



The Second Commandment

“The second is this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’
There is no other commandment greater than these.” Mark 12:31



Rev. Tracy McConnell

If asked what the best-known passages on conflict and sin are in the Bible, most would put Matthew 18 at the top of their list. However, there’s another passage that is more widely known among both Christians and non-Christians. But before revealing it, it would be helpful to provide its context within God’s commands designed to limit sin in the Pentateuch. After God warned Cain about sin in Gen. 4:6, it was nearly 2000 years before He gave Noah the commands about murder and eating meat in Gen. 9:6. It was another 850 years before God gave Moses the Ten Commandments in Ex. 20:1-17, where He codified the way mankind was to interact with Him, and, along with restating the command against murder, added commands against lying, stealing, adultery, and coveting to limit man’s conflict with man. God added more commands in Ex. 20:18-23:9, restricting things like physical assault, oppressing strangers, mistreating widows and orphans, and gave guidelines for restitution. Then God added more commands in Lev. 18 through 20 against sins like holding back a worker’s wages, mistreating people with disabilities, and showing partiality in the courts. It is in Lev. 19 that the best-known passage on conflict and sin appears. Verses 17-18 say,

You shall not hate your brother in your heart,

but you shall reason frankly with your neighbor, lest you incur sin because of him.

You shall not take vengeance or bear a grudge against the sons of your own people,

but **you shall love your neighbor as yourself**: I am the Lord. (ESV)

When Jesus quoted the last part of these two pairings as the 2nd great command in Mark 12:31, He was, of course, referring to the moral commands in the Old Testament designed to limit the impact of sin (Rom. 13:9). But the context of the phrase also marked a fundamental shift away from laws meant to limit sin and define restitution after sin, to a process for resolving conflict to prevent sin, making Lev. 19:17-18 one of the best and possibly least known passages about sin and conflict in the Bible.

Lev. 19:17-18 presents two pairings that describe what you can do when someone hurts, offends, or sins against you (conflict): hating your brother in your heart vs. reasoning frankly with him, and taking vengeance and bearing

a grudge against him vs. loving your neighbor as yourself, along with a warning in the middle. In the first pairing, hating your brother in your heart is the opposite of reasoning frankly with him about the conflict. The words “reason” and “frankly” are the same Hebrew word repeated in two different forms. One definition involves openly and honestly presenting an accusation of wrongdoing,¹ while the other involves clarifying a person’s moral standing through arguments for or against them that use facts about physical circumstances to determine whether a sin has been committed.² By combining these definitions, reasoning frankly involves confronting the person you’re in conflict with by openly and honestly presenting an accusation of wrongdoing, and then working through arguments for or against it with facts about physical circumstances to determine whether a sin has been committed. Therefore, choosing not to confront (reason frankly with) your brother when he hurts, offends, or sins against you is hating him.

Moses joins the pairings with a warning against failing to confront. If you choose not to reason frankly with the person who has hurt, offended, or sinned against you, you will “incur sin because of him” through what the second pairing describes as taking vengeance and bearing a grudge against them. Paul echoes this warning in Eph. 4:26-27, where he says, “*Be angry, and do not sin*’: do not let the sun go down on your wrath, nor give place to the devil” (NKJV). On the other hand, when you reason frankly with your neighbor, you are loving your neighbor as yourself.

While Lev 19:17-18 is not the total of God’s instruction on dealing with sin and conflict in the church, it does lay the foundation on which passages like Matt. 18:15-20 and Rom. 12:16-21 are built. It prioritizes confrontation, defines the approach to take when confronting, warns of the dangers of not confronting, and presents confrontation as a loving act.

¹ Paul R. Gilchrist, “865 נָכַח,” in *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, ed. R. Laird Harris, Gleason L. Archer Jr., and Bruce K. Waltke (Chicago: Moody Press, 1999), 376.

² Warren Baker and Eugene E. Carpenter, *The Complete Word Study Dictionary: Old Testament* (Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers, 2003), 446.

RECIPES

Mom's Snickerdoodles

Dough Mixture

1 cup butter (Softened)

1½ cups Sugar

2 Eggs unbeaten

2¾ cups Flour

2 tsp Cream of Tarter

1 tsp Baking soda

½ tsp Salt

Cinnamon Sugar

2 Tbsp Cinnamon

5 Tbsp sugar

Cream together butter and sugar. Add eggs and beat until light and fluffy.

