

1974 Q2

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W. M. U. PROGRAMMES

APRIL, MAY, JUNE

1974

THEME: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE CHRISTIAN TODAY

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(Resource materials by D. Lockard)

(Note: At the end of each programme is PRAY TODAY FOR: and SUGGESTIONS TO PRESIDENT: Each country may add prayer items and suggestions for work at these places, if desired.)

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Moses told the people what God had commanded. The people cried out, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient."

It is very important how we respond to the Word of God. It is very important what we say about the commands of God. When the Bible speaks to us, how do we answer? Do we say, "All the Lord says I will do"? This is still the right way to answer God.

As we obey the Word of God it will become a light and a power in our lives. If we sincerely love God, we will love His commandments. We will gladly obey Him and do all He tells us to do.

PART FOUR:

Jesus said, "Think not that I have come to abolish the law and the prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfil them (Matthew 5:17). The Ten Commandments are still for us today. They show us what God expects from His people. They are the beginning of God's teaching concerning living a godly life.

When a small child comes near the fire, we say, "No, no." When he is older we explain to him that the fire will hurt him.

In God's first laws, eight of them say to us, "No, no." They tell us we must not do certain things. As we grow in our spiritual lives, we are able to understand more. Then we will understand why we are commanded not to do some things. The more we understand about God, the more we will love Him. We will want to obey Him because we love Him so much.

PROGRAMME LEADER:

For the next ten weeks we shall study the Ten Commandments. God expects us to honour Him. He expects us to obey His commandments. Are we willing to do what He says?

Are we willing to say now to God, "All that you say I will do"? Let us think very much about this as we remember the words of Jesus which we have already heard today, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

PRAYER:

Let us pray that we may each one give our all to the Lord.

Let us pray that we may love Him enough to keep His commandments.

PRAY TODAY FOR:

SUGGESTIONS TO PRESIDENT:

PROGRAMME 2

Theme for the Quarter: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE
CHRISTIAN TODAY

Theme for Today: NO OTHER GODS

Memory Verse:

"You shall have no other gods before me."

Exodus 20:3

PROGRAMME LEADER:

We have learned the first commandment as our memory verse today. It is: "You shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:3). The people of Israel had been slaves in Egypt. They had seen the Egyptians worshipping many gods. Now God had told them that He is the only true God. They were commanded not to worship any other gods of any kind.

Today we shall learn what this commandment means to us as Christians.

PART ONE:

The Bible tells us that God says, "I am the Lord, and there is no other, besides me there is no God..." (Isaiah 45:5). There is only one true God. There is not a Japanese god and an African god and a white man's god.

There is one God only. He is very great. He is holy and righteous. He is all-powerful. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. He alone is worthy of all our love.

The prophet Elijah spoke to people who were worshipping a false god called Baal. He told them that they must choose to serve God or Baal. He said, "...If the Lord is God, follow him; but if Baal, then follow him" (1 Kings 18:21).

Jesus said that a man cannot have two masters. Matthew 6:24 tells us these words of Jesus, "No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other,

or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other...."

If we choose to serve God, we must put Him in the first place. We must serve Him only. We cannot serve God and the world at the same time. We cannot worship God and other things at the same time.

PART TWO:

Whatever is first in our lives is our god. Christians who do not put God in the first place in their lives are disobeying the first commandment. There are many things people put in first place in their lives.

Some people love money more than anything else. Some love money so much that they will cheat or lie or steal to get it. Many Christians refuse to give their tithes to God. They love money more than they love God.

Other people put education in the first place in their lives. Others put their homes or families or pleasures first. Some put things first, such as nice clothes or motor-cars. Many put self first, wanting only to please themselves without thinking of anyone else.

If we love anything more than we love God, we are disobeying the command of God, "You shall have no other gods before me."

PART THREE:

The children of Israel sometimes forgot God. They began to sin and to serve other gods. Every time God punished them for their sin. Every time they suffered much trouble and heartache. In the end, they were again taken into captivity by stronger nations.

The Bible says, "Do not be deceived; God is not mocked, for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap" (Galatians 6:7). We may deceive others, but God knows everything. God

knows whether we love Him more than anything else. He knows what is first in our hearts and lives. He knows all that we think and feel.

We ourselves choose the way we will go. What God commands is always right. Going our own way will lead to unhappiness and final destruction. "For the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 6:23). If God is not first in our lives, we will surely suffer the consequences of disobeying His commandment.

PART FOUR:

The Bible tells us that God said to the people, "...The Lord our God is one Lord; and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might" (Deuteronomy 6:4,5).

One day a lawyer asked Jesus, "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?" (Matthew 22:36). Jesus said, "...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment" (Matthew 22:37,38).

Christians are commanded to love God with all of their hearts. We are unable to keep the other commandments if we do not love God more than anything else. It is important that we do not kill or steal or covet or commit adultery. However, we are sinners. We are unable to live a righteous life without the help of God.

Only as we let God live His life in us can we have the Holy Spirit's power to overcome temptation and sin. Only as the Holy Spirit controls us can we have victory in our lives.

PROGRAMME LEADER:

Are we putting other gods before God? What do we love more than anything else? Is God in the first place in our hearts? Does the Holy Spirit have control in our lives?

Let us think seriously about these questions. If God is not in first place in our hearts, today we can confess this to Him and ask Him to be Lord of all of our lives.

PRAYER:

Pray that we may have no other gods before the one true God. Pray for courage to turn away from anything that keeps God from being first in our lives.

PRAY TODAY FOR:

SUGGESTIONS TO PRESIDENT:

PROGRAMME 3

Theme for the Quarter: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE
CHRISTIAN TODAY

Theme for Today: TRUE WORSHIP OF THE TRUE GOD

Memory Verse:

"You shall not make for yourself a graven image..."

Exodus 20:4

PROGRAMME LEADER:

Today we shall study the second commandment. The first commandment taught us that God must be first in our lives. We must not worship false gods.

It is also important how we worship the one true God. The second commandment tells us we are not to bow down to idols or images of any kind.

Let us read carefully this command.

(Read Exodus 20:4-6.)

