



Our Duty to God

In the Northwest, Native people have uniquely recorded history and stories in the carving of totem poles. They use totem pole figures to symbolically identify their family heritage—what tribe or band their parents and grandparents come from. The carved figures symbolically tell stories and legends that are often used to teach lessons that apply to present-day life.

Similarly, the Bible, also teaches lessons and truths by stories and symbols. On the previous page is a picture taken from the book of Revelation, the last book of the Bible, of a woman who represents God’s people, His church. The woman’s clothing reflects sunlight which represents the gospel of Jesus—the teachings of heaven and the love of God—written about in the New Testament. The reflected light of the moon she stands on represents the reflected light of the ministry and teachings of Jesus written in the Old Testament.

The twelve stars in the woman’s crown represent the twelve Bible apostles and their teachings about Jesus. The location of the stars on her forehead shows that in her mind she “believes” what the disciples taught concerning the Savior. She has chosen to follow Jesus’ way of living by keeping God’s Ten Commandments which she holds dear (Revelation 12:17).

Like a totem pole this picture symbolically teaches us important truths.

Key Thought. What do God’s Ten Commandments say to us about God’s plan for our lives? Why are God’s commandments so important to us? What does it mean when the Bible says, “by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward” (Psalm 19:11)?

Native people use totem poles for remembering their history and for storytelling. The Bible also uses symbolic language.



BIBLE ANSWERS

1. In Exodus, chapter 20, the Bible gives Ten Commandments. In the first commandment what does God ask us not to put before Him? Exodus 20:3. “You shall have no other _____ before Me.”

(All quotations from the Bible in these lessons are taken from the New King James Version (NKJV) unless otherwise noted.)



Keeping God first, last, and best in all we do should be our most important duty in life.

NOTE: God wants you to allow nothing in life to come between you and Him. He wants you to let nothing prevent Him from carrying out His plan for you, and giving you strength to live a truly happy and fulfilled life. Keeping God first, last, and best in all we do should be our most important duty in life.

2. In the second commandment, what does God say that we shouldn't bow down to or worship? Exodus 20:4-5. “You shall not make for yourself a _____ . . . you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.”

NOTE: Some people think that Native people worship totem poles. They do not understand that they are used only for remembering history and telling stories, not for worship. Unfortunately, there *are* other cultures that encourage people to worship and ask for help from statues of wood and stone. However, the second commandment deals with more than statues and icons of worship.

It deals with anything we might put before God—cars, houses, money, or even relationships.

3. What ultimately happens to those who worship things made of metal, wood or stone? Psalm 97:7. “Let all be put to _____ who serve carved images.”



Only God can answer our prayers, help and protect us in times of trouble.

NOTE: Sooner or later the foolishness of worshipping idols will become apparent. This will become humiliating to the idol worshiper. An image of wood or stone lacks power. It can't change our hearts or provide miracles in our lives. It can't answer prayer or protect or help us through times of trouble. Only God can do this. Because of this, He is very specific in this commandment telling us we are not to worship graven images, and that only our Creator God should have our worship—the first place in our heart.

4. What does God warn us about in the third commandment? Exodus 20:7. “You shall not take the _____ of the Lord your God in vain.”

NOTE: What does taking God's name in vain mean? It is using God's name disrespectfully. Many call it “swearing.” The reason it is so important for us not to do so is because of the bad effect it has on us, on our children, and on others we associate with. Whenever God's name is taken in

vain, there is less respect felt for Him. When we don't have respect for God, it makes us less inclined to open our hearts to His leading.

In Native cultures the kind of influence parents have on their children is most important. If we want our children to respect someone, we are very careful not to run that person down or speak negatively about him. In the same way we are to give God respect by not swearing or taking His name in vain.

5. What specific thing does God ask us to remember? Exodus 20:8-10. “Remember the _____, _____, to keep it holy.”


In our traditional Native culture, the influence parents have on their children is most important.

NOTE: The weekly Sabbath is the day God has asked us to set aside as a special day of rest and worship. The question naturally arises, “Which day of the week is the Sabbath day?” It is easy to see on a calendar that Sunday is the first day of the week. As you count the days on the calendar, you can see that the seventh day of the week, Saturday, is the Sabbath (Exodus 20:10). The instruction in the fourth commandment is quite plain. On the Sabbath we are to keep from doing



our regular work because it is a day when God wants us to turn our minds more fully toward Him, a day when He wants to have a special closeness with us.

6. Why does God want us to remember the Sabbath day? Exodus 20:11. “For in six days the Lord _____ the heavens and the earth.”

 he Sabbath is a time for reflection, a time to remember that every heartbeat and every breath comes from the Creator.

