

Ten Commandments — Respect for God
Centenary United Methodist Church
Sept. 4, 2022

TITLE

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable to you, O God, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

Last week we started the 10 Commandments. And we're doing so in a little unconventional way.

- We're not taking them all one at a time.
- We won't necessarily take them all in order as we go through them.
- Instead we're looking at themes.



- **You must have no other gods before me.**
- **Do not make an idol for yourself.**

Last week, you talked about making God the top priority in our lives.

- You must have no other gods before me.
- Do not make an idol for yourself.



Let's explore the next two commandments together. And to do so, we'll quote the queen of soul, Aretha Franklin — R-E-S-P-E-C-T.

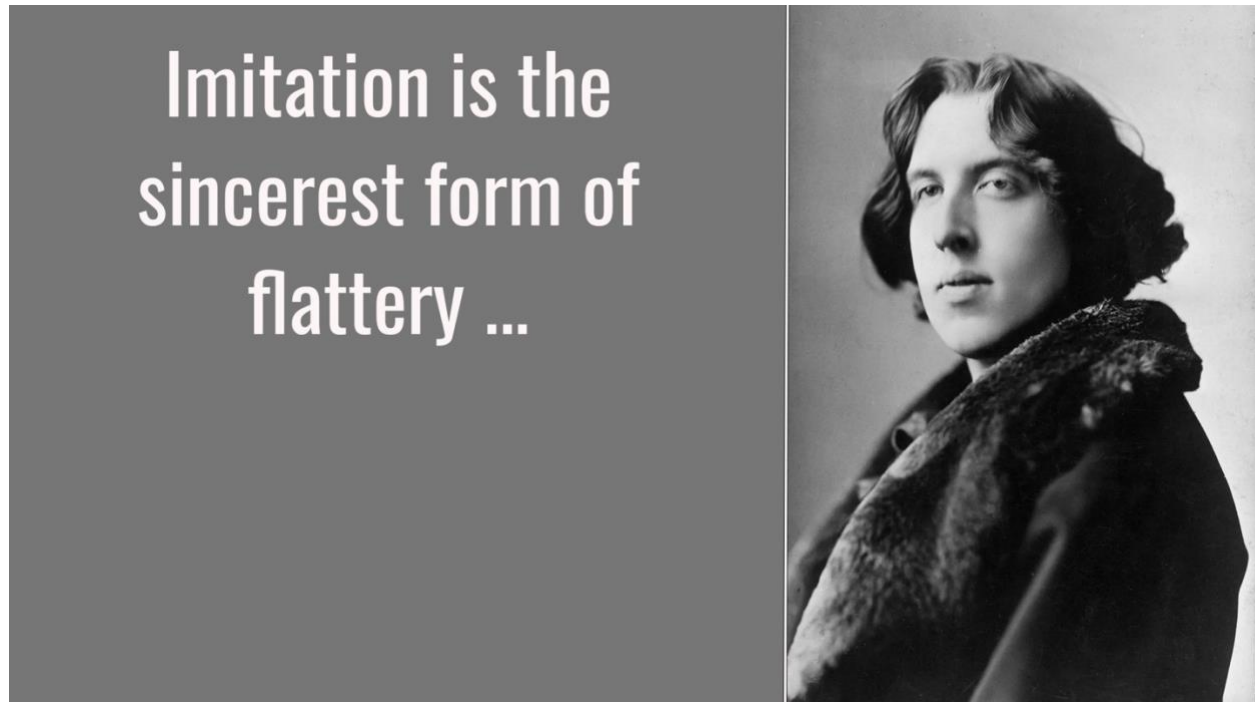
Think for a moment about the ways we show regard for others in the United States:

- We say "Please" and "Thank you" and "Excuse me."
- We cover our mouths when we sneeze, cough or burp.
- Make eye contact when speaking to a person.
- We tend to stay outside another person's "bubble" — and that was before COVID required us to stay 6 feet apart.

But respect looks differently in different cultures. Here are some examples:

- Bow upon encountering someone in Asian cultures.
- In India, you should eat with your right hand.
- In Sweden, you shouldn't drink until the host has made a toast.
- In Kenya, you don't start to eat until the oldest male present is served and has taken a bite.
- In Mexico, eye contact can be seen as confrontational or as having an air of superiority.
- In Jordan, never show the bottom of your shoes.
- And in Germany, you always use "Mr." or "Mrs." or "Miss."

The idea is when you are in areas where there are other cultures, you do what the others there do. The saying “When in Rome ...” comes to mind. You imitate them.



Irish poet and playwright Oscar Wilde perhaps has the most famous quote about imitation: “Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.”

- Have you heard that one before? Most of us have.
- But it’s not the full quote. But we’ll come back to that later.

What do all of those things have in common? They all deal with respect.

- Respect for people around us.
- Showing deference to others.
- Showing honor to those we encounter.

Respect is the key word for the next two commandments we are going to explore today.

Last week, you heard and were challenged to ponder what it means to make God the No. 1 priority in your life — more than yourself, and more than even your family.

- Together, the first two challenge us to prioritize God in our lives.

Today, we're going to talk about respect.
Let's dive into the scripture today. Exodus 20:7-11 ...

Do not use the LORD your God's name as if it were of no significance; the LORD won't forgive anyone who uses his name that way.