PART ONE:

What is an idol? An idol is any object which a person turns to for help or salvation. Some idols are made of wood. Some are made of metal or stone.

In Isaiah, chapter 44, we are told about a man who takes a tree from the forest. He uses some of the wood to build a fire to keep warm. He uses some of the wood to cook his food. Then he carves an image from some of the wood. He bows before the image.

He made the image with his own hands. Yet he trusts the image to help him and answer his prayers. He says to the image of wood, "...Deliver me, for thou art my god!" (Isaiah 44:17). How can that piece of wood help the man? It cannot, for it is still only a piece of wood.

We know people today who believe such objects can help them. Some trust in charms to keep a child well. Some buy such things to cause them to get good marks in school or to help them

in other ways. Satan uses such things to turn us away from faith in God.

God is not pleased with this. He says to us plainly, "You shall not make for yourself a graven image..." (Exodus 20:4).

PART TWO:

Some say that idols help them to think of God. The Bible says that "God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). We do not need an image to help us think of God. We do not need an image to worship God.

The Bible tells us that if we are Christians God is in us. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God?" (1 Corinthians 6:19). God is always with us because He lives in us. Why should we need the help of an idol to think of God? This does not please God.

Listen to these words from 1 John 5, verses 20 and 21: "And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, to know him who is true: and we are in him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

This is the command of God to us. We have understanding from the true God. We have eternal life through Jesus Christ, God's Son. We must not make or buy any image. We must not have images in our houses or in our churches. We must not use images in our worship of the true God.

PART THREE:

The second commandment teaches one thing which is the same as is taught by the first commandment. This is that God must be first in the life of a Christian.

God said, "...I the Lord your God am a jealous God..." (Exodus 20:5). This means that God wants no one to share His place in our hearts and in our love. A man who has two wives must divide his love between them. He is unable to love one with his whole heart. He can love each wife with only a part of himself. This brings jealousy and trouble to the man and his wives.

God says we cannot love Him in this way. He will not allow it, for He is a jealous God. He says we must love Him with our whole heart. Punishment will come to those who worship other gods or idols.

This commandment show us how much God loves us. When a woman loves her husband greatly, she does not wish to share his love with anyone else. God loves us this way. He will not share our love and loyalty.

If we love God enough, we will not want to love other things too much. We will be happy to put God in the first place in our lives. We will know that this is the only way of true joy and peace.

PART FOUR:

It is Satan himself who tempts us to trust in charms or idols or any other thing. Satan is very powerful. The Bible tells us he is the god of this world. He may cause us to think in our hearts, "I will trust God. But it is all right to put this charm on my baby. What harm can it do?"

Or Satan may say to us, "Believe in God. But go ahead and worship the spirits of your ancestors. They may be displeased." Again Satan may cause us to think, "Go ahead and pray to God. But the witchdoctor might be able to help you, too. Why don't you go to him and see?"

All these thoughts are lies of Satan. He tries to get us to trust in other things besides God.

What if you have tried, but you cannot keep from doing these things? Pray. Ask others to pray with you and for you. God is more powerful than Satan. He commands us to love and worship Him only. He commands us to forsake all idols. We can overcome the Devil only in the strength of God.

PROGRAMME LEADER:

God requires our whole love and loyalty. Putting our trust in any other thing is wrong. Anything we put in the place of God is wrong. God says, "...They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a god that cannot save...And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Saviour; there is none besides me.. Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of earth! For I am God, and there is no other" (Isaiah 45:20-22).

PRAYER:

Pray that we may worship only the one true God. Pray that we may love Him with all our hearts.

PRAY TODAY FOR:

SUGGESTIONS TO PRESIDENT:

PROGRAMME 4

Theme for the Quarter: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE
CHRISTIAN TODAY

Theme for Today: HONOURING THE NAME OF GOD

Memory Verse:

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain;
for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his
name in vain."

Exodus 20:7

PROGRAMME LEADER:

Names are important. Parents are careful in choosing names for their children. Names may describe the person or the family. The name of a person stands for that person.

Today we shall study the third commandment. It tells us that we must honour the name of God. This commandment is our memory verse today, Exodus 20:7. Let us say it together. (Say together Exodus 20:7.)

PART ONE:

The children of Israel feared and honoured the name and the person of God very much. Most Jews would never speak the name of God. This was because they had such great respect for the name of God.

God is holy. The prophet Isaiah tells us that he had a vision of God. In the vision he heard the angels saying, "...Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory" (Isaiah 6:3). Because God is holy, His name is holy.

The name of God should be used carefully when we pray and worship. We should use God's name only in sincere praise. The third commandment tells us that it is wrong to use the name of God carelessly or lightly. It is wrong to speak the

name of God or Jesus to emphasize what we are saying. This is done by saying things like, "God knows that this is the truth." It is wrong to use the name of God in swearing or cursing.

The name of God is holy, as He Himself is holy.

PART TWO:

The meaning of this commandment includes more than just the things we say. It also means the way we live. Jesus said, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and not do what I tell you?" (Luke 6:46). To say, "Lord, Lord" is a very bad thing if we do not really follow God in all our ways.

Today many people will tell us, "Oh, yes, I believe in God." Yet their lives show they do not really care about God at all. This is to take the name of God in vain.

Some people want to be known as Christians. Yet they do not want to pay the price to really follow Jesus. As Christians we carry the name of God. The first followers of Jesus were called Christians because they were like Christ. We take His name in vain if we do not live in the way He has told us to live.

John tells us, "He who says, 'I know him,' but disobeys his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him; but whoever keeps his word, in him truly love for God is perfected. By this we may be sure that we are in him: he who says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked" (1 John 2:4-6).

Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

PART THREE:

Today many people are lost without God. We must be serious about following Jesus. Jesus said, "...If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me" (Matthew 16:24).

What did Jesus mean? He meant that if we are serious about being His disciples, we will have to die to ourselves. We will have to kill our own desires to do only what He says.

This seems a hard thing to do. But Jesus says, "...Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what will it profit a man, if he gains the whole world and forfeits his life? Or what shall a man give in return for his life?..." (Matthew 16:25,26).