Sift together the dry ingredients. Add combined dry ingredients to the sugar mixture and beat until dough-like.

Refrigerate for 2 hours.

Preheat oven to 375°

Mix cinnamon sugar ingredients. Roll dough into walnut-sized balls and roll in cinnamon sugar mixture. Place on a lightly greased cookie sheet and cook for 8-10 minutes.

Storing Fruits and Vegetables

- Potatoes like it a bit warmer than other root crops, so store higher up. Don't store apples near potatoes. The apples give off ethylene gas that will spoil potatoes. Don't store near onions. Potatoes excrete moisture and speed up onion decay.
- Beets, carrots, parsnips & other root crops should be brushed clean of soil & stored in a cool, dark location. Clipping tops will keep them fresh longer.
- Store apples in the refrigerator in a fruit drawer with a damp paper towel for the short term. For long-term storage, store in plastic bags in boxes at 32° for up to 6 months. Apples ripen 4 times quicker at 50° than at 32°. Don't store apples near bananas. Both give off ethylene gas that dramatically accelerates their ripening and causes them to spoil much faster.

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Leave a legacy for your family & favorite ministries. When planning a legacy, give Terry L. Balko a call at 404-229-1645 or email Mr. Balko for forms and details at terrylbalko@gmail.com. **Don't let your hard earned life-savings go into a probate bureaucracy! NOT PLANNING is a plan, but it is NOT a very good plan!**

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Bible Related Ministries Newsletter

Fernando Garza, Interim Director



2026

*He who did not spare His own Son,
but delivered Him up for us all,
how shall He not with Him also
freely give us all things?"*

Romans 8:32

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>Dr. Joe Stewart, BRM Associate – Sr. Pastor of Grace Bible Church, Dallas City, IL

>Rev. Darwyn Hassert, BRM Associate – Smyrna Bible Church (and vicinity), MI, preaches and assists as needed in nearby areas

>Rev. Don Zimmerman, Interim Pastor of Western Springs Baptist Church, IL

>Rev. Jim Vyleta, Interim Pastor of Appleton Community Evangelical Free Church, Appleton, WI

>Rev. Tracy B McConnell, BRM Associate – Newsletter Publication

Corney Corn Jokes:

- How much does a corn flake weigh? 1 Kelloggram.
- What did the cornfield say when it heard rain coming? That's music to my ears.
- Did you hear about that corn stalk that changed careers? He went into a different field.
- Who is the leader of the corn army? The kernel.
- What did the baby corn say to the mama corn? Where's pop corn?
- How much does pirate corn cost? A buck an ear.
- Who is the corniest baseball player of all time? Ty Cobb!
- What do you call a single kernel of corn? A unicorn!
<https://www.skiptomylou.org/corn-jokes/>

BRM Field Report #8

Hello BRMers,

It's been a year since Rev David J Bauer, our BRM Executive Director, went home to be with the Lord. I was able to see him a couple of days before he passed, and he's the only person I've ever said that I'll see you again in Heaven. What a promise and assurance we have with Jesus that this will take place, John 3:16, 1 Thess 4:17.

It has also been a year since the BRM Board elected me to be the Interim Director. I have often felt 'who I am' to lead BRM. But I have heard and felt God's voice saying, "I don't make mistakes." With that assurance, I've been managing and leading BRM alongside Dolores Bauer. We are still filling the needs of Churches we have known for a long time, as well as new Churches, which has been very encouraging.

I love the mission of BRM, which began with our founder Rev Chuck Svoboda, and we will continue in ministry as long as 'God wills it'.

Blessings, Fernando Garza, Interim Director

If you enjoyed Rev. Hassert's article from last month, you can find his books, *Patriotism from an American Pulpit* and *The Bible, Perfect and Practical*, on Amazon.

BRM is here for you! As we wait on God to provide BRM with a new Executive Director, Fernando Garza (BRM Interim Director), along with Dolores and the BRM Associates, are working together to fulfill BRM's mission. The phone lines are open and manned. Don't hesitate to call with any questions, needs, concerns, or issues.

Please continue to pray for BRM:

1. For God to provide a new Executive Director
2. For God's wisdom and guidance for the BRM Board