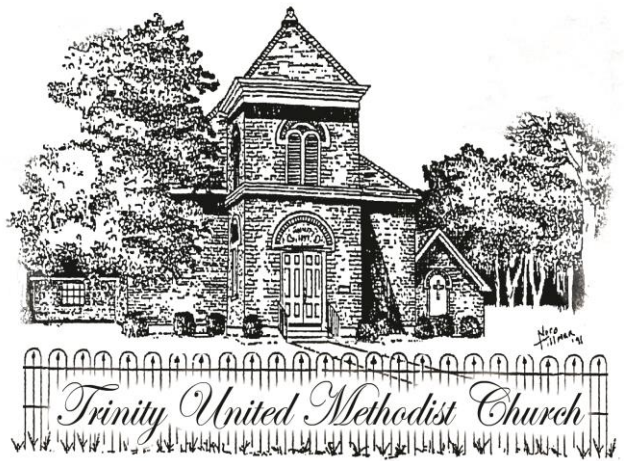




Trinity United Methodist Church Newsletter



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May 4, 2016

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.

¹² 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:

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

¹² 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. ¹³ And now, our God, we give thanks to you and praise your glorious name. 1 Chron 29:12-13

⁵ 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 not to 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.

13 You shall not murder. Exodus 20.13 NRSV

13 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:

20 Likewise, if someone pushes another from hatred, or hurls something at another, lying in wait, and death ensues, 21 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 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, after being ambushed in a village, killed innocent civilians along with combatants in an apparent act of rage, grief and fear over fallen comrades. These actions resulted in court-martials. 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.

14 You shall not commit adultery.

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 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:

²⁴ 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 is 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.

15 You shall not steal. Exodus 20:15

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

¹⁷ Do not say to yourself, "My power and the might of my own hand have gotten me this wealth." ¹⁸ 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:

¹³ You shall not have in your bag two kinds of weights, large and small. ¹⁴ You shall not have in your house two kinds of measures, large and small. ¹⁵ 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. ¹⁶ 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:

⁴ Hear this, you that trample on the needy,

and bring to ruin the poor of the land,
⁵ *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,
⁶ *buying the poor for silver*
and the needy for a pair of sandals,
and selling the sweepings of the wheat."
⁷ *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. ² Your riches have
rotted, and your clothes are moth-eaten. ³ 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.
⁴ *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. ⁵ You have lived on the earth in
luxury and in pleasure; you have fattened your hearts in a day of slaughter. ⁶ 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.

¹⁶ 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 hurt to another.

¹⁷ 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:

⁶ *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.¹*

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:

⁶ *The LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why has your countenance fallen? ⁷ 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.

Note on the Administrative Council Meeting From Donnie Hartsock, Chairman

The ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL is a body that is made up of all our Church Members. Its function is to oversee the business and programs of the Church. We try to meet quarterly to discuss and review our status on the various issues under our charge. Sometimes, if an important issue needs immediate attention, we will meet briefly after services on Sunday. If you are a member of the Church, you are a member of the Administrative Council. On the bulletin board at the side entrance to the Church is a list that names the various Committees and those who currently serve on them.

On Saturday April 9th, the Administrative Council met in Fellowship Hall. What follows are not the official minutes of the meeting. They are simply some of the highlights taken from my notes which I pass on for your information.

- Meeting was called to order at 9am.
- Pastor Meaker opened meeting with a prayer.
- Last Meetings Minutes were reviewed and approved.
- Committee Reports:

¹ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version.* (1989). (Ge 3:6). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

- Finance- Chair Jason Aldred reported that our finances are in order. However, we recently moved our accounts to another bank where we expect to get much better service.

Jason is also looking into insurance requirements regarding our playground.

(Fence around playground will be installed soon, Men's Group will provide labor to install mulch after fence is in)

Trustees- Chair Sam Richardson reported that an exterminator had set a "Bug Bomb" in the ceiling of the sanctuary to combat the wasp community.

SANCTUARY CARPET- Last summer a Memorial Donation was made to Trinity on behalf of a former Member. Since those funds were not designated for a specific purpose, a family member may come forward with suggestions.

- Tommy Cotton is a cousin. He and Jo, on behalf of the family, would like to designate said funds for replacement of the carpet in the Sanctuary. Any leftover funds would be earmarked for replacement of our HVAC when that need arises.

- A VOLUNTEER COMMITTEE headed by Cheryl Wilson will be formed to investigate cost,color,installation etc. and report back to the Administrative Council with a bid for final vote and approval. IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ON THAT COMMITTEE contact Cheryl.