Do you want to find real life? Then put your own desires down, and put God in the first place in your life. You will find abundant life. You will also be honouring the name of God.

PART FOUR:

What would happen if all Christians honoured the name of God in the way we speak and in the way we live? What would happen if all Christians openly committed themselves to the will of God in everything?

There would be a wonderful spirit of love and fellowship among Christians. Anger, jealousy, hatred and fighting would be gone. Each Christian would want only what was best for others, with no thought of self.

There would be plenty of money to carry on the work of God. Christians would give their money and share with each other. Pastors would be supported. Church buildings would be built. Missionaries would be sent to preach the gospel in all the world.

Those who were not Christians would see that God is real. They would see Him in our lives. They would turn to Him and be saved. Does this seem impossible?

The Bible tells us in Acts, chapter 2, about the coming of the Holy Spirit. When the Christians were filled with the Holy Spirit, they had great power to witness and preach. Those who saw them knew something had happened. In one day three thousand people were saved.

God's power is still available to us today. We must confess and forsake our sins and surrender ourselves to God. We must ask the Holy Spirit to fill us. Then we must let Him guide us every moment.

PROGRAMME LEADER:

We need revival in our world today. We need revival in our country. We need Christians who truly honour the name of God by the way they live. "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain" (Exodus 20:7).

Let us ask ourselves if we are breaking this commandment by the way we are living.

PRAYER:

Pray that each woman will surrender herself to God today.

Pray that God will send revival in these days.

PRAY TODAY FOR:

SUGGESTIONS TO PRESIDENT:

PROGRAMME 5

Theme for the Quarter: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE
CHRISTIAN TODAY

Theme for Today: KEEPING THE LORD'S DAY

Memory Verse:

"Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy."

Exodus 20:8

PROGRAMME LEADER:

(Read Exodus 20:8-11.)

These verses tell us that God has made one day out of seven a special day. He blessed this day and set it apart as a day of rest. The fourth commandment tells us, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8).

Today we shall study this commandment.

PART ONE:

The Bible tells us that God created the world in six days. Then on the seventh day He rested. He commanded His children to do their work in six days, but the seventh day was to be a day of rest from regular work.

God created this day because of His love for us. He knows what is best for us. He knows our need for peace, joy and fellowship. He knows our weaknesses and our need for strength and renewal. So God set aside one day in each week as a holy day. This day was for two purposes.

First, the sabbath day was to be a day of rest from ordinary work. It was given to us as a day when we can find rest and help for our bodies and our minds.

Secondly, the sabbath day was to be a day of worship and praise and prayer. It was to be a holy day. It was given to us as a day when we can find help for the needs of our spirits.

We should thank God for giving us this special and holy day.

PROGRAMME 1

Theme for the Quarter: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE
CHRISTIAN TODAY

Theme for Today: GOD EXPECTS HONOUR AND OBEDIENCE

Memory Verse:

"...If you will obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my own possession among all peoples..."

Exodus 19:5

PROGRAMME LEADER:

Today we shall begin a study of the Ten Commandments. These commandments were given by God to His people in the time of the Old Testament. They were rules for living a righteous life.

The Ten Commandments are still the commands of God to us. Today we shall study the meaning of the Ten Commandments for Christians in these days of 1974.

I shall read the Ten Commandments from the Bible. They are found in Exodus 20:1-17.

(Read from your Bible Exodus 20:1-17.)

PART ONE:

God had delivered the children of Israel from bondage in Egypt. He said, "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage" (Exodus 20:2).

God was telling them that now they were freed from being slaves in Egypt. Now only God was to be their master. They were to love Him and serve Him and act as His children. The Ten Commandments showed what God expected of them.

We know that keeping the Ten Commandments does not make us Christians. We can never be good enough to be saved. We are not saved by anything we can do for ourselves. We are saved only through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith; and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God--not because of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8,9). When we repent of our sins and receive Jesus as our Saviour, we become children of God. We are saved now and for eternity.

When we are saved, we are delivered from slavery to sin. God becomes our master. He wants us to love Him and serve Him and act as His children. The Ten Commandments still show us today what God expects of us. If we allow Him to do so, He will empower us to keep His commandments.

PART TWO:

The Bible says, "What does it profit, my brethren, if a man says he has faith but has not works...?" (James 2:14). Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15).

It is easy to say, "I am a Christian." However, we show other people that we truly are Christians by our manner of living. Our memory verse from the Old Testament tells us that if we obey God we will be His own possession.

In the New Testament we are told that when Jesus shed His blood for us, He bought us for His own. "Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God? You are not your own; you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body" (1 Corinthians 6:19,20).

We belong to God. He bought us with the blood of His own Son. We show our love for Him by living a righteous life and by obeying His commandments. This is the way we glorify Him in our bodies.

PART THREE:

Let us read from the Bible to see what the people did after Moses had been given the Ten Commandments.

(Read Exodus 24:3-8.)

PART TWO:

Verse 9 tells us, "Six days you shall labour and do all your work." Here God has commanded us to work. This is part of God's plan for our lives.

God does not want us to be lazy. Paul tells us in the New Testament, "...If any one will not work, let him not eat" (2 Thessalonians 3:10).

He wrote to the Christians, telling them "...to work with your hands, as we charged you; so that you may command the respect of outsiders, and be dependent on nobody" (1 Thessalonians 4:11,12). Any honest work is good and pleasing to God. There are six days each week in which we are expected to work so that we may care for our physical needs.

Then God says, "...the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work..." (Exodus 20:10). God meant us to have a day of rest from the regular work we do. He did not mean that we should idle or do nothing at all.

Some work must be done even on Sunday. In our homes we must cook and care for our families. Some people, such as doctors and nurses, have jobs where they must work on Sunday. God understands this.

However, we should keep Sunday as a day of rest for our bodies, as much as is possible. If we must work at our jobs, we should still remember that God wants us to have a time of rest from our work.

PART THREE:

In the time of the Old Testament, the Sabbath Day was Saturday, the seventh day of the week. The Jews who have not believed in Jesus still keep Saturday as their Sabbath Day.