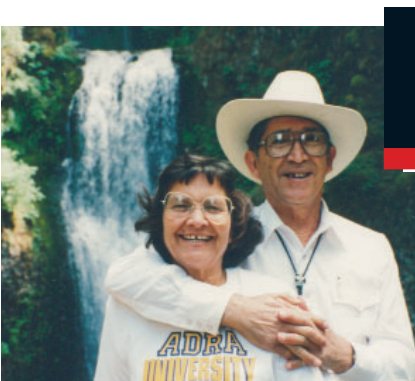
NOTE: The Sabbath is a day we set aside to help us continually remember that as God is able to create the world and everything in it, so He is able to help us today with all our needs. The Sabbath is a time for reflection, a time to remember that every heartbeat and every breath comes from our Creator. God knows that if we continue to keep so busy in life that we don't take time for spiritual thoughts and closeness to Him, we can easily forget that He is the only power that can change and help us.

Because of our great need of His life-changing power, God asks us to set aside the seventh day of each week to remember to refresh our minds about His love and plans for us. He knows we would forget that He is the source of our power and strength and drift away from Him, if we don't have this time together. The Sabbath hours are so important that even in the “new

heaven” and the “new earth” (Revelation 21:1), we will continue to set aside the seventh day of each week for worshipping the Great Creator God (Isaiah 66:22–23).

7. What sign is it to us and the world when we keep God’s Sabbath day holy? Ezekiel 20:20. “Hallow My Sabbaths, and they will be a sign between Me and you, that you may know that I am the LORD _____ God.”

NOTE: By keeping the Sabbath holy, we will be constantly reminded of God’s wonderful re-creative power. It is a sign of security, which comes to those who consistently depend on God for their needs. God calls them “His children.” He quietly puts the assurance of His love in the hearts of those who love and obey Him.



T

hrough the Sabbath we are reminded of God’s wonderful re-creative power. It also gives us time to strengthen our bonds with family.

The Sabbath provides rest from physical labor, which contributes to our health. The Sabbath gives us time to study and learn about God. It gives us a time for strengthening our bonds with our families and Christian friends.

When people see us keeping His Sabbath day holy, they can see the closeness it brings between us and the Lord.

Closing Thought. God made the Sabbath for our benefit (Mark 2:27–28). In future lessons we will discuss the topic of the Sabbath more fully. We need to remember that God has set aside this time every week for the contemplation of the blessings He has given and wants to continue to give to us in the future.

Today millions around the world are discovering the benefits of keeping holy the Sabbath. Many Native people across America and Canada are finding the special change that takes place in their lives when they set aside this time with the Lord as He has asked us to.

Next Lesson. In this lesson we have discovered that the first four commandments outline our duty to God. In the next lesson we will be discussing the last six commandments which outline our duty to man.

(Note: More information regarding the Sabbath will be given in future lessons—lessons 20 and 21.)



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Our Duty to God

Read through the lesson, then fill in this Answer Sheet. You should refer back to the lesson to find the correct answers. Referring to the lesson helps fix the answers in your mind.

Place an X before each TRUE statement.

1. The first commandment tells us:

- to try our best to be good.
- not to put any other god above God, our Creator.

2. What “other gods” is God warning us about?

- Anything we put before God, including cars, houses, money, and even relationships.
- Only idols of wood and stone.

3. The foolishness of worshiping idols is apparent:

- because only God can transform our hearts and provide miracles in our lives.
- because God made the material out of which idols are made.

4. Taking God’s name in vain:

- fosters a lack of respect for God.
- strengthens our respect for God.

5. What day does God ask us to remember?

- Sunday, the first day of the week.
- The Sabbath (Saturday), the seventh day of the week.

6. Why did God give us the Sabbath day of rest?

- To continually remind us that He is the Creator and that He will help us with our every need.
- To give rest each week to our bodies and busy lives.

7. Keeping the Sabbath holy:

- is a constant reminder to us of God’s wonderful saving and re-creative power.
- is the only way we will be saved and go to heaven.

Answer to a question often asked about the seventh-day Sabbath.

Wasn’t the fourth commandment about the Sabbath intended just for the Old Testament Jews to keep?

- Jesus Himself said that “the Sabbath was made for man,” meaning for all mankind and not just for certain people (Mark 2:27). Many people think the commandment about keeping the Sabbath existed only for Jews during Old

Testament times. However, we find it was kept by our first parents, Adam and Eve, at the beginning of the world, many years before there was a Jewish nation (Genesis 2:2-3). The Sabbath will be kept by all of God's people of all nations throughout eternity (Isaiah 66:22-23).

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