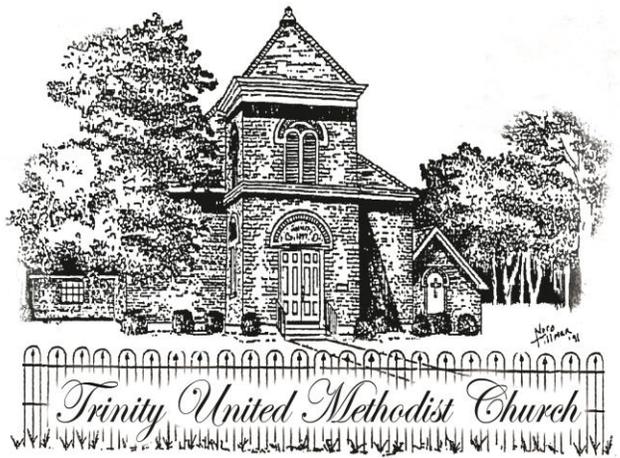




# Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter

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## Biblical Guides to Living The Ten Commandments (Part 2)

*Then God spoke all these words... Exodus 20:1 NRSV*

In the last Newsletter I focused on the first four of the Ten Commandments. The first four deal with our relationship to God. The remaining six commandments deal with our relationship to one another and focus on the principle ways we seem to go astray.

***<sup>12</sup> Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. Exodus 20:12***

Understanding the scope of this commandment starts by looking at the Hebrew word 'kabbed' that is translated 'Honor.' As this word is used in other parts of the Old Testament it means extending extravagant respect, obedience, wealth, power, love and reverence. It is often used to describe what God does for those God favors. For example:

*<sup>13</sup> I [God] give you [Solomon] also what you have not asked, both riches and honor all your life; 1 Kings 3:13*

*<sup>12</sup> Riches and honor come from you, and you rule over all. In your hand are power and might; and it is in your hand to make great and to give strength to all. <sup>13</sup> And now, our God, we give thanks to you and praise your glorious name. 1 Chron 29:12-13*

*<sup>5</sup> Yet you [God] have made them [human beings] a little lower than God, and crowned them with glory and honor. Ps 8:5*

The command to honor is a command to show the greatest respect, generosity, love and care that is within our power. Such honor can be vitally important as our parents age and are unable to care for themselves. Note also that, although the society of Israel was patriarchal, the command to the people was to honor both parents equally. How long should we honor our parents? Although some seem confused about the commandment, it was not directed at minor children as much as to adult children. We are to honor our parents as long as we live.

In present day context it would be remiss if we did not consider the effect that parental abuse and neglect has on the relationship between parent and child. It may be difficult, or impossible, for a child to get

beyond the feelings of anger, hurt and abandonment attendant to such treatment. Nevertheless, as difficult as that situation is, scripture sets the standard God asks us to follow. Part of our discipleship journey is to deal with such feelings to the best of our ability, trusting in God to bring healing to the relationship. That does not mean opening ourselves to further hurt or abuse.

*<sup>13</sup> You shall not murder. Exodus 20.13 NRSV*

*<sup>13</sup> Thou shalt not kill. Exodus 20.13 KJV*

The two translations of this passage above highlight the principle area of debate over this commandment. Is the commandment aimed at stopping premeditated murder or any taking of human life? There are examples in scripture of punishment for both premeditated killing and unintentional killing. Thus, King Ahab was sentenced to death by God for the killing of Naboth for the purpose of stealing his land. 1 Kings 21:17 et seq. Likewise, the law provided for the death penalty in cases of what our society would classify as second degree murder or manslaughter. For example:

*<sup>20</sup> Likewise, if someone pushes another from hatred, or hurls something at another, lying in wait, and death ensues, <sup>21</sup> or in enmity strikes another with the hand, and death ensues, then the one who struck the blow shall be put to death; that person is a murderer; the avenger of blood shall put the murderer to death, when they meet. Numbers 35:20-21 NRSV*

For negligent killing, God commanded that sanctuary cities be established to which someone guilty of causing a negligent death could flee. See, e.g. Deut. 4:41-42.