Jesus rose from the dead on the first day of the week, Sunday. After He went back to Heaven, the Christians began to meet on Sunday instead of Saturday. They began to call Sunday "the Lord's Day."

Christians have continued to meet for worship on the Lord's Day, Sunday. God has commanded us to keep this day holy. It should be a time of worship and praise to God. We should be faithful in attending the services of our church.

Some people today say they can worship God anywhere. They think they do not need the church. The writer of Hebrews told the Hebrew Christians they should not neglect to meet together for services of worship. (Read Hebrews 10:25.)

PART FOUR:

What should Christians do during the rest of the time of the Lord's Day? At the time of the New Testament the Jews had many rules about keeping the sabbath. There were more than one thousand things they could not do on the sabbath day. They were very careful to see that everyone kept these rules. Those who did not obey the sabbath day rules were punished severely.

When Jesus came, He condemned this way of keeping the sabbath. One sabbath day Jesus and His disciples were walking through the fields. They were hungry so they picked a few ears of grain. The Pharisees said, "...Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the sabbath?" (Mark 2:24).

Jesus told them, "...The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath; so the Son of man is Lord even on the sabbath" (Mark 2:27,28).

Jesus was telling them the sabbath was given for our good. We do not need many rules in order to keep God's Day holy. We should study God's Word, talk to Him, worship and pray with other Christians. We should rest our bodies and our minds.

We should not do things which would not bring honour to God. If Christ is Lord of all of our lives, He will be Lord of our sabbath, too.

PROGRAMME LEADER:

During the past month we have studied the first four commandments. All of these are concerned with our relationship to God. We have learned that God wants the first place in our lives. He tells us we are not to bow down to idols nor to take His name in vain. We are to keep His day, Sunday, holy.

Christians should keep these commandments because of their love for God. We have read that Jesus said the greatest commandment is to love God with all our hearts and our souls and our minds (Matthew 22:37). If we do this, we will be obeying the commandments we have been studying.

PRAYER:

Pray that we may love God more than all the other things in our lives.

PRAY TODAY FOR:

SUGGESTIONS TO PRESIDENT:

PROGRAMME 6

Theme for the Quarter: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE
CHRISTIAN TODAY

Theme for Today: RESPECT FOR PARENTS

Memory Verse:

"Honour your father and your mother, that your days may
be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you."

Exodus 20:12

PROGRAMME LEADER:

We have studied the first four commandments which speak about our relationship to God. Jesus told us the way to obey these commandments: "...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind" (Matthew 22:37).

The last six of the Ten Commandments speak to us about our relationship to other people. The Bible speaks first of the very important relationship between parents and children. Our memory verse tells us, "Honour your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land which the Lord your God gives you" (Exodus 20:12).

Today we shall learn the meaning of this commandment.

PART ONE:

This commandment has a promise to God's people. It tells us that if we honour our parents our days will be long in the land which the Lord gives us. God was speaking to the children of Israel. He was showing them the way to have a strong nation and to continue to do well in the land which God gave them.

A family where children love, respect and obey their parents will be a strong family. A nation must have strong families in order to remain a strong nation. In every nation trouble has come when the families have become weak. Where

children do not love and respect and obey their parents at home there will be no respect or discipline in the nation.

Therefore, we can see how important it is to have strong families. Parents must teach their children the right ways. Parents must teach their children to honour both father and mother. Then we will have strong families and a strong nation.

PART TWO:

In some places special honour is given to the father, but not to the mother. God tells us to honour both father and mother. The father is the head of a Christian home, but the mother also should be respected and honoured and obeyed by the children.

In many homes today there is disobedience to parents. This is very bad. We are told in Ephesians 6:1, "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right." Again in Colossians 3:20 we read, "Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord."

Parents know more than children. In their years of living they have learned many things. Even if children have a better education than their parents, there are still many things about life that parents know because of their experience.

Parents must teach their children the right way to live. They must see that their children listen to them and obey them. God planned that parents should be in the place of authority in the home so that they can teach and guide their children in the best way.

Christian parents will look to God for wisdom. They will lead their children to love God and to follow Him in all they do.

PART THREE:

Sometimes children refuse to listen to parents. They do not wish to be told what to do. Sometimes they refuse to obey. Even a small child will sometimes look at his mother and say "No," when he is told to do something.

The discipline is necessary. Everyone has to learn to obey. A child who has his own way all the time will not be a happy child. When it is necessary, parents must discipline their children to cause them to obey.

If your child is sick, you force him to take the medicine the doctor gives, even though he may not want it. You do this because you know it will make him better. If your child wants to play close to the river, you move him to another place, even if he does not want to be moved. If your child started to drink paraffin, you would quickly stop him, even though he cried.

We do not let our children do things that will hurt them. We must not let them do things in any way. We must not let them go their own way when we know it is not best for them.

We must correct and discipline our children when they do wrong. Some children scream and quarrel to get their own way. These children will grow up to be adults who quarrel to have their own way all the time. In our homes we must teach our children to obey, and we must punish them for disobedience.

PART FOUR:

Parents must live in such manner that children will be happy to love and obey them. Parents must have real love for their children. They must show this love to their children. There are many children in the world who do not feel loved or wanted. Christian parents should love their children.

Sometimes parents have many children. They become very tired. There is not enough money for clothes and school fees and other necessary things. It is hard to show real love.

Christian parents should ask God for guidance. In every town there are Family Planning Clinics to help mothers and fathers plan better for their families. Christian parents should not be afraid to talk to these people or to the doctor and to ask for help for their family.

Christian parents should be just and reasonable. They should not love one child more than another child. They should be unselfish and sincere. They should be honest in all things. They should be sure that their discipline is fair.

Parents should put God in the first place in their lives and in their home. Without God we cannot teach our children the right ways. We need the Holy Spirit to lead us and to give us strength and wisdom. When children really see Jesus in us and in our daily lives, they will be happy to obey and honour their parents.

PROGRAMME LEADER:

Let us think seriously about our homes. Is there quarrelling? Is there jealousy? Is there confusion, anger, or hate?

Or is there love, respect, obedience, and trust? Is there love of God, peace and happiness?

