



Reflections on The Ten Commandments

By Karen Stallard, Union Chapel Minister

1. Have no other gods

Since I have been set free I don't know what to believe any more, there are so many different gods people tell me to believe in for this that and the other, I really don't like the sound of any of them. I don't want to box God up into something tangible because I know that God will let me down. I don't want any gods other than the one who I cannot really put my finger on....

I like this law, it gives me permission to have faith in a God who is beyond all other gods, it gives me permission not to have to believe in other peoples version of God. It helps me to be free in my faith and my thinking about God.

2. Have no idols

Since I have been set free I really don't want to be bound to anything or anyone in a way which is not life giving, I don't want to rely on an object or a person to empower me, I want to be able to survive, to be robust enough to take life's stresses without the aid of a magic picture or a hero to save me

I like this law, it gives me the freedom to break away from enslaving objects or people and know I can still survive intact.

3. Don't talk about God in the wrong way

Since I have been set free I no longer want to say for definite that I know God and I know what God is like. When I was enslaved I felt obliged to admit that God might be violent or vengeful or jealous or full of anger because other people had told me so. I don't want to have to say these things about God now, in fact I don't really know what God is like at all, it is all too much of a mystery.

I like this law as it gives me permission not to speak about God if I am unsure.

4. Keep the Sabbath holy

Since I have been set free I no longer feel the need to neglect myself. For so long I have put the needs of others before me, trying to please, frightened in case I have not done a good enough job. I want to be able to enjoy my life, to spend time with my friends and family, to feel my body and mind relax so I can really see the world.

I like this law as it gives me permission to stop, to have a whole day for myself, a day where I have permission to do nothing and perhaps encounter the God I do not know in pleasurable and relaxing things. A day free from worry, a real day each week of freedom.



5. Honour Father and Mother

Since I have been set free I have been able to view my life through a different lens, I can see now the struggles my parents had and why they chose to bring me up like they did, the good and the bad. I have been set free from the past and so now I choose to take with me the good things and I can walk away from the bad

I like this law as it gives me the chance to establish a free and healthy relationship with my family, if in order to honour my parents I need to change my relationship with them it gives me freedom to do just that. Perhaps my parents have deeply wounded me, in my freedom this law helps me to disentangle myself from them that pain and see things differently and perhaps journey towards a different end in my relationship with them.

6. You shall not kill.

Since I have been set free violence doesn't seem like the option I want to take. I no longer want to fight and battle, struggle and wrestle, wish people dead and dream of how to murder them. Since I have been set free I see no glory in war only hatred and pain. I hate violence which kills.

I like this law, it is simple and clear, it makes something I do not want to do clearly not an option.

7. Do not commit adultery

Since I have been set free I am learning how to be free in my sexuality, I am more aware that I am a sexual being and that part of me cannot be disconnected or hidden away. I want to celebrate my sexuality and be able to express it freely only it feels wild and untamed liberated yet unboundaried.

I like this law, it helps me to put the brakes on, to slow things down when my sexual feelings take over from my rational mind. There are plenty of potential partners out there for me to explore, but it is good to know where to draw the line. Now I am free I want to stay free, I don't want to go back to an enslaved sexuality lived in secret and fear of being exposed.

8. Do not steal

Since I have been set free I feel the world is my oyster, I have been owned and enslaved for so long it is so good to feel like I can have my own things, build my own life and share what I have with others. I no longer have to ask another to get what I need, I can help myself and in a world of chaos and anarchy I can do just that. But I recognise that not everything is mine to just take, I need to learn what it is like to earn possessions so that in my freedom I do not enslave others.



I like this law, it is simple and clear. I know the boundaries of what is and is not mine and I know that I will need to work for that which I want but do not have.

9. Do not lie about others

Since I have been set free I am wanting to be confident about myself, to not have to defend myself anymore, to not have to place myself above others and tell lies in order to do so. In my freedom I have discovered a sense of self and worth, I no longer need to back stab in order to make my way in life.

I like this law as it reminds me of how I used to be and how much I have changed, and every time I feel insecure or threatened by others it helps me not to fall back into bad habits and keeps me in good relationships with others.

10. Do not covet

Since I have been set free I have realised that freedom brings the knowledge that the simple things in life are the most pleasurable and are freely available. I no longer want to gaze at the complex things which others have and long for them myself, I know that happiness is not found in another's wife or car or dog! Happiness is found in all that I have as a free person.

I like this law as it helps me to remember that if I am coveting something which I do not possess it will take me back into slavery, back to the times where I was always hankering after freedom. I don't want to go back there again, this law teaches me how to live content in a freedom which allows others to enjoy all they have without me being envious.

The 10 commandments are written for a free people, they are to help those who have been too bound up by slavery to really experience permission to be free in this world.