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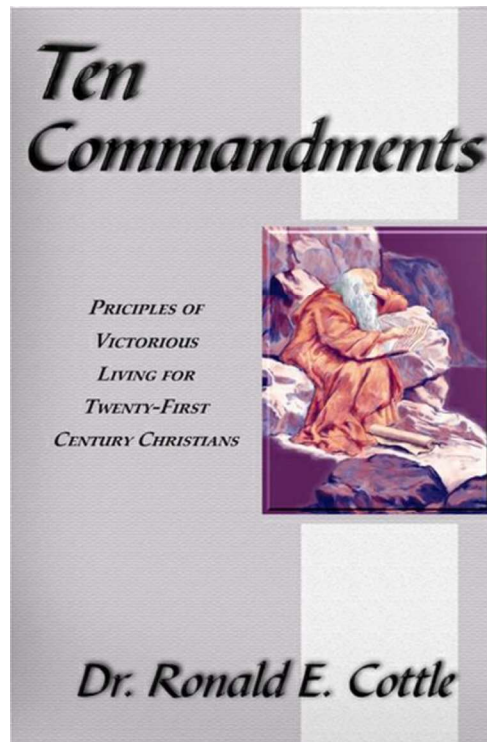
**TEXTBOOK (ACADEMIC VERSION)**

**THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

**COURSE: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS (OT214)**

**DR. RONALD E. COTTLE**

# Principles of Victorious Christian Living for Twenty-First Century Christians



*A new focus on the Ten Commandments for thoughtful Christians who desire to understand their faith and to discover the vitality and power of committed Christian living.*



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## About The Author

A graduate of Florida Southern College in Lakeland, Florida, Dr. Cottle also earned a Bachelor of Divinity degree from Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary and a Master of Science in Education from the University of Southern California (USC). In addition, he holds both Doctor of Philosophy and Doctor of Education degrees from USC.

As an educator, he has taught at Southern California College and Pasadena City College, and has served as president of several other colleges and one seminary.

As a minister, Dr. Cottle has served pastorates in California, Missouri, and South Carolina. He is Founder and President of Christian Life School of Theology and of Beacon School of Theology.

TO MY SON, RON, JR., WHOSE INTEGRITY AND HONESTY  
HAVE ALWAYS BEEN A SOURCE OF JUSTIFIABLE PRIDE FOR  
HIS FATHER.

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## Foreword

This book, the second in the series, *A NEW FOCUS*, is aimed at the thinking Christian who is interested in making his faith in Jesus Christ firm and productive in his daily life. Dr. Cottle demonstrates the vitality and power of the Ten Commandments as an aid toward such dynamic living by showing how their central principles work for us today.

Here the reader will find **keys for victorious living** in every area of life: personal, spiritual, family, social and economic.

In the first four commandments, the reader will discover:

- a) The Right **Place** of God,
- b) The Right **Picture** of God,
- c) The Right **Thought** of God,
- d) The Right **Time** of Worship.

In the final six commandments, the reader will see:

- e) The Right Focus on **Family**,
- f) The Right Focus on **Life**,
- g) The Right Focus on **Sex**,
- h) The Right Focus on **Property**,
- i) The Right Focus on our **Fellowman**,
- j) The Right Focus on **Things**.

This book is offered with the prayer that it may inspire all who read it with a new trust in God's faithful provision for every area of our daily lives.



<b>TEXT</b>	<b>BRIEF ANALYSIS AND TITLE</b>
Ex. 20:13	"God: the Ultimate Priority"
Ex. 20:4-6	"Images and their Consequences"
Ex. 20:7	"On Taking God Seriously"
Ex 20:8-11	"Using the Sabbath Creatively"
Ex. 20:12	"On Honoring Parents"
Ex. 20:13	"Man's Humanity to Man"
Ex. 20:14	"Man, Woman and God"
Ex. 20:15	"Stealing: How Many Are the Ways?"
Ex. 20:16	"Slander and its Consequences"
Ex. 20:17	"Grasping for more Leaves You with Nothing"

## OVERVIEW OF BOOK CHAPTERS

TOPIC	THEME
The Right <b>Place</b> of God	We need not live our lives apart from God for He is available to us.
The Right <b>Picture</b> of God	Our image of God is important for it determines both our character and our influence upon others.
The Right <b>Thought</b> of God	Profession denied by possession is the worst form of taking God's name in vain.
The Right <b>Time</b> of Worship	Keeping the Sabbath helps us to put the eyes of purpose into our lives.
The Right Focus on <b>Family</b>	If parents are to be honored by their children—and they are, then they must be honorable.
The Right Focus on <b>Life</b>	When faced with “kill or be killed,” Jesus calmly prayed in Gethsemane until the executioners arrived.
The Right Focus on <b>Sex</b>	Whatever my sin, whatever my guilt, Jesus can make me new by the power of forgiveness.
The Right Focus on <b>Property</b>	God wants to be your partner not only in church and prayer, but in business and all of life.
The Right Focus on our <b>Fellowman</b>	It takes some of the pain out of one's own inferiority when he can rub the glitter off someone else's crown.
The Right Focus on <b>Things</b>	To covet means to think always of myself and what I can get and this destroys, not enhances.



