

Dear friends,

Someone recently told me about a new version of the Ten Commandments printed in text messaging language that is greatly abbreviated. One place on the internet says that 60% of Americans can't name five out of the Ten Commandments.¹ No wonder our country is in such trouble.

Some stories are funny. A child was asked which commandment tells us how to treat our parents. Number 4 was the answer: honor your father and your mother. So far, so good. Was there a commandment that tells us how to treat our brother or sister? #6: don't kill!

Some congregations recite the Ten Commandments every Sunday at the beginning of worship. Maybe it will be good for us to reflect on God's law using memory pegs² (pictures that tell a story) and text message abbreviations³ to give us a fresh perspective. The memory peg will also have an explanation in parenthesis.

1 

no1 b4 me. Srsly
(God must have first place in our lives. Some people make money their god, and some put fame or entertainment ahead of the one true God.)

2 

dnt wrshp pix/idols
(The 2 is bowing down as if to an idol. This causes us to remember that commandment two forbids idol worship.)

3 

no omg's
(We see an angry 3 saying inappropriate words. A simple "yes" or "no" is sufficient. God's name must be spoken with reverence.)

4 

no wrk on w/end (sat 4 now; sun l8r)
(The temple is shown by the 4. The Jewish people worshiped in the the temple or the synagogue, and they did no work on the sabbath day.)

5 

pos ok – ur m&d r cool
(The 5 has a crown on it. Parents are held in high esteem when their children honor them as God directs.)

6 

dnt kill ppl
(The 6 shows what happens when people resort to violence to settle their conflicts. God wants us to settle our differences in a peaceful manner.)

¹ USA Today 03/07

² <http://gardenofpraise.com/mempeg2.htm>

³ <http://churchcrunch.com/if-god-text-messaged-the-10-commandments/>



:X only w/ m8

(We see a man and his family. He is not to also have a girlfriend with whom he betrays the love of his wife. An X has been placed on the "other woman" beside the 7.)



dnt steal

(God wants us to respect the rights of others. We must not take money or anything else that does not belong to us.)



dnt lie re: bf

(The wagging tongue on the 9 is telling lies about his neighbor. God wants us to always speak the truth to one another.)



dnt ogle ur bf's m8. or ox. or dnkey. myob.

(We must not want what others have. The 10 reminds us that a person must not always be thinking of "ME", but must learn to think of the welfare of others.)

The Ten Commandments can be found in Exodus 20:1-17 and Deuteronomy 5:6-21. We are commanded to teach them to our children in Deuteronomy 6:4-7. Can they be shortened like in the text messages? Jesus summed them up by saying:

²⁹ "The most important one," answered Jesus, "is this: 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.'^a ³⁰ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'^b ³¹ The second is this: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'^c There is no commandment greater than these."⁴

So, take some time to reflect on the commandments and consider how they apply to your everyday life as a Christian. (If you don't understand the text message abbreviations, ask somebody under age 18.)

Love in Christ,

^a Or the Lord our God is one Lord

^b Deut. 6:4,5

^c Lev. 19:18

⁴The Holy Bible : New International Version. 1984 (Mk 12:29). Grand Rapids: Zondervan.