We all want to have happy Christian homes. Let us dedicate ourselves to God to be the kind of mothers He wants us to be. Let us play for His guidance and His wisdom. Let us seek His will in all things we do.

PRAYER:

Pray that we may teach our children the ways of God.

Pray that we may be the right kind of parents.

PRAY TODAY FOR:

NOTE TO PRESIDENT:

PROGRAMME 7

Theme for the Quarter: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE
CHRISTIAN TODAY

Theme for Today: THE SACREDNESS OF HUMAN LIFE

Memory Verse:

"You shall not kill."

Exodus 20:13

PROGRAMME LEADER:

The law of God which we shall study today tells us that we should not take the life of another person. We may think we do not need to be told not to kill. Christian women would not even think of killing another person.

Perhaps this is true. However, murder never begins as murder. It begins in jealousy or envy or hatred, or the selfish desire to have first place. It begins in the heart of a person.

The Bible also tells us there are ways to kill a person other than just by taking his physical life. We shall learn the meaning of this commandment today.

PART ONE:

The commandment, "You shall not kill," does not mean we are not to kill animals, birds or fish for food. The Bible is speaking of killing another person, one who has a soul that will live forever. Animals do not have souls.

No one has the right to kill another person. Life comes from God. Only God can give life. Man is made in the image of God. Man has a soul. When a man kills another man he destroys the life that God gave. We are told plainly in the Word of God that we are not to destroy another human life.

There are different degrees of murder. Sometimes because of ugly attitudes of the heart, a person plans to murder another person. This may be because of jealousy or envy or hatred. He may think about it and plot much to kill that person.

Sometimes there is a sudden murder which has not been planned ahead of time. This may be due to quarrelling and fighting. Many times it is done when a person is drunk and becomes angry for some reason or another. Drinking leads to much killing.

Sometimes a parent will strike a child in anger and kill that child without really meaning to do so. Sometimes a woman will try to kill an unborn baby or a newborn baby which she does not want. Sometimes a person will take his own life.

All forms of killing a human person whom God created are wrong. When human life is destroyed, a sin is committed against God.

PART TWO:

We should not do anything that might lead to the death of another person. Let us read the words of Jesus. (Read Matthew 25:35-45.) Jesus tells us in these verses that when we deal with other people we are dealing with God Himself. What we do to others, we do to Him.

We must be careful that we do not lead another person into something that might cause his death. We must be very careful that we live righteous lives. We must not lead our weaker brother into temptation and sin.

One man had a son whom he loved. He would never have thought of killing that son. However, the man thought it was all right to drink beer. He never got drunk and he enjoyed his drinking. The son began to drink at home with his father. They had a good time.

But one day this son was out drinking with his friends. He got into a fight. He was so seriously injured that he died a few days later. The father said, "I killed my son. If I had never taught him to drink, he would be alive today."

"...As you did it to one of the least of these my brethren, you did it to me" (Matthew 25:40). These words of Jesus should stay in our hearts. They will help us to remember that we must not do anything to cause harm to another person.

PART THREE:

Jesus spoke about the commandment we are studying today. He said, "You have heard that it was said to the men of old, 'You shall not kill; and whoever kills shall be liable to judgment; But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother shall be liable to the council, and whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be liable to the hell of fire" (Matthew 5:21,22).

Jesus is saying that our inner thoughts and motives are very important. Our outward deeds come from our inner thoughts. We must not be angry with our brother or with anyone because anger is the seed which can turn to murder. When a person is angry with another person, the next step is often to hate that person. Hate may lead to murder.

We can kill a person without taking his life physically. To call him a fool, meaning a worthless nobody, and to treat him as worthless again and again is to kill his personality.

We can "kill" a person by destroying his character. When we gossip or speak lies about another, we may destroy his character. When we destroy a person's character we may destroy him or cause him to destroy himself.

The things we have in our hearts cause us to act as we do. Christians must have clean hearts and pure thoughts and motives. Hate, anger and bad talking are from the Devil and can never please God.

PART FOUR:

Another way we may break the law, "You shall not kill," is by just not caring about others. (This is indifference.) Jesus told a story in Luke 10:30-37 about a man who was beaten by thieves and was left to die by the roadside. Two men came by and saw him, but neither stopped to help the wounded man. They just passed by quickly and left him to die. They were as guilty as the men who beat him.

A third man came to the place. He saw the wounded man. He quickly stopped to help him. He washed his wounds and took him to a place where he could be cared for. He gave his own money to pay for the man's care.

Jesus asked, "Which of these three, do you think, proved neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?" And the right answer was given, "The one who showed mercy on him." Jesus said, "Go, and do likewise" (Luke 10:36,37).

Jesus told His followers that the first great commandment was to love God. Then He said that the second greatest commandment is, "...You shall love your neighbour as yourself" (Matthew 22:39).

We must allow God to remove hate, anger and indifference from our lives, but this is not enough. We must also have love for others which causes us to help those in need, to care for the wounded, to comfort the sad, to be friendly to the lonely. We must have the love of Christ Himself. This love must be shown by the way we treat all other people.

PROGRAMME LEADER:

Every person is important to God. He loved each one enough to send His Son to die for that one's sin. We, too, must love. We must love our families, friends, neighbours and fellow Christians, but not only these. We must also love our enemies and those who do us harm and treat us wrongly.

We must show our love by our actions. The Bible says to us, "...Let us not love in word or speech but in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18).

PRAYER:

Thank God for His great love for all people everywhere.
Pray for God's love to be in us.

PRAY TODAY FOR:

NOTE TO PRESIDENT:

PROGRAMME 8

Theme for the Quarter: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE
CHRISTIAN TODAY

Theme for Today: THE IMPORTANCE OF PURITY

Memory Verse:

"You shall not commit adultery."

Exodus 20:14

PROGRAMME LEADER:

The commandment which we shall study today tells us, "You shall not commit adultery." Adultery is the sin of having sexual relations outside of marriage. This commandment forbids adultery. It also means all other kinds of impurity. Husbands, wives and those who are unmarried can all be guilty of adultery.