# PART ONE

## MAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD

Augustine said, "In every heart there is a God-shaped vacuum, and until that vacuum is filled with God, every other part of man remains empty." This section of the book is designed to explore the first four commandments and to show the right relationship between man and God.



# CHAPTER ONE

## GOD:THE ULTIMATE PRIORITY

Exodus 20:1-3

*<sup>1</sup>And God spake all these words saying, <sup>2</sup>"I am the Lord your God, which have brought thee out of the Land of Egypt, out of bondage. <sup>3</sup>Thou shalt have no other gods before me."*

Companion Scripture: Exodus 20:1-17

Originally the Ten Commandments were known as the "Ten Words," the decalog. In its earlier form, it consisted of ten brief phrases each containing two words, and it was probably memorized in connection with the fingers of the hand. The first four deal with man's relationship to God while the last six deal with man's relationship to man.

In the first group we have the following:

1. The First Commandment concerns  
THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP.  
*"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."*
2. The Second Commandment concerns  
THE MODE OF WORSHIP.  
*"Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image."*
3. The Third Commandment concerns

## THE ATTITUDE OF WORSHIP.

*"Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain."*

4. The Fourth Commandment concerns  
THE TIME OF WORSHIP.

*"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy."*

Now, having "begun at the beginning" with man's relationship with GOD, "The Ten Words" move on to deal with man's relationship to other men. As H. G. Wells so aptly said: "Until one has found God, he begins at no beginning; he works to no end."

The second group has its own two divisions.

First, there is the inner-family relation: "Honor thy father and thy mother."

Second, there are "guideposts" for general social living designed to give life meaning and purpose, as well as bring joy and satisfaction to others:

*"Thou shalt not kill."*

*"Thou shalt not commit adultery."*

*"Thou shalt not steal."*

*"Thou shalt not slander."*

*"Thou shalt not covet."*

We come now to the First Commandment—foundational to all the rest, for upon it all the others build to form the spiritual and ethical life of the child of God.

*"I am the Lord thy God...thou shalt have no other gods before me."*

It is extremely significant that this is the FIRST Commandment, for number ONE differs from all other numbers not just in degree, but in essence. Indeed, the step from "2" to "3" is relatively slight, but the step from "1" to "2" is enormous. For example, the man who has two

wives and the man who has three wives are in the same class. Both are polygamists. That is, both are able to divide their deepest human affections. But they are totally different from the man who, because he cannot divide his deepest human affections, has only one wife. We call this practice of marrying only one wife “monogamy” because it means exactly that—ONLY ONE (Greek—*mono*).

We preserve a fundamental insight in our grammar when we make the primary numerical distinction between “singular” and “plural,” no matter what the degree of plurality might be. For there is more essential difference between “one” and “two” than there is between “two” and “two thousand,” or even “two million.”

And, of course, all of this underscores the fact that THERE CAN BE ONLY ONE “ULTIMATE PRIORITY” IN A PERSON’S LIFE. And that priority becomes the object of his deepest affections, his worship. That priority becomes his GOD.

So it is not surprising that the “Divine Principles for Good Living” begin with the announcement of God as the Supreme Object of Worship. Indeed, they could not begin elsewhere.

“I AM THE LORD THY GOD...THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.”

Let us examine this statement more closely. It contains both the **announcement** and the **priority** of God.

#### THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF GOD

“I AM THE LORD THY GOD”—

Whenever, in the King James Version, the word “Lord” appears in all capital letters, it is a direct rendering of the name *Yahweh* or *Jehovah*. The word “Jehovah” comes from the Hebrew verb which means “to be.” In the margins of the revised versions of the Bible, one will often find several suggested meanings:

“I am because I am.”



**"I am who I am."**

**"I will be that which I will be."**

Looking at the original disclosure of this name in Exodus 3, I believe that the last meaning best expresses it. The children of Israel are being ground to dust in Egypt beneath the heel of a hostile Pharaoh. God calls a halt at a burning bush in the Midian desert and tells Moses to lead His people out. But then Moses begins to make excuses to God. He especially makes two.

### **Who Am I?**

First, "Who am I that I should bring Israel out?" What an interesting and revealing question. On the surface, it appears to be an expression of genuine humility. Instead, it is pride, for it assumes that the responsibility for accomplishing that to which God calls him is Moses' and not God's. It is of little consequence what my native talents and capabilities are if God calls. He will enable if I trust Him and follow Him faithfully. God's answer to Moses' first question: "Who am I?" (that I should lead the people out of Egypt) was, "Surely I will be with you." So again, the question is not, "What are your talents and capabilities, "but it is "Who is your companion and Lord."

### **Who Are You?**

Second, Moses, having learned his first lesson well, then asked the right question, "God, who are you?" He put it like this: "What is your name...whom shall I say sent me?" And to this God answered, "I will be that which I will be (verse 14)."

Now what did God mean? God had been known by the enslaved Hebrews and the dwellers in the Midian desert by two names: *El*, the Exalted One, and *Shaddai*, the Strong One. But exaltation and strength were not enough now. The people of God needed a God who could provide not only deliverance, but survival and independence in a new land.

It was a big demand, but God answered: