

Chapter 21

Ten More Commandments

Topics in this Chapter:

- * Following the golden rule
- * Keeping good company inside and out
- * Being honest, trustworthy, and happy

Even though many folks already have a hard time keeping some of the original Ten Commandments that Moses brought down from his experience of God's presence, I've nevertheless decided to add in ten more that you can also think of as suggestions or helpful advice on ways to honor and follow the laws of this universe.

Do unto Others As You Would Have Them Do unto You

This golden rule is included in the teachings of several traditions, but is generally considered to have originated with Confucius. Another converse version given by Rabbi Hillel in 30 B.C. says, "Whatsoever thou wouldst that men should not do unto thee, do not do unto them."

Consider

Of course, the actual practice of "doing unto others as you would have them do unto you" can bring up sticky questions about whether someone else would want the same things that you do. With people's different styles and preferences, you may end up giving others what *you* would want, but not what *they* would want.

For example, imagine that you're sitting with a friend in front of two slices of pie — a big one and a small one. You love pie and would really like to have the bigger piece, so you follow the golden rule by giving your friend the slice of pie that you would want to be given unto you. But what if your friend doesn't really like pie? What if she is on a diet or is a diabetic? This simple example shows why just following spiritual rules dogmatically isn't enough — you have to grasp the spirit behind the law.

Doing unto others as you would have them do unto you is not about pushing your preferences onto others, but is a stance of generosity that reflects in how charitable and fair you are in all areas of your life.

What is most important about this golden rule is to be in the spiritual frame of mind that allows you to truly do unto others as you would have them do unto you. The only way you can fully enter into this commandment is to have a tangible sense of the oneness and divine nature of everything and everyone in this world. With this awareness, you know that giving to another is inherently giving to yourself.

Think Good Thoughts

Looking at the events of your life with a positive eye enhances the good times and softens difficult times. Your thoughts and feelings also go into everything you cook, build, say, create, and give. Shine good thoughts into your life and into the world!

Look Beyond Matter to Spirit

Within and beyond the realm of matter is spirit. Adjust your focus so that you're seeing not only the external appearance of matter and outer forms, but also the spiritual, inner realms of life.

Too much focus on material things can block your awareness of spirit. Therefore, spiritual scriptures advise seekers to release their attachments to outer sensory experiences so they can more easily perceive the subtle but precious spiritual ones. Just think — if you eat a bowl of hot chilies, your taste buds will get overstimulated and dulled to tasting or enjoying even the most delicious gourmet foods. In the same way, partaking in too many sensory experiences of this physical world can numb your ability to savor the delicious yet subtle spiritual flavors of life.

Consider

This commandment doesn't mean you should deny yourself the enjoyments of this world. Just enjoy them in moderation and with an awareness of spirit!

Keep Good Company

The company you keep determines to a large extent how you think, feel, and act. Even if you think of yourself as a perfectly individual and independent thinker, the fact remains that human beings are designed to absorb and reflect traits of their associates.

Psychologists have observed that if you put two people in a room together for a couple hours, their movements begin to synchronize with one another. They may start speaking with similar phrases or inflections. Their breathing may become entrained with one another. And these are just two people in a room for a couple hours.

Consider

Just imagine how much people with whom you spend a great deal of time affect you!

Be Careful

This idea of keeping good company is not meant to create fear or make you run away from people and situations that may not be the best of company. For example, you may be doing volunteer work or performing a job that requires you to be around challenging people who are not always the best of company. In these cases, *you* get to be the good company for *them*!

Turn Within for Guidance

Turn within and make friends with your own wise soul. Let the spiritual grace that expresses in both the inner and outer world guide your steps. Seek a dialogue of continual guidance within yourself through introspection and quiet sitting and relish your own freshly flowing spring of wisdom.

Be Moderate and Balanced

Moderation and balance can be incorporated into all your activities, including your work, lifestyle, diet, relationships, and use of time. When you achieve balance and moderation, you naturally enter into the flow of spirit. In spirit, the stress of opposing qualities gives way to peaceful centeredness.

Remember Death

The death of your body is inevitable. Therefore, the truly intelligent thing to do is to acknowledge and contemplate that which you know is going to happen one day.

Thinking about death isn't a gruesome task, but a realistic one. Remembering that your journey in this world will end one day helps you to see beyond the materialistic level of life. Remembrance of death inspires you to be generous while you're here, makes it easier to let go of ego and false pride, and encourages you to appreciate each moment (see Chapter 4).

Consider

When you become more comfortable with the idea of death, you may also become aware of an essence within yourself that's beyond birth and death. This is a great bonus!

Express Yourself Freely

This entire universe is filled with movements: planets spinning, galaxies twirling, stars being born, atoms smashing, water raining, and flowers growing. This creation goes on and on in every direction — bigger, smaller, higher, and lower — action upon action, work upon work. Do you think God’s universal creative power is doing all this work for a big, fat paycheck? No. Everything in nature takes place out of a sense of right action and service, which the Indian scriptures call *dharma*. (See chapter 13 for more on *dharma*.)

When you act from a sense of *dharma* rather than from greed-based motivations, then your actions flow smoothly and in harmony with the freely expressing universe. You don’t have to limit yourself to accommodate everyone else’s judgments or jealousies. You are serving, expressing, and being guided by spirit.

Keep Your Word

Learn to respect yourself and your words so that you find it natural and important to keep your word to yourself and others. If you give your word, you should do your very best to keep your word. When you speak, what you say should be in harmony with your thoughts and intentions. Don’t promise things you won’t deliver, and don’t go around making and breaking commitments all over the place.

When you truly respect your words, all kinds of great new doors open for you. The universe also begins to respect your words. You are able to declare an intention and know that your power of righteousness will bring it to be. You reap the benefits of honesty that I outline in Chapter 10. You trust yourself, and others are also able to trust you. The universe itself is able to trust you!

Have a Good Sense of Humor

As Chapter 17 explains, God is funny. Life is funny. Turns of events are funny. Even suffering can be funny. And more than anything else, truth is funny.

Have you ever noticed that most of the best comedians are usually just saying what they really think? The audience laughs, in part, because the comedian has dared to speak his truth and say what the audience may not have been bold enough to proclaim.

Laughter is the wine of the soul. When you laugh with pure delight, know that God is laughing with you. Like God and spirit, humor is present through the ups and downs of good and bad times. With a good sense of humor, you laugh when you’re happy and can even laugh while you cry. Humor is a great friend on your journey!

Never Let Your Creative Spirit Be Limited by Numbers

An appropriate topic for the 11th commandment of this list of ten!