

The Greatest Commandment
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What is actually the greatest sin? It should be found in the Ten Commandments; yet, how can one rate one evil as begin “better” than another? Try another approach – summarize the ten, and: Thou shalt not be false into thyself.

If one is not true unto himself, how can he begin falsehood against his parents, or even God? One must know himself before he can know others and act accordingly. A person cannot be false to God and remain true to himself. Self-falsehoods are the root of all evil. Glance over the original Commandments a moment, and see if you could feel innocent while committing any prohibited act. Could this new commandment be an overall guideline in life?

This law is difficult to comprehend, for it involves conscience and honesty. We often try to justify our actions to overcome a pang of guilt; we look only at the beneficial outcomes of our work, and tend to overlook the unconventional or inappropriate means by which we accomplished the deed. In order to use this condensation of rules, we must learn to be honest with ourselves. What is a falsehood by your standards? How can you judge yourself as being untrue? Learn to recognize your shortcomings, your tricks of twisting the truth, and remedy them.

Many a time do we find people being hypocritical; however, not only are they speaking contrary to their own beliefs or opinions, but are, at the same time, downgrading themselves. They will eventually earn reputations as hypocrites, ingrates, or outright liars. William Inge’s play, “Picnic” though somewhat outdated, portrays all people as being hypocrites. The shocking idea which comes to mind is – mankind is actually a race of such people. Just as all of Inge’s characters showed themselves as being untrue, so we see ourselves reflected in each of the characters. If you don’t believe your spoken words to be true, keep them to yourself. No words are better than lies, no matter how insignificant you may find these few utterances.

Many of us, in honestly trying to prove ourselves, take on too much; we attack every problem in sight, with good intentions, but very little is accomplished. We want to believe ourselves capable of great tasks; however, it requires much more to limit ourselves in order to benefit others. Temperance seems almost out of place when talking about falsehood; yet, aren’t we playing false with ourselves if we build ourselves up way out of proportion?

One must learn to know oneself. Evaluate yourself: your goals, your beliefs, your capabilities, your strengths, your weaknesses. Once you know yourself, you can better understand this new commandment. And with a clearer mind, and a clearer conscience, thou shalt NOT be false unto thyself.