

***S*HEDDING *L*IGHT ON *T*EN *C*OMMANDMENTS *F*OR *C*HRISTMAS**

Some unknown author came up with the idea, that because Christmas comes and goes so quickly, we should have at least Ten Commandments to guide us through the Christmas Season. I wrote them down and expanded the notes. No, God did not write these in stone. They are just basic ideas to help us prepare ourselves for Christmas.

Not too many of us like the word '**commandments**', but if we can see beyond the phrase - '**Thou shalt**' and catch the 10 valuable principles suggested - we will do well.

1. Thou shalt prepare early.

This is good common sense, isn't it. Christmas seems to creep up on us fast, so don't wait until the last minute to get into the Christmas spirit. Begin to think now of celebrating the Savior's birth. Make plans now! The world was NOT prepared for the first coming of Jesus. ***"He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him"*** (John 1:11). But here's the good news – ***"Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His Name, He gave the right to become children of God"*** (John 1:12). We need to be ready and prepared for Christmas.

2. Thou shalt keep Christ at the centre of Christmas.

Don't allow yourself to be overwhelmed by shopping and the commercialism of the season. Christmas is not just about tinsel, lights, decorations and parties. Resolve to read one of the Gospel accounts of the first Christmas, during this December. **Luke 1-2** is very good. Meditate upon the reason why Christ came into the world. Put Christ back into your Christmas activities. Remember the reason for the season - Christ came to seek and to save the lost. He is the Saviour and Redeemer of all who love Him wholeheartedly. The Angel said to Joseph, ***"And Mary will have a Son, and you are to name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins"*** (Matthew 1:21).

3. Thou shalt make Christmas a family time.

It is a good time to do things together with family, children and grandchildren. By all means, decorate the tree, play games, bake cookies, shop, write cards, have devotionals, go caroling, and attend church together. Jesus was a family man, of Whom people said, - ***"He's just a carpenter's son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers - James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. All his sisters live right here among us"*** (Matthew 13:55,56).



4. Thou shalt remember those who are less fortunate.

Contribute significantly to an organization serving the needs of others throughout the year. Give a Christmas gift to your Church, or others in need. Christmas time is all about giving. Think of God, who that first Christmas, gave us ***“the wonderful gift of Jesus”*** (2 Corinthians 9: 15).

There is magic in giving, as St Francis of Assisi wrote in the hymn, ‘Eternal Life’ - *“It is in giving that we receive”*.

Or as Jesus reminded us, ***“As you give so it will be given to you”*** (Luke 6:38).

5. Thou shalt give yourself with every gift.

Don't give to impress, but rather impact others by the giving of yourself. Put some thought into the gifts you purchase. Be sure they are meaningful. Give a gift that represents you. If possible, make something, instead of buying something. Paul spoke affectionately of one of his co-workers - a sacrificial giver. ***“Our sister Phoebe, a deacon in the church in Cenchrea, will be coming to see you soon. Receive her in the Lord, as one who is worthy of high honor. Help her in every way you can, for she has helped many in their needs, including me”*** (Romans 16:1-2).

6. Thou shalt learn to be a good receiver.

Many of us have trouble receiving graciously and gracefully. Others make large sacrifices to purchase or make a gift. Be responsive and show the spirit of ‘thankfulness’. Do not take any gift for granted, but rather express appreciation to the giver.

- ***“I have not stopped giving thanks for you”*** (Ephesians 1:16). Always show genuine thanks! ***“In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you”*** (1Thessalonians 5:18).

7. Thou shalt put music into Christmas.

Often we hear so many Christmas carols in the Malls and Plazas that we are tired of them by Christmas. This is very unfortunate. It is still a good idea to buy several Christmas CD's of singers that you like and play them again and again.

If you can, attend church for special Christmas programs. Sing carols with loved ones. Singing was prominent when Jesus was born and the angels pronounced the gift of ***“Joy to the World”***.

The Angels said to the shepherds, ***"Don't be afraid, because I am bringing you some good news. It will be great joy to all the people"*** (Luke 2:10). Let's keep that joy in our hearts and homes. Music and words keep the Christian faith alive in our mind and heart.

8. Thou shalt slow down.

Though we pack a lot into Christmas, it is supposed to be a season of peace, not hypertension. It seems we get all up tight trying to do too much. Why not take a break and read, rest, relax and renew your spirit. Take time out to think about the Lord, His love and His peace. Peace was the message at Jesus birth: ***"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men"*** (Luke 2:14).

9. Thou shalt remember to worship.

The Church is the place you are most likely to be reminded of the true meaning of Christmas. Make plans to join God's people in the Celebration of the birth of Jesus. The wise men said, ***"Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East and have come to worship Him"*** (Matthew 2:2).

10. Thou shalt receive the Christ of Christmas into Your life.

Don't just 'talk about Christmas', be sure you know the **Christ** of Christmas. That's what Christmas is all about. Receive Him into your life and He will give you the gift of ***'eternal life'***. Jesus said, ***"Everyone who trusts in Me will have eternal life"*** (John 3:15).

Have you received Christ and His gift of eternal life?

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