⁸ Remember the Sabbath day and treat it as holy. ⁹ Six days you may work and do all your tasks, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. Do not do any work on it—not you, your sons or daughters, your male or female servants, your animals, or the immigrant who is living with you. ¹¹ Because the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything that is in them in six days, but rested on the seventh day. That is why the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

May God add a blessing to the reading, hearing and understanding of scripture.



3. Do not use the Lord your God's name as if it were of no significance.

Let's take that first one – the 3rd commandment: Thou shalt not take the Lord's name in vain." — That's how the King James Version puts it.

The NIV says, "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God."

And the Common English Bible is what we just read: "Don't use the Lord your God's name as if it were of no significance."

How do we use the Lord's name as if it were not significant.



Ever hit your thumb with a hammer? You use colorful language. And sometimes “God” gets involved inadvertently.

- That certainly qualifies as using the name's Lord in vain, or as if it is insignificant.
- We have to understand what a name meant in the ancient world.
 - Today we have directories and can look up names online really easily. We know the names of people we have never met and will never meet.
 - But when the Bible was written, to know a person's name was to have power over them. The name was an identity. More so than identity means today.
 - In the ancient world, my name would have been Todd, son of LeRoy.
 - Tuff would be Tuff, son of Lowell.
 - Sorry ladies, the ancient world was even more misogynistic than it is today.
- To speak a person's name — someone you weren't intimate with — would be to identify that person's lineage, to paint them with either praises or

curses from their family line's successes or failures — and to do so in the open.

- People would know who the person was and what you were tying them to.
- The modern-day equivalent would be to say:
 - You're David, the son of the man who went to prison for a DUI.
 - Or "You're Jenny, daughter of the man who made the life-saving discovery for a new medicine."

Saying "Oh my God" is another way of using the name of our Creator in an insignificant way.

- It signifies a lack of importance because we certainly don't hold any power over God.



But there are ways to take the Lord's name in vain without even speaking it.

- One example: Misquoting scripture or inserting things into scripture that aren't there — it's a kind of faith-based malpractice.
- That's why I tell people when you talk about your faith, just share your story and the things you know to be absolutes:
 - Jesus came to earth as an infant.
 - Jesus taught us to love God and love others.
 - Jesus died on the cross for all people.
 - On the third day, Jesus conquered death by rising from the grave.
 - All who believe in Jesus as their savior are given the gift of eternal life in a heavenly kingdom.
 - Don't worry about the other details.
 - Use Google to look them up if you want.
 - And share the scripture so people can read it for themselves.
- Another way is to commit evil in God's name.



- People who kill others in the name of God are not doing it in God's name. God loves all people; they are all God's creation.
- Basically, any way or manner you use God's name or do something in the name of God that is wicked, worthless or for evil purposes is using God's name as though it is worthless.



And here's probably the biggest reason why we shouldn't use God's name in that way.

- Look at YHWH — the Hebrew name for God — “I am”
- We added YeHWeH because we like vowels — Hebrew has no vowels.
- Take the two sounds YH and WH — they are the sounds of breath
 - YH — inhale
 - WH — exhale
- So a baby's first breath is saying the name of God.
- Our last breaths are saying the name of God.
- When we breath because we have no words to describe the hurt and anguish, we say the name of God.

I think that's significant!

The name of God — YHWH, I am — is our very breath. And that is indeed most significant.



4. Remember the Sabbath day and treat it as holy.

So what about the Sabbath?



“Remember the Sabbath and treat it as holy.”

I would argue there are at least two reasons for honoring the Sabbath.

- First, God wanted to show us that it's important that we rest.
 - I found an article titled "The Importance of Rest."
 - It talks about the real health consequences of not getting enough rest.
 - I think we all understand the issues with burnout and fatigue.
- But it identified 7 kinds of rest:
 - Physical — napping or lounging.
 - Mental — Any type of rest that allows your brain to slow down or "shut off."
 - Sensory — Give the senses a break by unplugging from sensory overload caused by technology, loud noises, and such.
 - Creative — It's not really taking a break from being creative but rather re-engaging with spaces or activities that inspire you
 - Emotional — It means take time to express your emotions so you don't have to manage them internally
 - Social — Staying away from social situations that drain or exhaust you
 - And, finally, spiritual, which means to take part in practices such as prayer or meditation or worship.

Each of those are meant to provide a sense of calm, of peace.

Together they are the first of the two reasons I think God told us to keep a Sabbath.

The second reason goes back to that quote I shared earlier from Oscar Wilde.

Remember the quote: "Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery."

And what did God do on the seventh day of creation — however long seven days is in God's time?

God rested. So we're expected to do the same.

Imitation is the
sincerest form of
flattery ...



So back to the quote. Here it is in it's entirety:
"Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery

Imitation is the
sincerest form of
flattery
that mediocrity can
pay to greatness.



... that mediocrity can pay to greatness."

I don't know about you, but that makes the commandment even more meaningful to me.

- I fully recognize I am mediocre.
- And I fully recognize I want to mimic the greatness that is God.

So we've gone through the first four commandments.

The first two were about putting God atop our list of priorities.

- No other gods.
- No idols.

The two today were about showing God the respect that God deserves.

May we be mindful of showing that respect in the week ahead and beyond.

Amen.