Today many people laugh at God's rules about purity. But we shall see that the Word of God is plain as to the pure lives that Christians must live. His laws must be kept if we are to have strong homes and strong churches.

Let us see what the Bible says to us today about purity.

PART ONE:

(Read Matthew 19:4-6.)

God gave marriage as a holy and permanent union between one man and one woman. God created a man and a woman. He made them different so that together they could be one.

It is God's plan that a man will leave his father and mother and take a wife. It is God's plan that the man and his wife should become one flesh. Marriage is a holy relationship. God wants us to love and honour our partners.

Adultery is the sin of the man who makes love to another man's wife when her husband is away. It is the sin of the wife who will have a 'man friend' as well as her husband. It is the sin of the husband who leaves his wife and family to

take another woman. Or the wife's sins who runs away with another man. It is the sin of the woman who gives her body to men for money.

Adultery is SIN. The Bible says, "He who commits adultery has no sense; he who does it destroys himself" (Proverbs 6:32).

PART TWO:

God's plan was for one man to be married to one woman until they are parted by death. It is a sin for a man to take two or more wives. It causes much trouble and jealousy in the home. It hurts both children and parents.

It is also a sin for a man to put away his wife, to divorce her, or for a woman to divorce her husband. Jesus said, "...Whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery" (Matthew 19:9).

God loves us. He wants us to have the best kind of life. Adultery leaves us with feelings of guilt and fear. It leads to unhappiness and sometimes even to death itself.

In the time of the Old Testament adultery was a very serious sin. Those who committed adultery were punished by death. The Old Testament law says, "If a man commits adultery... both the adulterer and the adulteress shall be put to death" (Leviticus 20:10).

The Bible says an adulterer cannot inherit the Kingdom of God. (Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.) Adultery is a terrible sin. However, the Bible tells us that if an adulterer or any sinner repents and trusts Christ, this sinful habit and its guilt will be taken away forever.

The person who holds on to this sin is condemned, for God is holy. He tells us that we also must be holy. The Bible says, "...Be ye holy; for I am the Lord your God" (Leviticus 20:7).

PART THREE:

Jesus spoke concerning this commandment. Let us read what He said about it. (Read Matthew 5:27-32.)

Jesus said that the way we feel in our hearts toward another person can cause us to be guilty. Adultery begins with wrong desires in the mind and heart. Jesus said, "...Every one who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28). We must keep our hearts pure, as well as our bodies.

We must be careful that we do nothing to tempt another to sin. Women can dress in ways that tempt men to desire their bodies. This is wrong.

Today there are many books, songs and pictures which cause men and women to be filled with wrong desires and lust. The person who continually thinks of immorality sins in his heart. Tomorrow we may do what we are only thinking about today.

We must seek friends who are good and holy. We must not go to places of sin. We must not listen to unclean talk. We must not tell filthy stories.

If we are Christians, our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit. We must keep them pure and clean. We must not be guilty of committing adultery. We must be guilty of unclean desires or unclean speech or unclean thoughts. We must live holy lives.

PART FOUR:

One day a woman caught committing adultery was brought to Jesus. The self-righteous religious leaders thought Jesus would condemn her for her great sin. It was their law that one guilty of adultery should be stoned to death. But Jesus looked at them and said, "...Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7).

One by one the people went away. Then Jesus said to the woman, "...Go, and do not sin again" (John 8:11). There is forgiveness for one who has committed the sin of adultery. The Bible tells us, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just, and will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

It is much better, however, never to have committed this sin. There is a way that we can keep from falling into the sin of adultery and impure living. The Bible says, "...Walk by the Spirit, and do not gratify the desires of the flesh" (Galatians 5:16). If our day by day walk is controlled by the Holy Spirit, we will not be guilty of committing sins of uncleanness.

We can be controlled by the Holy Spirit. First, we must confess all known sin in our lives, giving all of ourselves to Jesus. Then we must ask the Holy Spirit to control our lives. Then we must seek to follow His will day by day.

PROGRAMME LEADER:

"You shall not commit adultery." Many people today are breaking this commandment. Christians must live clean, pure lives. We must not sin by being impure in our living or in our thinking.

We must also teach our children that marriage is holy and sacred. We must teach them that adultery is a sin against God.

PRAYER:

Pray that any who have sinned by committing adultery may confess their sin and be forgiven.

Pray that we all may live holy lives.

PRAY TODAY FOR:

NOTE TO PRESIDENT:

PROGRAMME 9

Theme for the Quarter: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE
CHRISTIAN TODAY

Theme for Today: YOU SHALL NOT STEAL

Memory Verse:

"You shall not steal."

Exodus 20:15

PROGRAMME LEADER:

The commandment we shall study today has to do with honesty. It teaches us that we must be honest with ourselves and with others. "You shall not steal," God says to us.

To steal means to take something that belongs to someone else. The Bible says stealing is a sin.

Today we shall learn what this commandment means for us.

PART ONE:

Who is a thief? The thief says, "Only a fool will work for his living. If you are clever you can get what you want without work."

A thief may be a burglar or a pick-pocket or a bag-snatcher. A thief may be a car thief or a bicycle thief. He may forge people's names. He may take things from his employer or cheat his employer. He may carry a gun to force people to give him what he wants. He may beat people, take their money and leave them to suffer.

Always the thief thinks he is very clever. He thinks he can find much money without working for it. He makes others poor to get gain himself. He is like the ticks on the ox that suck its blood and make it weak. He lives off someone else.

Thieves are selfish and greedy. They do no good to anyone. Stealing usually leads to lying and violence. The thief must always live in fear, for he is afraid he will be found out. The usual end of a thief is that he is caught and goes to prison.

PART TWO:

Why do people steal? Sometimes one will steal because he is hungry and he does not know anyone who will help him. Sometimes one steals because he has bad friends who tempt him to do wrong with them. Many have been persuaded to help with a robbery because they are too weak to say "No."

Some people steal from envy. They cannot bear to see other people doing well. They cannot bear to see others have something they want and do not have.

Some steal because of laziness. It seems so easy. A person says, "Why should I work? I can get what I want. I can have a good time. I can have smart clothes and drinks. I can have friends and money."

