



A FRAMEWORK FOR FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS

I'M FREE TO DO WHAT I WANT ANY OLD TIME

TRY JESUS COURSE BOOK 16

"I'm free to do what I want, any old time." So goes a line from an old 'ROLLING STONES' song on their STRIPPED album. Our society has tried to live that way, but it hasn't worked!



16 – A FRAMEWORK FOR FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS

“I’M FREE TO DO WHAT I WANT, ANY OLD TIME.”

Since the 1960s ours has become an “anything goes, do your own thing” society. But anything doesn’t go. Free a tree from the ground and it dies. Pour sand into the sump of your car and you wreck your engine. Disregard the laws of life and very soon you have no life. A comment from *Time* a few years ago, on the spectre of AIDS is pertinent: “In the 1970s, sex was ‘free’. [Now people] are pondering the unexpected bill.”

Western society has changed. Speaking about some of these changes sociologist **Richard Ekersley**, says,

“The 1960s and ’70s saw a growing questioning of authority, traditional social conventions and political beliefs: attitudes towards divorce, sex and pornography became more relaxed; the role of women changed and the social importance of religion and the Church declined. While young people may no longer be under the same pressure to conform as they were before, they now face a bewildering array of values and beliefs to choose from.” (*Casualties of Change: the Predicament of Youth*)

“It may be, then, the greatest wrong we are doing to our children

is not the broken families or the scarcity of jobs (damaging though these are), but the creation of a culture that gives them nothing greater than themselves to believe in—no god, no king, no country—and no cause for hope or optimism.”

(*Youth and the Challenge to Change*)

Social psychologist **Hugh Mackay** says the process of value-shedding through the 1960s and ’70s has left the “me generation” “with a sense of emptiness, and a feeling that life lacks some of the meaning and some of the sense of purpose which they observed in their own parents and grandparents.” (*The Mackay Report*)

Where can we find that sense of purpose? Where can we find real freedom and happiness? The animated movie *The Prince of Egypt* is based on the story of Moses in the Bible. **Moses, the Prince of Egypt**, rather than becoming the ruler of the most powerful empire on earth, chose to follow God and become the leader of the children of Israel. One day God came down and spoke to Moses and gave him **Ten Commandments** that contain the secrets of happiness.

The Secrets of Happiness

1. The first secret is: **LIFE IS RUN BY LAW NOT BY LUCK.**

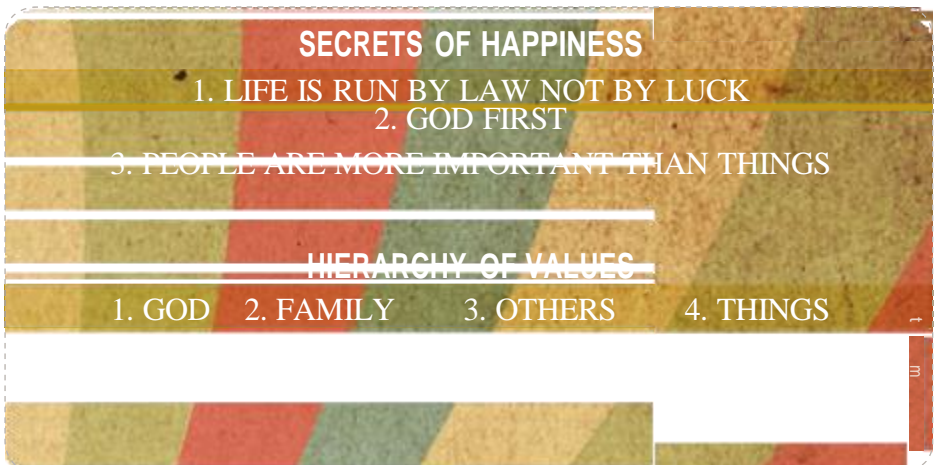
Physicist Paul Davies says:

“The universe is seen to be a product of law rather than chance... The new physics and the new cosmology reveal that our ordered universe is far more than a gigantic accident. (*Superforce*)

2. The second secret of happiness is to **PUT GOD FIRST, not THINGS first, because things come last in the commandments. GOD IS FIRST.**

The Ten Commandments begin with the declaration “I am the Lord your God... You shall have no other gods before me.” They end with: “You shall not covet ... anything that belongs to your neighbour.” As we saw in Guide 3 (*Where did I come from?*) there are only two possibilities as to where life came from. Life is either the product of blind chance or a creation by a personal God. It’s largely because of the theory of evolution that people today have lost the knowledge of God and have become so materialistic.

