey, and lastly everything that is the neighbor's. For the house involves all that follows, since it includes the husband, wife, manservant, maidservant, ox and donkey. Again, the wife, who is next mentioned, involves all that follows; for she is the mistress as the husband is the master in the house. The manservant and maidservant are beneath these, the ox and the donkey beneath them, and last of all come all things that are below or outside, which is the meaning of "everything that is the neighbor's." Evidently therefore, in these two commandments all the preceding, both in general and in particular, are regarded, both in a broad and a restricted sense.

TCR 327. In the spiritual sense, these two commandments forbid all lusts that are contrary to the spirit, thus all that are contrary to the spiritual things of the church, which relate chiefly to faith and charity; for unless lusts are subdued, the flesh let loose would rush into every wickedness. For it is known from Paul,

That the flesh lusts against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh (Gal. 5:17).

And from James:

Each man is tempted by his own lust when he is enticed; then the lust, when it has conceived, bears sin; and sin, when it is completed, brings forth death (James 1:14, 15).

Again from Peter,

That the Lord reserves the unjust unto the day of judgment, to be punished; but chiefly those who walk after the flesh in lust (2 Peter 2:9, 10).

In short, these two commandments understood in the spiritual sense relate to all things that have been presented before in the spiritual sense, that they must not be lusted after. So likewise they relate to all that has been before presented in the celestial sense. But to repeat all these things is unnecessary.

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. Have you ever heard someone maintain that it is not necessary to keep the Ten Commandments for the sake of salvation, but only to have faith? Or that the Ten Commandments are only for children? (See Life 63.)
2. Criminal law takes into account a jury's or judge's best guess as to the extent of a person's deliberate intent in committing a crime. There is a recognition that it is not just the act that matters.
3. Which is worse, to rage at someone but then recover one's temper, or to harbor hatred and bear grudges but not say much?
4. 1 John 2:15-17 says, "Do not love the world, neither the things that are in the world.... For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world; and the world passes away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever."
5. TCR 327 says that the flesh let loose would rush into every wickedness. Does this statement make sense to you? Is restraining the flesh a manageable job?
6. In the Christmas story it says, "there was no room for them in the inn" (Luke 2:7). A question is whether there is room for the Lord in our hearts, or whether love of the world and love of self is filling all the spaces.

Day Two

Matthew 15:11, 17-19

Not that which enters into the mouth defiles the man; but that which comes forth out of the mouth, this defiles the man. Whatever enters into the mouth goes into the belly, and is cast out into the latrine. But the things that come forth out of the mouth come forth out of the heart, and these defile the man. For out of the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies.

TCR 328. The lusts [or covetings] of the flesh, the eye, and the other senses, separated from the lusts—that is, from the affections, the desires, and the delights of the spirit—are wholly like the lusts of beasts, and consequently are in themselves beastlike. But the affections of the spirit are such as angels have, and therefore are to be called truly human. For this reason, so far as anyone indulges the lusts of the flesh, he is a beast and a wild beast; but so far as one satisfies the desires of the spirit, he is a man and an angel. The lusts of the flesh may be compared to shriveled and dried up grapes and to wild grapes; but the affections of the spirit to juicy and delicious grapes, and also to the taste of the wine that is pressed from them. The lusts of the flesh may be compared... in general, as dross and gold, as limestone and silver, as coral and rubies, and so on. Lust and the deed are connected like blood and flesh, or like flame and oil; for lust is within the deed, as air from the lungs is in breathing or in speaking, or as wind in the sail when the vessel is in motion, or as water on the wheel that gives motion and action to machinery.

AC 8910. This [commandment] means that one must beware of the love of self and of the world, and thus lest the evils which are contained in the preceding commandments become of the will and so come forth. This is evident from the meaning of “coveting,”* as being to will from an evil love. That “coveting” has this meaning is because all coveting belongs to some love, for nothing is coveted unless it is loved. Therefore “coveting” is a continuation of a love,

in this case of the love of self or of the world, and it is as it were the life of its breath. For that which an evil love breathes is called “coveting,” but that which a good love breathes is called “desire.” Love itself belongs to the one part of the mind that is called the will, for whatever a man loves he wills. But coveting belongs to both the will and the understanding, though it properly belongs to the will in the understanding.... **Latin is concupiscere.*

AC 8910:2. It is believed in the world that the thought is the man. But there are *two* things which constitute the life of man, the understanding and the will. Thought belongs to the understanding, and the affection that is of love belongs to the will. Thought, without affection that is of love, does not make anything of life with man, but thought from affection... thus understanding from will, does [make the man].