This commandment often comes up in connection with arguments over the death penalty. Clearly scripture contemplates that society can act to punish killing by taking the life of the perpetrator. However, the reality is that, in order to have capital punishment as an option we must accept that our justice system, organized and run by fallible human beings, will make mistakes. Innocent people will be executed and that is not something sanctioned by scripture. We cannot have capital punishment without accepting the cost that some number of innocent people will be executed.

The Hebrew word being translated here, ‘*râtsach*,’ is not used in the bible to describe the killing taking place in war. However, that does not necessarily provide an answer to the question of whether killing in war is exempted from the commandment. Following World War II, for instance, the victorious nations determined that there were rules against killing in war that applied to nations. Several German and Japanese generals were executed or imprisoned for the act of directing their troops in what was determined to be a war of aggression. Nor are these rules easy to discern. For example, the United States, following 9/11, has used air strikes to assassinate terrorists even though everyone knew beforehand that innocent civilians were almost certainly going to be killed in those strikes as well. In contrast, ground troops who, after being ambushed in a village, killed innocent civilians along with combatants in an apparent act of rage, grief over fallen comrades and fear have been court-martialed. The decision to make the air-strike is part of a plan formulated dispassionately far removed from the heat of battle. The decision of the ground troops is made in the heat of battle and in the cloud of warfare. One may result in commendations while the other may result in court-martial. It is not only Christians who struggle over the nature of killing attendant to war.

In our struggle to understand and apply this commandment it is best to begin with the understanding that God created humankind in the image of God and that life is not ours to take. As we stand against evil in this world the taking of life may be the inevitable result. The innocent should be protected and that may mean employing violence and the attendant loss of life. However, we can never assume that our conduct of taking

lives is blessed by God. It is something that we should always mourn and for which we should ask forgiveness. The Gospel commands us to always seek a path that does not involve the taking of human life.

#### **<sup>14</sup> You shall not commit adultery. Exodus 20:14**

An understanding of the seriousness of adultery from a biblical perspective should proceed from the use of the term to describe our relationship to God. Throughout scripture, adultery is used to describe the nature and effect of apostasy, the worship of other Gods. For example, the Book of Hosea uses the adultery of Hosea's wife Gomer as a metaphor for Israel's faithless relationship to God.

Putting aside for the moment issues of same gender marriages, the biblical concept of marriage involved mutual commitments to create something new. Thus:

*<sup>24</sup> Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. Gen 2:24*

Marriage created a family unit that was central to the stability of society. This was true even though, at times, biblical marriage included what we would call polygamy. Adultery can weaken and destroy that unit. The same is true today. In our media drenched world we are constantly reminded of the damage caused to men, women and children in marriages rocked by the adulterous conduct of a spouse.

The biblical understanding of adultery was much more generous to men than women. A married man only committed adultery when he had relations with a married woman. A married woman committed adultery when she had relations with any man not her husband. Our modern understanding of adultery cannot credit such an interpretation without tearing marriages apart. Relations by either spouse outside the marriage are adulterous.

#### **<sup>15</sup> You shall not steal. Exodus 20:15**

When contemplating why stealing is one of the 'Big Ten' consider this passage:

*<sup>17</sup> Do not say to yourself, "My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth." <sup>18</sup> But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you power to get wealth, so that he may confirm his covenant that he swore to your ancestors, as he is doing today. Deut 8:17-18.*

God makes it possible to acquire wealth and possessions. When we steal, we not only sin against the person who worked for and acquired the thing but also against God who gave that person the ability to acquire his wealth. The word translated 'steal' includes concepts of taking something secretly or by stealth or deceit. For example, in Deuteronomy 25:13-16 you find the following:

*<sup>13</sup> You shall not have in your bag two kinds of weights, large and small. <sup>14</sup> You shall not have in your house two kinds of measures, large and small. <sup>15</sup> You shall have only a full and honest weight; you shall have only a full and honest measure, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. <sup>16</sup> For all who do such things, all who act dishonestly, are abhorrent to the LORD your God.*