Staff Parish Relations- Chair Nancy Conway reported that her committee had been busy with the annual business of review and evaluation of our Pastor. She didn't let it slip here, but the next day during Church, she announced that the Conference had reassigned Dennis to Trinity for the coming year. There was much rejoicing!

Program Council- It was noted that the Chair of this committee is vacant. Dennis informed us that the Nominations Committee is to make that recommendation.

- Family Ministry- Renita Hartsock reported on the Adult and Kids Sunday School classes. The Adults are helping to fund meals at 61st Ave.
- Please continue to bring food items EVERY SUNDAY for Graceworks.
- VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL- Dawn Stevens has embraced the leadership for this summer! Mark your calendars for July 18-21(M-TH) and listen for opportunities to participate!
- Mission/Outreach- Charles Wilson informed us of what's happening with the school in Africa we support with a portion of our Fish Fry proceeds.
- He also reminded us that we were feeding the needy at 61st Ave that day.
- Worship- Brooks Crowell gave us insight on the work and preparation that goes into coordinating what we do in Sunday morning worship. Thanks to Dennis, Lynn,Brooks,Laura,Judy and all who contribute to making our Sunday Worship meaningful and special.
- Congregational Care- Cheryl Wilson reported on this committee. They coordinate flowers and food on behalf of the Church when the need arises. They also send cards. We really appreciate the work they do.
- Special Events- There are no large scale events (ie:Fish Fry, BBQ) scheduled for this year. At least not at this point. Jason suggested we come up with a signature event that will continue to allow us to fund missions and attract new members. All agreed.

We will be celebrating Trinity's 151st Anniversary later this summer with a cake. Probably at a First Sunday Lunch.

-New Business- Dawn Stevens has agreed to be our Church Web Master! That will allow us to keep our site up to date with the hope of informing others about what's happening at Trinity.

- Brooks informed us of the meeting he is having after church April 10th re: Mother's Day Out Program he has been researching for us. This is very exciting and we can all pledge our prayers and support.
- Dennis moved that, when completed, the new playground be Dedicated in Memory of Sarah Jordan. All were in favor. -Meeting Adjourned

Submitted by: Donnie Hartsock
 Administrative Council Chair

Thursday Morning Bible Study

Our Thursday morning Bible Study meets between 10:00 and 11:30. Everyone is welcome to attend. It has been my practice to allow the group to decide what parts of the bible they wish to study. We have completed our study of the Gospels, including the Book of Acts and are beginning a study of Paul's Epistles. We have begun with 1st Corinthians.

Prayer Ministry

The following persons are part of the prayer ministry at Trinity UMC:

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

May 8th: Sermon: Watch Where You Are Going. Good advice, often given by parents to children. What does it mean as we live as the Body of Christ? My texts are Luke 24:44–53 and Acts 1:1–11.

May 15th: Sermon: Adopted By God. We often speak of God as Father as did the People of Israel. Paul understood that this was not a mere metaphor for the nature of God's love. God has actually claimed us as God's children. My texts are Acts 2:1–21 and Romans 8:14–17.

Worship Leader's Schedule

May 8

Ken Strait, **Liturgist**

Dawn and Richard Stevens, **Greeters**

Maurice and Joyce Edwards, **Ushers**

May 15

Mike Fetting, **Liturgist**

Pat Moran and Maurice Edwards, **Greeters**

Elaine Rohrig and Linda Robinson, **Ushers**

Announcements

Trustee Meeting: The trustees will meet this Sunday, **May 8** immediately after church for a brief discussion about church heating/cooling. Please plan to attend.

Volunteers are needed to help with this year's VBS. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board by the side door. If you have questions, please contact Dawn Stevens at (615)-638-8827 or dawnstevens1961@gmail.com. A meeting will be scheduled soon to discuss the theme and all the activity details. VBS is an exciting, fun time for all, come join in!

Church Carpet: A committee is being formed to initiate a process for replacing the sanctuary carpet. Cheryl Wilson has volunteered to lead this committee. The Administrative Council has determined that any member wishing to serve on the Committee may do so. If you have an interest in being a part of this process, please make Cheryl aware.

The **Nanette Crowell Companions in Christ Sunday School class** is both learning and enjoying a series of videos, narrated by Ray Vanderlann. The videos as well as the narration take place in ancient lands described in the Old Testament. We enjoy discussion about what we are learning and the application of the lessons to our lives.

We enjoy fellowship beginning at 9:45 with our study beginning at 10:00. All are welcome to join us as we pursue Biblical truths and the application for our lives.

Birthdays in May

Tommy Cotton, Sam Richardson, Jim Winton

Happy Birthday to each of you!