That these two are distinct from each other is plain to everyone who reflects, from the fact that a man can understand and perceive that something which he wills is evil, and that something is good which he either wills or does not will. From this it is clear that the will is the man himself, but not the thought, except so far as something from the will passes into the thought.

Hence it is that the things which enter the thought of man, and not through the thought into the will, do not defile him, but [only] the things which enter through the thought into the will. These things defile him because they are then appropriated to him and become his; for the will... is the man himself. The things which become of the will are said to enter into his heart and to come forth from it, while the things which are only of the thought are said to enter into the mouth, but to go out through the belly into the latrine, according to the Lord’s words in Matthew [quoted above].

AC 8911. From what has been said so far it can be seen how the case is with man and his life, namely, that man is such as his will is, and that he remains such after death, because death is not the end of life, but its continuation. As therefore man is such as his will is... therefore “to be judged according to his deeds” means to be judged according to his will....

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. TCR 328: What might be some examples of “affections, desires and delights of the spirit”? Can spiritual affections be present within lusts of the flesh, or are they always opposite to each other?
2. Do you have a feeling for the difference between your thought and your will? The middle paragraph on page 8 gives one way we can see the distinction. Do you have further examples of the distinction?
3. The Lord’s teaching in Matthew 15 (at the top of Day Two, explained in the fourth paragraph on page 8) is very helpful. It shows that we are not to blame for the bad thoughts that come into our minds— “what enters into the mouth.” Our job is to not *dwell* on evil thoughts and fantasize about them, and also not to act on them, but rather to turn our minds away from bad thoughts and hold our noses against them.

Day Three

Luke 12:13-15

And one of the crowd said to Him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. But He said to him, Man, who has set Me as a judge or a divider over you? And He said to them, See, and guard against avarice; for no one's life consists in the excess of his belongings.

AE 1021:2. There are two loves from which all lusts spring and flow forth perpetually like streams from their fountains. These loves are called the love of the world and the love of self... Now because the love of the world and the love of self are the foundations of all lusts, and all evil lusts are forbidden in these last two commandments, it follows that the ninth commandment forbids the lusts that flow from love of the world, and the tenth commandment forbids the lusts that flow from love of self. "Not to covet a neighbor's house" means not to covet his goods, which in general are possessions and wealth, and not to appropriate them to oneself by evil arts. This lust belongs to the love of the world.

AE 1022:2. [In the tenth commandment] are [represented] lusts after what is a man's own [proprium], because the wife, manservant, maidservant, ox, and ass, are inside his house, and the things inside a man's house mean in the spiritual internal sense the things that are his own. That is, the wife means the affection of spiritual truth and good; "manservant and maidservant" mean the affection of rational truth and good serving the spiritual; and "ox and ass" mean the affection of natural good and truth...

But because coveting and desiring these affections means to will and **eagerly desire to subject a man to one's own authority or bidding**, it follows that lusting after these affections means lusts of the love of self, that is, of the love of ruling, for this is how one makes the things belonging to a companion to be his own.

TCR 400:8. There are two kinds of dominion: one of love towards the neighbor, and another of love of self. These two kinds of

dominion are opposites. He who exercises dominion from love towards the neighbor desires the good of all, and loves nothing better than to perform uses, thus to serve others. Serving others is doing good from good will and performing uses. Such is his love and the delight of his heart. Moreover, so far as he is elevated to dignities he rejoices in it, not on account of the dignities, but on account of the uses which he can then perform to a greater extent and in a higher degree. Such is dominion in the heavens.

But he who exercises dominion from love of self desires the good of none but himself and his own. The uses he performs are for the sake of his own honor and glory, which to him are the only uses. His end in serving others is that he himself may be served and honored and may rule. He seeks dignities not for the sake of the goods he may do, but in order that he may gain eminence and glory and may thereby be in his heart's delight.

TCR 400:11. But love of the world is a desire to draw to oneself the wealth of others by any device whatever, to set the heart on riches, and to permit the world to withdraw and lead one away from spiritual love, which is love towards the neighbor, that is, from heaven. Those are in love of the world who long to draw to themselves the goods of others by various devices, but especially those who wish to do so by craft and deceit, caring nothing for the good of the neighbor. Those who are in that love covet the goods of others, and so far as they do not fear the law and the loss of reputation on account of the gain, they get possession of others' goods and even plunder them.