The prophets extended the concept of stealing to the rich using their God given power to acquire wealth in order to oppress the poor. Thus in Amos 8:4-7:

*<sup>4</sup> Hear this, you that trample on the needy,*

*and bring to ruin the poor of the land,*  
<sup>5</sup> *saying, "When will the new moon be over*  
*so that we may sell grain;*  
*and the sabbath,*  
*so that we may offer wheat for sale?*  
*We will make the ephah small and the shekel great,*  
*and practice deceit with false balances,*  
<sup>6</sup> *buying the poor for silver*  
*and the needy for a pair of sandals,*  
*and selling the sweepings of the wheat."*  
<sup>7</sup> *The LORD has sworn by the pride of Jacob:*  
*Surely I will never forget any of their deeds.*

Or James 5:1-6:

*Come now, you rich people, weep and wail for the miseries that are coming to you.* <sup>2</sup> *Your riches have*  
*rotted, and your clothes are moth-eaten.* <sup>3</sup> *Your gold and silver have rusted, and their rust will be*  
*evidence against you, and it will eat your flesh like fire. You have laid up treasure for the last days.*  
<sup>4</sup> *Listen! The wages of the laborers who mowed your fields, which you kept back by fraud, cry out, and*  
*the cries of the harvesters have reached the ears of the Lord of hosts.* <sup>5</sup> *You have lived on the earth in*  
*luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter.* <sup>6</sup> *You have condemned and*  
*murdered the righteous one, who does not resist you.*

Stealing, whether through theft or by cheating your employees or others, is harmful to the owner and disrespectful to our relationship to God.

***<sup>16</sup> You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. Exodus 20:16***

In the days before CSI Israel, the principle evidence provided in court cases was the testimony of eye witnesses. Generally, it took two witnesses to convict someone of a crime. For example, in the case of Naboth's Vineyard, Ahab's wife Jezebel arranged for two 'scoundrels' to give false testimony against Naboth accusing him of treason. 1 Kings 21:8-14. Being found guilty of perjury could end with the false witness receiving the punishment he had planned for the victim. Deut. 19:15-19. False witness also perverts Justice and scripture makes clear that justice is a primary concern for God.

Obviously, false witness need not be made in court. The later biblical understanding of this commandment, and our own, includes all false statements that can cause harm to another.

***<sup>17</sup> You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. Exodus 20:17***

As you consider this commandment, it might be helpful to reflect on the experience of Eve before she decides to break the command of God and eat of the forbidden fruit:

<sup>6</sup> *So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree*  
*was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate; and she also gave some to her husband, who*  
*was with her, and he ate.*

Adam and Eve had at their disposal a whole garden filled with fruits that were “good for food” and “a delight to the eyes.” Yet Eve has taken note of the fruit of this tree. I have always believed that we are to understand that this was not the first time Eve had considered eating the fruit of this tree. The snake may have given her the push that sent her over the edge but I suspect that she often considered eating the fruit. She desired the fruit; she coveted the fruit.

Desiring something is not a bad thing. But desire can lead us into sin when what we desire belongs to another. This is what Jesus was speaking about when he spoke of our desires leading us to sin. Matthew 5:27-30. We have taken the first steps toward adultery when we covet another’s spouse. That was certainly King David’s experience with Bathsheba. 1 Kings 11:1-5. Desiring the possessions of another is the first step in stealing. Our desire to possess something can so overpower our minds that we will do anything to satisfy that desire. God warns Cain that his desire to have what Able has, God’s favor, can lead him to sin:

*<sup>6</sup> The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? <sup>7</sup> If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is lurking at the door; its desire is for you, but you must master it.” Genesis 4:6-7.*

Often, the “sin lurking at our door” is some form of desire to have what another has. For that reason, I think, it is included in the Ten Commandments.

There are many other scriptures that give us guidance for living. From time to time we’ll look at some of them in greater detail.

