



Are They Rules or a Way of Life: A Look at the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes

St. Michael's Church

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Are They Rules or a Way of Life?





Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

How many commandments are there?

- a. 2
- b. 10
- c. 613



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

With 613 commandments, no wonder the scholar asked
Jesus which commandment is the greatest!

Matthew 22:34-36

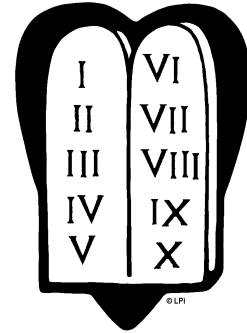


Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

How We Look at the Commandments

- Legal rules
- Black and white
- Written on STONE

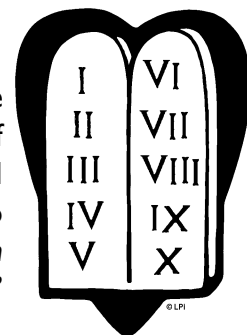
→ When we look at the Commandments this way, some people tend to look at them as what is the minimum we have to do to follow them.



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

How We Look at the Commandments

“Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying, “The scribes and the Pharisees have taken their seat on the chair of Moses. Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you, but do not follow their example. For they preach but they do not practice. *They tie up **heavy burdens** [hard to carry] and lay them on people’s shoulders, but they will not lift a finger to move them*” Matthew 23:1-4.





Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

“As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up, knelt down before him, and asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus answered him, “Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not kill; you shall not commit adultery; you shall not steal; you shall not bear false witness; you shall not defraud; honor your father and your mother.’” He replied and said to him, “Teacher, all of these I have observed from my youth.” Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said to him, “**You are lacking in one thing. Go, sell what you have, and give to [the] poor and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me.**” At that statement his face fell, and he went away sad, for he had many possessions”

(Mark 10:17:22).

→ Following the Commandments is not enough



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

How many Beatitudes are there?

- a. 2
- b. 4
- c. 8
- d. 10
- e. 613



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?



Where do you find the
Beatitudes in the Bible?



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- Definition of “Beatitude” – “Happiness or blessedness, especially the eternal happiness of heaven, which is described as the vision of God, or entering into God’s rest by those whom He makes “partakers of the divine nature.” (page 868).
- Definition of “Beatitudes” – “Moreover, by shedding light on the actions and attitudes of the Christian life, they describe the vocation of all the faithful.” (page 868).



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

Which is better?

Commandments



Negative reinforcement

Beatitudes



Positive reinforcement



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

The Commandments may be interpreted as

- rules we must follow or else bad things will happen

or

- bringing to the front the goodness God has already planted within us.



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

“Now therefore, Israel, hear the statutes and ordinances I am teaching you to observe, that you may live, and may enter in and take possession of the land which the LORD, the God of your ancestors, is giving you. In your observance of the commandments of the LORD, your God, which I am commanding you, **you shall not add to what I command you nor subtract from it.** You have seen with your own eyes what the LORD did at Baal-peor: the LORD, your God, destroyed from your midst everyone who followed the Baal of Peor; but you, who held fast to the LORD, your God, are all alive today. See, I am teaching you the statutes and ordinances as the LORD, my God, has commanded me, that you may observe them in the land you are entering to possess. **Observe them carefully, for this is your wisdom and discernment in the sight of the peoples, who will hear of all these statutes and say, “This great nation is truly a wise and discerning people.”** For what great nation is there that has gods so close to it as the LORD, our God, is to us whenever we call upon him? Or what great nation has statutes and ordinances that are as just as this whole law which I am setting before you today?” (Deuteronomy 4:1-8).



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

Examples of how the Commandments are good:

- Don't steal
- Don't commit adultery
- Don't covet
- Don't bear false witness

→ to function as a society we need to be able to **trust** one another



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

Catechism on Commandments - large part of Part III "Life in Christ" dedicated to commandments as a way of life but before the Commandments in part III comes a section on the Beatitudes.



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

Matthew's Sermon on the Mount (chapters 5-7) starts with Beatitudes but then expounds on some of the commandments.



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Catechism of the Catholic Church

- CCC 1716 – “The Beatitudes are at the heart of Jesus’ preaching.”
- CCC 1717 – “The Beatitudes depict the countenance of Jesus Christ and portray his charity. They express the vocation of the faithful associated with the glory of his Passion and Resurrection; they shed light on the actions and attitudes characteristic of the Christian life; they are the paradoxical promises that sustain hope in the midst of tribulations; they proclaim the blessings and rewards already secured, however dimly, for Christ’s disciples; they have begun in the lives of the Virgin Mary and all the saints.”



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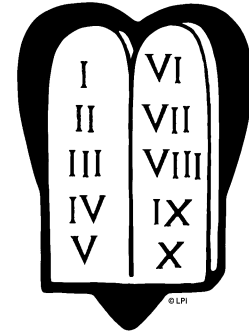


Where do you find the
Commandments in the Bible?