TCR 400:14. In a word, love of self and love of the world are directly opposite to love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor. Consequently, love of self and love of the world, such as have just been described, are infernal loves, and these reign in hell, and also constitute hell in man. But love to the Lord and love towards the neighbor are heavenly loves, and these reign in heaven, and also constitute heaven in man.

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. Opposite to the spirit of coveting, the Lord asks, "Is not the soul more than food, and the body than clothing? Do not be anxious, therefore, saying, What shall we eat? or What shall we drink? or With what shall we be clothed? For... your Heavenly Father knows that you have need of all these things. But seek first the kingdom of God and His justice, and all these things shall be added to you." (Matthew 6:25, 31-33)
2. The Doctrine quotes these words from Matthew and comments, "Very different is the case with those who trust in the Divine. These, even though they have care for the morrow, still do not have it, because they do not think of the morrow with solicitude, still less with anxiety. Unruffled is their spirit whether they obtain the objects of their desire, or not; and they do not grieve over the loss of them, being content with their lot. If they become rich, they do not set their hearts on riches. If they are raised to honors, they do not regard themselves as more worthy than others. If they become poor, they are not made sad; if their circumstances are lowly, they are not dejected. They know that for those who trust in the Divine, all things advance toward a happy state to eternity, and that whatever befalls them in time is still conducive to it." (AC 8478:3)
3. AE 1021-1022 says that the ninth commandment is against love of the world, or materialism, while the tenth commandment is against love of self, especially love of ruling over others and manipulating people through their affections. We can consider which of these commandments we are more inclined to break, and how to defend against breaking them.
4. TCR 400:8. Have you heard of or seen a good example of someone "exercising dominion" or leading from what appears to be a desire to perform uses and to serve others?

Day Four

John 14:21, 23

Jesus said, He that has My commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves Me; and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father; and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him, and We will make our abode with him.

TCR 329. THE TEN COMMANDMENTS OF THE DECALOGUE CONTAIN ALL THINGS THAT BELONG TO LOVE TO GOD, AND ALL THINGS THAT BELONG TO LOVE TOWARD THE NEIGHBOR.

In eight of the commandments of the Decalogue—the first, second, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth—nothing is said of love to God and love toward the neighbor; since it is not said that God should be loved, that His name should be hallowed, that the neighbor should be loved and consequently that he should be dealt with honestly and uprightly. It is only said, “Thou shalt not,” that is, in general, that evil, either against God or the neighbor, is not to be cherished in will or thought, nor to be done. The reason why such things as relate directly to love and charity are not commanded, but only such things as are opposed to them are forbidden, is that so far as man shuns evils as sins, so far he wills the goods that belong to love and charity. That the first of love to God and the neighbor is not to do evil, and the second is to do good, will be seen in the chapter on Charity.

TCR 330. It has been said that so far as man shuns what is evil, he wills what is good. This is so because evils and goods are opposites; for evils are from hell and goods from heaven. Therefore, so far as hell, that is, evil, is removed, so far heaven approaches and man looks to good. That this is so, is very manifest from eight commandments of the Decalogue when so viewed. Thus: (1) So far as one refrains from worshipping other gods, so far he worships the true God. (2) So far as one refrains from taking the name of God in vain, so far he loves what is from God. (3) So far as one refrains from the wish to commit murder, or to act from hatred and revenge, so far he wishes well to his neighbor. (4) So far as one refrains from a wish to commit adultery, so far he wishes

to live chastely with a wife. (5) So far as one refrains from a wish to steal, so far he pursues honesty. (6) So far as one refrains from a wish to bear false witness, so far he wishes to think and say what is true. (7 and 8) So far as one refrains from coveting what belongs to the neighbor, so far he wishes the neighbor to enjoy his own. From all this it is evident that the commandments of the Decalogue contain all things of love to God and love towards the neighbor.

TCR 331. Good and evil cannot exist together, and so far as evil is put away, good is regarded and felt as good. The reason is that in the spiritual world a sphere of his love exhales from everyone, and it spreads itself round about and affects others, and causes sympathies and antipathies. By these spheres the good are separated from the evil. That evil must be put away before good can be recognized, perceived, and loved, may be compared to many things in the natural world. For example: one cannot visit another who keeps a leopard and a panther shut up in his room (himself living safely with them because he feeds them), until those wild beasts have been removed.

TCR 331:2. Who enters the bridal chamber with his bride after marriage before he has washed himself wholly, and clothed himself with wedding garments? Who does not purify ores by fire and separate the dross, before he obtains the pure gold and silver? Who does not separate the tares from the wheat before putting it into his granary?

