
—Country Philosopher—

Visits to the church



Those precious moments given to me upon this earth are swiftly nearing their end. At least I know that in the future I will be standing in front of St. Peter giving an account of my life. I will be judged on past conduct and I'm not too sure I will pass the test. I should think that if we really tried to live up to the Ten Commandments then the gates of heaven would surely swing open. So today I would like to review the Ten Commandments and tell you how successful I have been in keeping them.

THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME:

This one was easy. I have only had one God, only needed one God, since my early introduction to Christianity. I can remember the solace and warmth I derived from kneeling by my bed and saying my prayers. My mother would stand patiently beside the bed until I was through. I say patiently because I must have blessed ten million people and four hundred animals. When I was overseas and things were getting just a trifle hairy I always knew that God would somehow protect me. I have always had a good, honest relationship with God and on that was built-on love instead of fear.

THOU SHALT NOT MAKE ANY GRAVEN IMAGES:

My faith never lessened to the extent that I sought new deities or theologies. I have not needed the pseudo-stimulant of joining a new cult or worshiping some obscure idol. My God, the God of my Bible, has been all I've ever needed.

THOU SHALT NOT TAKE THE NAME OF THE LORD IN VAIN:

There was no problem here. If you love someone, really, really love someone, how could you possibly hurt them by trivial acts of inconsideration?

REMEMBER THE SABBATH DAY:

I think I have been successful here. I went to both church and Sunday School well into manhood. And since that time, even though hypocrisy has diminished my church attendance, I can't remember the time I haven't set aside a portion of the Sabbath for prayer.

HONOR THY FATHER AND THY MOTHER:

Could I ever do anything but honor those two precious people? Daddy, with his stern manner and loving heart, and Mama who loved me always with a deep and beautiful intensity.

THOU SHALT NOT KILL:

I admit I have been tempted several times. There was a grown man who slapped my daughter when she was five years old. I didn't kill this man. I only half killed him. And that doesn't count.

THOU SHALT NOT STEAL:

When I was four years old someone stole my tricycle. I loved that little, red bike with all my heart and I knew that if stealing could cause the kind of pain I was enduring than I would never steal anything as long as I lived. An I haven't.

THOU SHALT NOT BEAR FALSE WITNESS:

I think my father helped me with this more than my religion did. Daddy couldn't stand a liar. The only lie I ever told was quickly followed by the worst whipping I ever got. It was a very painful and enduring lesson. The only time I even came close to lying is when my wife says, "Amos, do you like my new hat?"

THOU SHALT NOT COVET:

With my wife, my children, grandchildren, and all the blessings that have been bestowed upon me, I desire nothing else for myself.

THOU SHALT NOT COMMIT ADULTERY:

Well, nobody is perfect.