Some think to themselves, "I have so little and here is much. It is all right for me to take just a small bit."

It is the Devil who tells a person these things. Stealing is a sin against God. Satan came to tempt Jesus to sin when He was in the wilderness and was very hungry. Jesus refused even to listen to Satan. He said to him, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4).

The Bible is very plain. "You shall not steal." In the eyes of God there is no good reason for disobeying His Word.

PART THREE:

We know God does not ever want a child or any other person to suffer because of hunger or other need. However,

He wants us to use only honest ways of gaining our physical needs.

In Matthew, chapters 5 and 6, we are given the words Jesus spoke to many people who were following Him. He said that God knows all the physical needs we have. Let us listen to Jesus' words:

"...Do not be anxious about your life, what you shall eat or what you shall drink, nor about your body, what you shall put on. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?

"And which of you by being anxious can add one cubit to his span of life? And why are you anxious about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

"But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith? Therefore do not be anxious, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the Gentiles seek all these things; and your heavenly Father knows that you need them all.

"But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things shall be yours as well" (Matthew 6:25-33).

If we trust God and put Him first, God has promised to meet all our needs according to His love and His will. We must follow His way. We must not disobey His commandment. He will supply every need that we have.

PART FOUR:

There are many ways of disobeying this commandment, "You shall not steal." A merchant can steal from his customers when he does not give them full value. Perhaps he charges for 2 pounds of meat but gives only one and one-half pounds. A woman selling her vegetables can put the bad ones on the bottom so they cannot be seen. This is dishonest and it is sin.

Cheating at school or in games is a form of stealing. One can steal by paying a very low and unfair wage. All forms of dishonesty are wrong.

In the Bible we are told of Zaccheus. He was a thief because he charged the people too much tax money and then kept the extra money for himself. He did not see that this was wrong. It was the way in which he earned his living. Then one day Zaccheus met Jesus. He believed in Him. Immediately he became a new man. He said, "...Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold" (Luke 19:8).

If we really follow Jesus, we cannot continue to be dishonest. The Apostle Paul said, "Let the thief no longer steal..." (Ephesians 4:28). If we have stolen, we must repay. We must make things right in the sight of God and of man. Then we must never again be dishonest.

PROGRAMME LEADER:

Jesus said, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" (John 14:15). Honesty is the road to true happiness. We must be honest with ourselves and with others.

We also must be honest with God. The Bible says we rob God if we do not give our tithes to God. (Read Malachi 3:8-10.) Many Christians in our churches are dishonest by not giving their tithes.

Let us consider seriously whether we are honest in all ways.

PRAYER:

Pray that God may help us to cleanse our hearts and lives of all dishonesty. Pray that Christians may see the need to give God their tithes and to support their churches.

PRAY TODAY FOR:

NOTE TO PRESIDENT:

PROGRAMME 10

Theme for the Quarter: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE
CHRISTIAN TODAY

Theme for Today: THE RIGHT USE OF THE TONGUE

Memory Verse:

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbour."

Exodus 20:16

PROGRAMME LEADER:

The commandment which we study today tells us not to bear false witness. This means we are not to speak lies. We could say this commandment means: You shall tell the truth at all times, everywhere.

This rule is necessary for our happiness and our Christian witness. The Word of God has much to say about our tongues. Proverbs 6:16-19 tells us, "There are six things which the Lord hates, seven which are an abomination to him: haughty eyes, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, a heart that devises wicked plans, feet that make haste to run to evil, a false witness who breathes out lies, and a man who sows discord among brothers."

God hates lying, in whatever way it is done.

PART ONE:

Giving false witness may be done in a court of law. Some people will do this to help a friend or a brother. This is very evil and is sin against God. If we are called to testify in court, we must speak only what we know to be the truth.

Some people try to pay a person to lie for them in court. At the trial of Jesus false witnesses who had been paid by the enemies of Jesus spoke against Him. God says in His Word that He hates "a false witness who breathes out lies" (Proverbs 6:19).

Sometimes a person can be silent and still be a false witness. We may hear someone accuse another person. When we listen, we may know that this charge is not true. But if we want the person to suffer, we may remain silent. We may hear gossip and know it is a lie, and we remain silent. If we do these things we give a false witness. We may cause another to suffer when we should have told the truth. This is wrong.

We can also be guilty of being a false witness when we speak only part of the truth. We can give a false picture of what happened by telling a half-truth. Some people change the truth just a little to make it look like a different thing.

All these ways of being a false witness are wrong. They are sin against God.

PART TWO:

We can see parents who teach their own children to practise lying. They do not say, "It is all right to lie." They teach lying by their example, by what they do. Many times children go to school with a false report. It may be a false age. It may be a false excuse for not paying school fees. It may be a false excuse for the child's absence from school.

Children know whether or not their parents speak the truth. Sometimes a parent will have a child to lie for him. Children cannot learn to be honest and to speak the truth if parents do things like this.

Little children do sometimes tell lies. Usually they mean no harm. They lie to cover up a wrong they have done. They may lie to keep a parent from finding out what they do not wish him to know. Children must be corrected when they lie. They must be taught to tell only the truth.

Christian parents must never lie. We must speak only truth. We must teach our children that God forbids lying. It is sin. We must teach our children to tell the truth at all times.

PART THREE:

Lying goes back to the Garden of Eden. The Devil in the form of a serpent lied to Adam and Eve. Eve believed the lie of Satan. She disobeyed God and the first sin entered the world.

Satan is the source of all lies. He is called the father of lies. In John 8:44 Jesus said, "...The devil...has nothing to do with the truth, because there is no truth in him...He is a liar and the father of lies."

Some people lie to escape the consequences of the truth. Some lie because of pride. They are too proud to tell the truth. Some lie because it is their nature to do so. They show the kind of character they have. A lying character comes from Satan.

Some lie to be different, to get attention, or to get sympathy. Some lie to put themselves in a good light and to put others in a bad light. Some people lie so much they do not know how to tell the truth anymore. One lie leads to another and so they go on lying until they do not seem to be able to tell what is true and what is not true. For them the truth is mixed up with what is not true.