TCR 331:4. Man himself ought to purify himself from evils and not wait for the Lord to do this without his cooperation. Otherwise, he would be like a servant going to his master with his face and clothes befouled with soot and dung and saying, "Master, wash me." Would not his master say to him, "You foolish servant, what are you saying? See, there are water, soap, and a towel. Do you not have hands of your own and the power to use them? Wash yourself." So the Lord God will say, "These means of purification are from Me, and your ability to will and do are also from Me. Therefore, use these My gifts and endowments as your own, and you will be purified."

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. John 14:21, 23: Sometimes it feels hard to love God, but here He tells us how we can do it: keep His commandments. TCR 329e tells us that He especially means His Ten Commandments. The more we keep them, the more the Lord will be able to manifest or show Himself to us.
2. TCR 329-330: Why are the Commandments expressed in a negative form? Why are they not really “negative” at all?
3. TCR 331: How much do “spheres of love” exhaling from other people affect us in this world?
4. How does the warning to shun evils apply to people who are doing or saying bad things? Or does it not apply to people?

Day Five

Mark 8:34-35

If any man would come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever would save his life shall lose it; and whoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's shall save it.

Life 99. The “cross” means temptation.... By his “life” is meant the life of man’s proprium... which is also the “life of the flesh that profits nothing” in John 6:63.

Life 92. NO ONE CAN SHUN EVILS AS SINS SO AS TO BE INWARDLY AVERSE TO THEM EXCEPT BY MEANS OF COMBATS AGAINST THEM. Everybody knows from the Word and from doctrine drawn from it that the proprium [*or natural inclination*] of man is evil from his birth, and that this is the reason why from inborn covetousness he loves evils and is drawn into them. This is why he desires to have revenge, and to commit fraud, defamation, and adultery. And unless he takes thought that such things are sins, and on this account resists them, he does them whenever an opportunity offers, provided that his reputation and thereby his honors and gains do not suffer. Consider also that unless he has religion, the man does these things from delight.

Life 93. As this proprium of man constitutes the first root of his life, it is evident what kind of a tree a man would be unless this root were torn out and a new root planted in its place. He would be a rotten tree, of which it is said that it must be cut down and cast into the fire (Matt. 3:10; 7:19). And this root is not removed and a new one set in its place unless the man regards the evils that constitute the root as injurious to his soul, and on this account desires to rid himself of them. But as these evils belong to man’s proprium and are therefore delightful to him, he cannot do this except against his will, with a struggle and therefore with battling.

Life 94. Everyone does this battling who believes in the existence of hell and of heaven: that heaven is eternal happiness, and hell eternal unhappiness, and that those who do evils go to hell, and those who do goods to heaven. And one who thus fights, acts from

within, and against the coveting itself which constitutes the root of the evil, for one who fights against anything does not will it, and to desire is to will. This shows that the root of evil is not removed except by means of combat.

Life 96. A man who fights against evils cannot but do so as of himself, for one who does not fight as of himself does not do so at all, but stands like an automaton that sees nothing and does nothing, and from evil he is continually thinking in favor of evil, and not against it. But be it well known that it is the Lord alone who fights in a man against his evils, and that it only appears to the man that he fights of himself, and also that the Lord wills that it should so appear to him, because without this appearance no combat takes place and therefore no reformation.

Life 97. This combat is not severe except in the case of those who have given free rein to their covetings and have indulged them of set purpose, and also in the case of those who have stubbornly cast off the holy things of the Word and of the church. With others it is not severe; let them even once in a week, or twice in a month, resist the evils they are inclined to, and they will perceive a change.

Life 101. A MAN OUGHT TO SHUN EVILS AS SINS AND FIGHT AGAINST THEM AS OF HIMSELF. It is in accordance with Divine order that man should act in freedom according to reason, because to act in freedom according to reason is to act from himself. And yet these two faculties, Freedom and Reason, are not proper to man, but are the Lord's in him. And to the extent that he is a human being, they must not be taken away from him, because without them he cannot be reformed. For without them he cannot perform repentance, he cannot fight against evils, and afterwards bring forth fruits worthy of repentance. Now as it is from the Lord that man possesses freedom and reason, and as man acts from them, it follows that he does not act from himself, but **as** from himself....

Life 102. The Lord loves man and wills to dwell with him, yet He cannot love him and dwell with him unless He is received and loved in return. From this alone comes conjunction....