3. The third universal secret is that **PEOPLE ARE MORE IMPORTANT THAN THINGS.** The Ten Commandments provide a hierarchy of values that are the framework for freedom and happiness. They tell us to put God first, the family second, others next and things last. Our materialistic society has reversed the order. That’s why we’ve come unstuck. That’s why we’re so confused! That’s why life is sometimes too much for us! This Bible guide will examine some of the benefits that come from following the principles of the Ten Commandments.



A Message From God for All People

1. How does the Bible say that Moses received the Ten Commandments? Exodus 31:18 (page 63 in NIV Bible: International Bible Society. 00195)

When the Lord finished speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, he gave him the _____ of the _____, the tablets of stone inscribed by the _____ of God.

The Ten Commandments are the only part of the Bible God wrote personally.

2. Why does God want us to keep His commandments? Deuteronomy 6:24 (page 131)

The Lord commanded us to obey all these decrees and to fear [respect] the Lord our God, so that we might always _____ and be kept alive.

The commandments of God provide a framework to protect society. When the Ten Commandments are disregarded, chaos and destruction result. An example of this can be seen in what happened during the **French Revolution**. In our own society in which many have turned away from God, we can see similar results.

“Which is better”, asks an old adage, “to have an ambulance at the bottom of the cliff or a fence at the top?”



An Australian advertising agency, Clemenger Communications, in a report, says what would be true of most Western societies:

“Ordinary Australians are deeply concerned about the pace of change in their society. They feel changes are random and uncontrollable. And this perceived lack of control over change produces anxiety and a sense of apprehension. They point to what they see as ample evidence around them that the supportive social structures that nurtured past generations of Australians are crumbling.”

3. Were the commandments given only for the Jews, or for all people in every age? Ecclesiastes 12:13
(page 478)

Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the _____ of man.

Almost all church creeds and catechisms have acknowledged that the Ten Commandments are moral principles that apply to all people at all times.

Love God With All Your Heart

4. The Ten Commandments are recorded in the book of Exodus and are in two sections. Who is the focal point of the first section (1-4)? Who is the focal point of the second section (5-10)? Exodus 20:1-11; 12-17 (page 54)

1st Section (1-4) _____ 2nd Section (5-10) _____

5. How did Jesus summarise the two sections of the Ten Commandments? Matthew 22:34-40 (page 699)
"Love the _____ with all your _____ and with all your _____ and with all your _____." This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: "Love your _____ as yourself."

6. Which are the two positive commandments?

4th:- REMEMBER the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.... For in six days the Lord MADE the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them.

5th:- HONOUR your father and your mother. (Exodus 20:8-11; 12, page 54)

What is the significance of these two commandments? The first four commandments summarise our duty to God and constitute the first table of the law. Our duty to God hinges on the fourth commandment, which tells us why we should put God first and worship Him - because He is our Creator.

The last six summarise our duty to one another and constitute the second table of the law. Our duty to others hinges on the fifth commandment, which emphasises the importance of family relationships where we learn to relate to other people. Marriage and the family form the basis of society.

The Ten Commandments describe the way human beings would naturally act towards God and each other if they were not in a state of rebellion.



Notice the **logical arrangement** of the commandments. The first four commandments tell us: **1.** Whom to worship - God; **2.** How to worship - not with idols; **3.** Our approach to worship - to respect God's name and not to misuse it; **4.** When and why to worship - on the Sabbath day because God is Creator.

The last six commandments tell us how to relate to others. The 5th highlights the authority next to God are our parents - we are to honour them; the 6th safeguards life - it forbids murder because life is sacred; the 7th regulates relations between sexes - we are not to be involved with sexual relations outside marriage; the 8th safeguards property - it forbids stealing; the 9th safeguards reputation - we are not to tell lies about others; and the 10th regulates our thinking - we are not to covet, that is, desire what is not ours, because wrong thinking

is the basis of all wrong doing.

More Than Just Deeds

7. How did Jesus show that the Ten Commandments include more than just outward actions?

Matthew 5:17-19, 21-22, 27-28 (page 683) Tick the correct answer.

- He did away with the commandments He said the thought is sin as well as the deed
 He wrote the law in large letters

Principles of Life

8. What are the principles of the Ten Commandments, that if followed, would make society a better place?

Exodus 20:1-17 (page 54). Match principles with commandments.

TEN COMMANDMENTS

1. You shall have no other gods before me.
2. You shall not make ... an idol.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord.
4. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.
5. Honour your father and mother.
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not give false testimony.
10. You shall not covet.