All the reasons for lying are due to one thing--SIN. We may lie to escape the judgment of men, but "...the wages of sin is death..." (Romans 3:23). One day we will have to face the judgment of God.

PART FOUR:

One way of lying and giving false witness is slander. This means to tell things which are not true in order to ruin the good name of another person. The Word of God says, "He who conceals hatred has lying lips, and he who utters slander is a fool" (Proverbs 10:18). These are strong words, but they are the words of God.

Harmful gossip may lead to slander. Tale-bearing and whisperings against other people may also lead to slander. Lying about others stirs up trouble. It causes bitter feelings. Lying causes us to lose respect for the liar. It is a serious matter.

Jesus said, "...For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matthew 12:34). Speaking false words comes from a false heart. All sin begins with a heart that is not right with God. If our hearts are filled with the goodness and love of God, they will also be filled with love and goodness toward other people.

If we have real love in our hearts for others, we cannot bear false witness against them. We must guard our hearts at all times. We must speak only truth.

PROGRAMME LEADER:

Let us examine our lives today. Let us ask ourselves if we are disobeying God's commandment. "You shall not bear false witness."

A Christian should be like Christ. Jesus said, "I am... the truth" (John 14:6). As Christians we should speak truth because Christ lives in us. If we let Him control our lives, we will speak the truth because He is truth.

PRAYER:

Pray that we may see that lying is a sin.

Pray that we may let Christ have control of our lives and that we may be filled with goodness and truth.

PRAY TODAY FOR:

NOTE TO PRESIDENT:

PROGRAMME 11

Theme for the Quarter: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND THE
CHRISTIAN TODAY

Theme for Today: DESIRE FOR WRONG THINGS

Memory Verse:

"You shall not covet."

Exodus 20:17

PROGRAMME LEADER:

(Read all of Exodus 20:17 from your Bible.)

God's Word tells us that we must never covet anything that belongs to another person. To covet means to lust after something which one does not possess and cannot lawfully possess.

The other commandments forbid specific acts of sin. This commandment forbids the desire to sin. Covetousness is selfish desire in the heart. It comes from envy and greed and selfishness. The person who covets things he cannot have is showing his lack of faith in God.

Today we shall learn what God says about this sin of covetousness.

PART ONE:

One kind of covetousness is to desire or long after something to which we have no right. We are not to desire to have things which belong to our neighbour--his property, his animals, his servants, his wife.

In the Old Testament we are told about King Ahab. (This story is in 1 Kings 21.) King Ahab wanted very much a vineyard which belonged to a man named Naboth. Naboth refused to sell the vineyard to the king. Lust and covetousness filled the heart of King Ahab. He refused to eat. Then Jezebel, the king's wife, arranged to have false witnesses testify against Naboth. The lies of the false witnesses were believed and Naboth was stoned to death. Then King Ahab took Naboth's vineyard.

David's sin of adultery began also with covetousness. David looked at Bathsheba, who was another man's wife. He wanted her for his own. This wrong desire in his heart was so strong that it led David to commit adultery. Then to cover his sin, David had Bathsheba's husband sent to battle where he would be killed. (This story is in 2 Samuel 11:1-27.)

These sins of stealing, lying, murder and adultery all began with a wrong desire in the heart for something belonging to another. Covetousness in the heart leads to other terrible sins. This is why we must not desire things to which we have no right.

PART TWO:

To desire more than one needs, more than one can possibly use, is also covetousness. Today people want more and more things. It is not wrong to want to have things. But it is wrong to desire things above all else.

Many people today are putting the things of this world above spiritual things. Jesus said, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:19-21).

Many Christians in our churches have money in their savings accounts, but they refuse to pay the tithe which belongs to God. This is because their hearts' desire is to have money more than to serve God. We will never have strong churches until Christians desire to serve God above all else. Christians must desire to put God first, even above their money. As long as we rob God of the tithes which are His, our churches will remain weak. Christians will remain weak because their hearts are where their treasures are.

God said to one man who loved his money and the things which he had more than he loved God, "...Fool! This night your soul is required of you; and the things you have prepared, whose will they be? So is he who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (Luke 12:20,21).

PART THREE:

Today many people try to get something for nothing. This is another way of breaking the commandment of God, "You shall not covet." Why do people gamble? It is because of a selfish desire to get the good things of life without having to give anything in return.

At cards or dice men often gamble away the money which is needed by their families for food and clothes. Others spend money at the football pools or the lotteries while their wives and children are in need. All are trying to get something for nothing.

Gambling is not good. It is a selfish way of throwing away money. God is not pleased with this.

Jesus said, "...Take heed, and beware of covetousness; for a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions" (Luke 12:15). Paul said that covetousness is idolatry (Colossians 3:5). This is so because the person who covets puts things and his own selfish desires above God. The thing he desires so much becomes an idol for him.

The best way of life is in giving, not getting. We must ask God to remove all the covetousness out of our lives.

PART FOUR:

All of us have many desires. How can we keep ourselves from the sin of covetousness?

One thing we can do is to refuse to fix our attention on things which are forbidden. Refuse to look longingly at that which you cannot have. Refuse to even think about those things which you cannot have.

Another thing we can do is to surrender ourselves to Jesus Christ. When Christ has first place in our lives, the things of the world do not seem important any more.

Covetousness is a sin of the heart. It is the result of selfishness. God wants to have control over every part of us, even our inner thoughts and the desires of our hearts. Selfishness grows in the heart that lacks love. We are told in the Bible that we are to love our neighbours as we love ourselves (Matthew 22:39).

Real love for others will keep us from many sins. Real love for others will keep us from covetousness. If we try to see how much we can give to others and how we can help others, we will find there is no time for selfish desires in our lives.

PROGRAMME LEADER:

This quarter we have studied all of the Ten Commandments. It is important that we keep God's laws.

Jesus was asked about the commandments. He said, "...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, You shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets" (Matthew 22:37-40).

If we love God with all our hearts and souls and minds, then we will love our neighbours as we love ourselves. Then it will be easy to keep the commandments God has given us.