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. Mark 8: Jesus taught us that if we want to come after Him, we have to say no to ourselves, and do some hard work, and follow Him. There is a selfish aspect to our life that we must lose, for His sake and because His Word says so, if we hope to be saved. Does it help, in hard times, to picture taking up your cross to follow our Lord Jesus Christ?
2. Life 92: “The proprium” means what is one’s own. Only the Lord truly has proprium, but He created us to feel, use, and enjoy life **as** our own. But if we assume that life is our own to use as we please without the Lord’s guidance, then the proprium is selfish and evil. Here it means the weak side of human nature.
3. Life 94: See how important belief in eternal life is!
4. Life 97: Does this seem a doable task? Can you picture making this a habit? This is a wonderful way to prepare for holy supper.
5. Life 101-102: What a wonderful sign of how much the Lord loves us, that He created us to be free and rational people!

Day Six

Life 113. The Lord says in Matthew:

Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first the inside of the cup and the platter, that the outside may be clean also (Matt. 23:26).

And in Isaiah:

Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your works from before My eyes, cease to do evil; and then though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Though they have been red like crimson, they shall be as wool (Isa. 1:16, 18).

Life 108. IF ANYONE SHUNS EVILS FOR ANY OTHER REASON THAN BECAUSE THEY ARE SINS, HE DOES NOT SHUN THEM, BUT MERELY PREVENTS THEM FROM APPEARING BEFORE THE WORLD.

There are moral men who keep the commandments of the second table of the Decalogue, not committing fraud, blasphemy, revenge, or adultery. And such of them as confirm themselves in the belief that such things are evils because they are injurious to the public welfare and are therefore contrary to the laws of humane conduct, practice charity, honesty, justice, and chastity. But if they do these goods and shun those evils merely because they are **evils**, and not at the same time because they are **sins**, they are still merely natural men, and with the merely natural, the root of evil remains imbedded and is not dislodged. For this reason, the goods they do are not goods, because they are from themselves.

Life 109. Before men, a natural moral man may appear exactly like a spiritual moral man, but not before the angels....

Life 110. The covetings of evil that constitute the interiors of man from his birth can be removed by the Lord alone....

Life 111. There are many and various causes that make a man moral in the outward form, but unless he is moral in the inward form also, he is nevertheless not moral. For example: if a man abstains from adulteries and whoredom from the fear of the civil law and its penalties; from the fear of losing his good name and

respect; from the fear of the consequent diseases; from the fear of his wife's tongue in his home, and the consequent inquietude of his life; from the fear of the husband's vengeance or that of some relative; from poverty or avarice; from disability caused by disease, abuse, age, or impotence—in fact, if he abstains from such things on account of any natural or moral law, and not at the same time on account of the spiritual law, he nevertheless is inwardly an adulterer and whoremonger, for he nonetheless believes that such things are not sins. Consequently, in spirit he makes them not unlawful before God, and so in spirit he commits them, although not in the body in the sight of the world. And therefore after death, when he becomes a spirit, he speaks openly in favor of them. From all this it is evident that an ungodly man is able to shun evils as injurious, but only a Christian can shun them as sins.

Life 112. It is the same with thefts and frauds of every kind, with murders and revengeful acts of every kind, and with false witness and lies of every kind. No one can of himself be cleansed and made pure from such things, for within every coveting there are infinite things which the man sees only as one simple thing, whereas the Lord sees the smallest details of the whole series. In a word, a man cannot regenerate himself, that is, form in himself a new heart and a new spirit, but the Lord alone can do this, who Himself is the Reformer and the Regenerator. Therefore, if a man wills to make himself new by his own sagacity and intelligence, it is merely like painting an ugly face, or smearing a skin detergent over a part that is infected with inward corruption.

Life 114. To what has already been said shall be added the following:

1. Christian charity, with everyone, consists in faithfully performing what belongs to his calling, for by this, if he shuns evils as sins, every day he is doing goods, and is himself his own use in the general body. In this way also the common good is cared for, and the good of each person in particular.

2. All other things that he does are not the proper works of charity, but are either its signs, its benefactions, or its obligations.

Questions and thoughts for reflection

1. Life 108: What's the difference between "evils" and "sins"?
2. Life 110: Why can only the Lord pull out the roots of evil?
3. Life 114: Put this together with TCR 329 at the end (Day Four). What should be the main focus of our lives in following the Lord? How do these two, "the first of love to God and the neighbor" and "Christian charity," fit together?