## **Vacation Bible School at Trinity**

**VBS will be held Aug 1st and 2nd (Friday and Saturday) with a celebration during the church service on Aug 3 (also first Sunday).**

We’ll meet Friday night 6pm - 8:30 pm, Saturday morning 9am - 11:30 am and then Sunday worship at 11am. If you have not yet volunteered, please make Jeanne, Julia or Rev. Meaker aware of your interest in participating.

As a part of our VBS plans, our congregation will be providing school supplies for Williamson County children. We will be filling backpacks with index cards, composition notebooks, 3x5 cards. We are collecting these items now.

We will also be collecting items for fuel bags through Grace Works. Those items include: 8oz milk boxes - non refrigerated, Easy Mac, Microwaveable meat meals, cereals, canned/package meat with crackers. These are all individual servings, please.

Thank you for participating in this important effort.

## Pilgrimage to the Holy Land

Jeanne and I would like you to join us this February on a Pilgrimage to the Holy Land. We will leave on February 16 for nine days of Biblical discovery, returning on February 25th. We will be part of a larger group of primarily United Methodists from all over Middle and West Tennessee. This is a special tour organized by Bishop William McAlilly, the Bishop for the Tennessee and Memphis Conferences.

I first visited the Holy Land in 2000. Jeanne and I went back in 2005 and again in 2012. Before I went the first time I was somewhat cynical about the upcoming experience. I didn't think that it would have much of an effect on me. But, when you stand on the shores of the Sea of Galilee, or travel to the Synagogue at Capernaum, you suddenly realize that you are likely walking ground that Christ walked. When you pray among the Olive trees in Gethsemane, stand in the prison cell contained in the House of Caiaphas, or see the name of Pilate inscribed on a monument in Caesarea, the events surrounding the imprisonment, trial and passion of Christ take on new meaning; a new reality.

Brochures for the trip, including exact costs and travel itineraries, are available in my office. I'll also schedule a time this summer to share photographs taken on my previous trips to Israel and answer questions about the trip. I hope you will prayerfully consider participating in this faith building experience.

## The Poverty and Justice Bible

*The Poverty & Justice Bible* is a bible that highlights each passage of scripture that deals with the issues of poverty and justice. There are more than 2000 references in scripture to poverty and justice, as opposed to four or five on such controversial subjects as homosexual acts or marriage. Yet many Christians seem to think that helping the poor is a pointless and even harmful act. As an on-going part of this newsletter, I will be providing citations to passages from the Old and New Testaments each week that deal with what scripture tells us about poverty and justice. If you are interested in learning more about *The Poverty & Justice Bible* you can check on Amazon.com or go to [www.Justicebible.org](http://www.Justicebible.org).

*<sup>32</sup> The LORD doesn't like  
anyone who is dishonest,  
but he lets good people  
be his friends.*

*<sup>33</sup> He places a curse on the home  
of everyone who is evil,  
but he blesses the home  
of every good person. Proverbs 3:32-33 CEV*

Proverbs is often focused upon obtaining the blessing of God for good behavior and warning of God's curses for evil behavior. Many people, to some extent justly, question that the world works in this way. Sometimes it seems that those who do everything contrary to scripture are prosperous and happy while those who seek to live lives of righteousness, i.e. in right relationship to God, rarely seem to live in prosperity. If you feel that God has not blessed a life of righteousness perhaps the problem is in your definition of what constitutes a blessed life. I've known many people with very little in material wealth who nevertheless feel that their lives have been blessed. I've also known some very wealthy people who seem to believe that they have not been blessed by God in any way. In the final analysis it comes down to how you intend to live your life.

*<sup>31</sup> Don't worry and ask yourselves, "Will we have anything to eat? Will we have anything to drink? Will we have any clothes to wear?" <sup>32</sup> Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father in heaven knows that you need all of these. <sup>33</sup> But more than anything else, put God's work first and do what he wants. Then the other things will be yours as well.*

*<sup>34</sup> Don't worry about tomorrow. It will take care of itself. You have enough to worry about today.*

*Matthew 6:31-34 CEV*

In Chapters 5 and 6 of Matthew, Jesus speaks of the blessing of living a righteous life. He sums up much of that teaching in the passage cited above. Each and every day we are called to seek to live righteous lives; lives focused upon God and the welfare of each other. That is a difficult message in a society like ours that insists that we focus almost exclusively upon looking after ourselves and letting others do the same.