PRINCIPLES

- 1 loyalty
- purity
- true worship
- respect for authority
- 4 holiness, wholeness
- truthfulness
- contentment
- love
- reverence, respect
- honesty

1 Loyalty, 2 true worship, 3 reverence, 4 holiness, wholeness, 5 respect for authority, 6 love, 7 purity, 8 honesty, 9 truthfulness, 10 contentment

Think of how much better the world would be if we all followed these principles.

Trust and Obey

9. While the commandments are for all people, are we saved by them? Which came first for the Israelites:

God's requirement of OBEDIENCE to the Ten Commandments, or DELIVERANCE from Egyptian slavery?

Exodus 20:1-3 (page 54) _____

God delivered Israel out of Egyptian slavery in order that they could obey Him. God's order is salvation first - then obedience and right conduct. Accept Jesus - then obey Him. Obedience is not the means of salvation, but the evidence. It is the fruit, not the root. We are not saved by obedience - but that we may obey.

To teach any other gospel is to put the cart before the horse!

10. Can we be saved by obeying the Ten Commandments? Romans 3:20 (page 797)

No-one will be ... by observing the law.

11. Because we are saved by faith alone in Christ alone, does that do away with the law?

Do we, then, nullify [abolish] the law by this faith? NOT AT ALL! Rather, we UPHOLD the law. (Romans 3:31 (page 797))

The fact that Jesus died to pay the penalty for our sins is conclusive proof that the law can't be changed or done away with! This is the view of most Christians. The great Baptist **Charles Spurgeon** said: "The law of God was more vindicated by the death of Christ than it would have been had all transgressors been sent to Hell." (*All of Grace*, page 22)

Methodist Church founder **John Wesley**, said "the moral law, contained in the Ten Commandments, and enforced by the Prophets, He [Jesus] did not take away. It was not the design of His coming to revoke any part of this. This is a law which never can be broken, which 'stands fast as the faithful witness in heaven.' ... Every part of this law must remain in force upon all mankind, and in all ages." (John Wesley, Sermon 25, *Works*)

World famous evangelist **Billy Graham** agrees. "Like Wesley, I find that I must preach the law and judgment before I can preach grace and love ...The Ten Commandments ... are the moral laws of God for the conduct of people. Some think they have been revoked. That is not true. Christ taught the law. They are still in effect today. God has not changed." (*Billy Graham and the New York Crusade*)

12. What does God promise to give to us when we accept His free gift of salvation? Hebrews 10:11-17 (page 851)

I will my laws in their hearts, and I will them on their minds.

Leading New Testament commentator F F Bruce says, "The new covenant, according to Jeremiah's prophecy, not only involved the implanting of God's laws, together with the will and power to carry them out, in the hearts of His people; it also conveyed the assurance that their past sins and iniquities would be eternally blotted out from God's record, never to be brought up in evidence against them." (Comments on Hebrews)

13. How did Jesus say people would show that they love Him? John 14:15 (page 764)

If you love me, you will what I command.

14. How are those who have chosen the side of God and are waiting for Jesus' second coming described?

Revelation 14:12 (page 874)

This calls for patient endurance on the part of the saints who God's commandments and remain to Jesus.

15. While the people of God are pictured as keeping His commandments, how are we saved? John 3:16 (page 752)

Standing Up for Your Faith

Jason Stevens* is not your average sport star. He has a reputation as one of Australia's toughest rugby league players during his 14-year career. But Stevens is also an author. His book *Worth the Wait* is a reflection of his personal experience with sexuality and his commitment to abstain from sex until marriage.

"I was leading a lifestyle that was based on ignorance -one based on what feels good – on what everyone else does is OK," Stevens recalls. "It was a socially acceptable thing."

But there was a tension in his life. *"I had a strong church background, and I definitely had a belief in God. I was a regular churchgoer,"* says Stevens, "but it didn't really reflect in my lifestyle. Then it was explained to me that one needed to go beyond 'believing' to 'belonging' to God."

"The message of Christ really hit home when I realised how big a deal it was that Jesus went to the cross for me. I could no longer neglect the sacrifice, the pain he endured. I realised that God wanted a friendship with me, and a commitment from me."

To the question, **"How do you know it is better to wait?"** he says:

"A great sex life that lasts only comes out of a great relationship. A great relationship involves trust and commitment. When these things are in place, the relationship can be great and so too the sex that follows. I believe the ultimate commitment is signing on the dotted line in the security of marriage. Statistically, those who have sex before marriage have a much higher chance of divorce."



"Obedience" to God is another way of saying "commitment". It's standing up for what you believe. It's being true to your

How would the world be different if everyone followed the principles of the commandments?

How do you intend to benefit from what you've learned about God's commandments?