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

- Where do you find the Commandments in the Bible?
 - Exodus 20:1-17
 - Deuteronomy 5:6-21
 - Comparing Protestant listing of the Commandments to Catholic listing
- For our purposes we will use the Commandments as described in paragraphs 2084-2557 of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

“The Ten Commandments are God's 'x-ray,' Pope Francis says”

By Hannah Brockhaus

- “The pope pointed out that the apparent “negativity” expressed in the commandments – “do not steal,” “do not kill” – in Jesus become positive commands to love, to make room for others in the heart. “This is the fullness of the law that Jesus came to bring us,” he said.
- “Thus, we discover better what it means that the Lord Jesus did not come to abolish the law but to fulfill it,” he said.
- **“And while the law according to the flesh was a series of prescriptions and prohibitions, according to the Spirit this same law becomes life,”** he said, “because it is no longer a norm but the very flesh of Christ, who loves us, seeks us, forgives us, comforts us and in his Body reconciles communion with the Father, lost for the disobedience of sin.””



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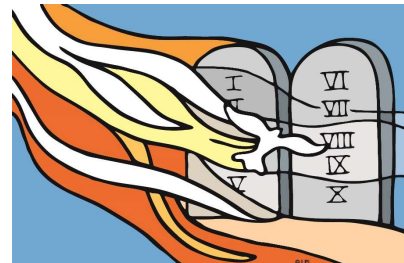
Catechism of the Catholic Church

- CCC 1719 – “The Beatitudes reveal the goal of human existence, the ultimate end of human acts: God calls us to his own beatitude.”



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

The Ten Commandments are God's gift to us as tools to help us grow towards eternity with him.





Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

Catechism of the Catholic Church

- CCC 1724 – “The Decalogue, the Sermon on the Mount, and the apostolic catechesis describe for us the paths that lead to the Kingdom of heaven. Sustained by the **grace of the Holy Spirit**, we tread them, **step by step**, by **everyday acts**. By the working of the Word of Christ, we slowly bear fruit in the Church to the glory of God.



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

United States Catholic Catechism for Adults

- “In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus presents to us a summary of the **New** Covenant in the Beatitudes. Hence, the Commandments are more than moral laws; our commitment to living them flows from our response to the **Covenant** we have with God, as members of the Church strengthened by the Holy Spirit” (xxii).



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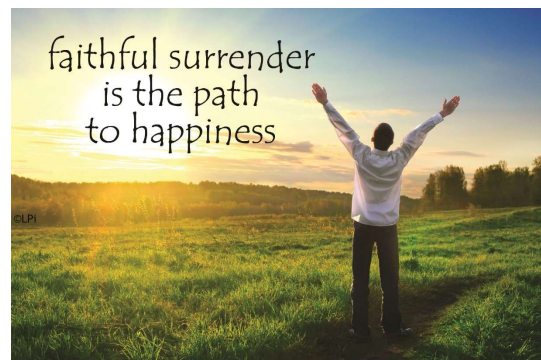
Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church

- “437. What is the bond between the Decalogue and the Covenant? The Decalogue must be understood in the light of the Covenant in which God revealed himself and made known this will. In observing the commandments, the people manifested their belonging to God and they answered his initiative of love with thanksgiving.”



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

The
“Beatitudes”
are about a state of being



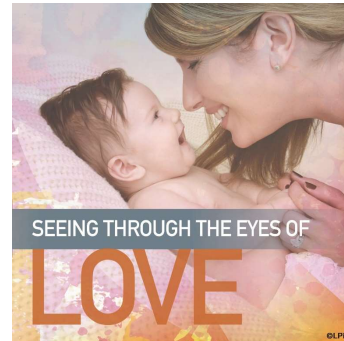


Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

Love is the “state”
we seek

“Whoever **is** without **love** does not
know **God**, for **God is love**.” 1 John 4:8

The Greatest Commandment is to love God
and the second is to love our neighbor



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

One Example of the Attitude behind a Commandment

- “The Tenth Commandment looks at the interior attitudes of greed and envy that lead us to steal and act unjustly.” (*United States Catholic Catechism for Adults*, 449).



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

List of
Commandments
and Beatitudes



Are They Rules or a Way of Life?

Next session

Where Do We Go For Truth?

Monday, March 11, 2019 at 7:00 p.m.



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Resources

Brockhaus, Hannah, "The Ten Commandments are God's 'x-ray,' Pope Francis says." EWTNnews, November 28, 2018, <http://ewtnnews.com/catholic-news/Vatican.php?id=18524>.

Catechism of the Catholic Church. Second Edition. Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 1997.

Compendium: Catechism of the Catholic Church. Libreria Editrice Vaticana. USCCB, 2006.

St. Joseph Edition of The New American Bible Revised Edition. New Jersey, Catholic Book Publishing Corp. 2010.



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Resources

Tunncliff, Rev. Jeffrey S., "God's Commandments." <http://www.renewaloffaith.org/god-s-commandments.html>

USCCB, United States Catholic Catechism for Adults. Washington, DC: USCCB, 2006.