## **Bible Study**

Our Thursday morning Bible study will take a break for the month of July and the first two weeks in August. We will continue with the study of 1 Samuel on August 21<sup>st</sup> at 10:30 AM.

I believe that the study of scriptures with other Christians is an essential part of our journey as Disciples. If you would like to be a part of a bible study at another time, during the day or evening, please contact me. If we can interest four or five people in gathering at a particular time I would be glad to lead another study.

## **Still Seeking People Interested in Disciple Bible Study**

Disciple Bible Study is a 32 week study of the bible from Genesis to Revelation. It has guided many people to a deeper understanding of scripture and their faith over the years. Many in the Church have completed this study.

I have been approached by two people who would be interested in a Disciple Bible Study to meet from 7:00 to 9:00 on Thursday evenings. If needed, we will seek to provide child care for this study. I would like to get at least five or more people to participate in this study. If you have considered undertaking a study of the bible before, this is a wonderful opportunity. If you are interested in being a part of this group, please contact me.

## **Prayer Ministry**

The following persons have agreed to be part of the prayer ministry at Trinity UMC:

Elva Beard	Sarah Jordan	Kenneth Stevens	Judy Richardson
Larry Eastwood	Mac McAfee	Patricia Stevens	Charles Wilson
Leslie Eastwood	Rachel Newman	Sam Richardson	

The members of the prayer ministry of Trinity United Methodist church covenant with one another to pray daily for:

- Those concerns on the prayer list of the Church and for healing of body and spirit for all persons listed;

- For each ministry of the church that each ministry would work to bring the Gospel to those within our community and most especially to bring the Gospel to those who have not yet accepted Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior;
- For all the members of the Trinity UMC community that they be led and enabled to live as the Body of Christ;
- For our local community and all its needs, especially for those who are struggling with the burden of poverty;
- For our nation and our world that God help lead the people of the world to live in peace with God's Kingdom.

If you would like to be a part of this ministry (or if you have already spoken to me about it and were inadvertently left off the list) please let me know and I will see that you are added.

### Up-Coming Sermons

**July 20<sup>th</sup>: Sermon: *Do You Know A Weed When You see It?*** My wife's preference is that I not weed any garden she plants because I'm certain to pull out something that is not a weed. Who knew that I could be so in sync with Jesus? My texts are Genesis 28:10–19a and Matthew 13:24–30.

**July 27<sup>th</sup>: Sermon: *The Kingdom of Heaven is Like a Weed, or Maybe Moldy Bread.*** Some of the most fascinating, and confusing, passages in the New Testament involve Jesus' descriptions of the Kingdom of Heaven or Kingdom of God. Jesus is speaking about how our world should work if we are focused on living God centered lives. My texts are Hosea 11:1-9 and Matthew 13:31–33, 44–52.

### Worship Leaders Schedule

#### July 20

Julia Moore, **Liturgist**

Betty & Herb Haynes, **Greeters**

Sam Richardson & Linda Robinson, **Ushers**

#### July 27

Rodger Klein, **Liturgist**

Linda Robinson & Pat Moran, **Greeters**

Marty Bauguess & Tommy Cotton, **Ushers**

### Announcements

**Program Council Meeting July 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM.** We will be discussing final preparations for the VBS as well as plans for this Fall and the Advent season. Please make every effort to attend.

There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board for volunteers to sign up to assist in the nursery or Sunday school. Please sign up for one or more Sunday's. Thank you for being a part of this vital ministry of our church.

There are sign-up lists on the Bulletin Board for volunteers who will prepare communion as well as hosting the First Sunday meal. Please sign up!

**July Birthdays**

**Nanette Crowell, Mac McAfee, Leslie Eastwood, Linda Robinson, Renita Hartsock**

**Happy Birthday to each of you!**