

WHAT are the consequences of offending God? The law stops every mouth that all may become guilty before God (Rom 3:19). Man's uneducated conscience cannot be trusted to assess the seriousness of sin and its verdict of death and separation from God. Only by proclaiming the character of God and the immutability of His law will sinners conclude that they are *lawbreakers* in God's sight who deserve *eternal condemnation* (1 Jn 3:4).

The First Commandment: *Have no other gods before Me.* We haven't loved God supremely—we haven't treasured Him and valued Him; and pressed on to know Him. We have chosen things in place of God and disregarded Him—despising His ownership of us. We have regarded His loving rule over us to be an intrusion. We have made *other gods* out of our own will, our own way, and our own cravings.

The Second Commandment: *You shall not make for yourself an idol.* We have set our affections on the world—we have worshipped and served the creature and creation instead of God. We have made idols of our lusts and desires. We have refused to love God by a life of continual thanksgiving to Him.

The Third Commandment: *Do not take the Name of the Lord God in vain.* We have not sanctified and set apart the Name of the Lord—we have used God's Name casually and irreverently. We have dragged His Name into our conversations without reverence and fear; with no thought of His holiness. We have had no passion for His honor and glory. We have been too cowardly to defend His character when others have dishonored His Name in our presence.

The Fourth Commandment: *Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy.* Though not a N.T. ordinance; the principle of setting aside time to draw near to God is timeless. We have failed in this by not leaving our pursuits and pastimes to actively seek God. We have not made it a priority to worship God; to serve Him; and make Him known to our fellow creatures. We have not come away from our schedules to give Him the best of our thoughts and conversation. We are by nature *Sabbath-breakers*.

The Fifth Commandment: *Honor your father and mother.* We have disobeyed by dishonoring our parents countless times. We have deemed them unworthy of our obedience and respect. We have talked back to them and undermined their authority. We have promised obedience and withheld it. We have been ungrateful and have disregarded their God-appointed authority in our lives.

The Sixth Commandment: *You shall not murder.* In 1 John 3:15 we are told that to hate your brother is murder because it is a spirit of murder. Have you despised and resented those who have mistreated you? Have you held a grudge and wished for their downfall, misfortune; failure; and destruction? Have you entertained violent thoughts against those who have offended you? Have you lashed out in angry words? (Matt 5:22). Do you harbor unforgiveness? Have you sought your own vengeance by gossip and slander?

The Seventh Commandment: *You shall not commit adultery.* This encompasses all sexual sin. We have allowed lusts to rule us. We have looked upon others as sexual objects of desire in our minds. Jesus said that to do that can be adultery in the heart (Matt 5:28). We have entertained discontent with our marriage partner and allowed imaginary lovers to enter the mind. We have loved our lusts above God's honor. We have not cared to reflect God's purity in our thinking; desiring; and looking.

The Eighth Commandment: *You shall not steal.* We have many times taken what is not ours. We have robbed employers of a full day's work. We have cheated on tests and homework. We have robbed God by using our resources for our pleasures without a thought of giving to His Kingdom and the spread of the Gospel. We have stolen the reputation of others by gossiping. We have borrowed from others and not returned; and we have cheated others out of fairness by our greed.

The Ninth Commandment: *Do not bear false witness against your neighbor.* We have lied and covered our sin. We have altered the truth to protect ourselves. We have exaggerated, embellished, and distorted the truth to make ourselves look more favorable. We have misrepresented the character of others. We have not sought the truth in the inward man; but have lied to ourselves about God's faithfulness. We have allowed dishonesty to enter our speech.

The Tenth Commandment: *You shall not covet.* We have desired what is not ours but another's. We have believed it should be ours and not our neighbor's. We have envied; been jealous of what others have. We have been secretly happy at the misfortune of those around us. We have been secretly saddened by the promotions and prosperity of those around us. We have complained and grumbled—indulging in self-pity and discontentment. We have felt elevated by the moral downfall of others. We have compared ourselves to others instead of living in gratitude to God for grace.

God has born witness to man's moral and spiritual condition. God is just and fair to shut impenitent sinners out of the enjoyment of His glory forever (Mt 10:28). Sinners who reject God's authority; who do not fear God or believe God are liable to death and judgment (Mt 12:36). They will experience God's verdict; the separation of their souls from God forever in eternal punishment (Rom 6:23). Sinners make a 'wager' or 'bet' that God will not judge