

Love Carved in Stone

A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments

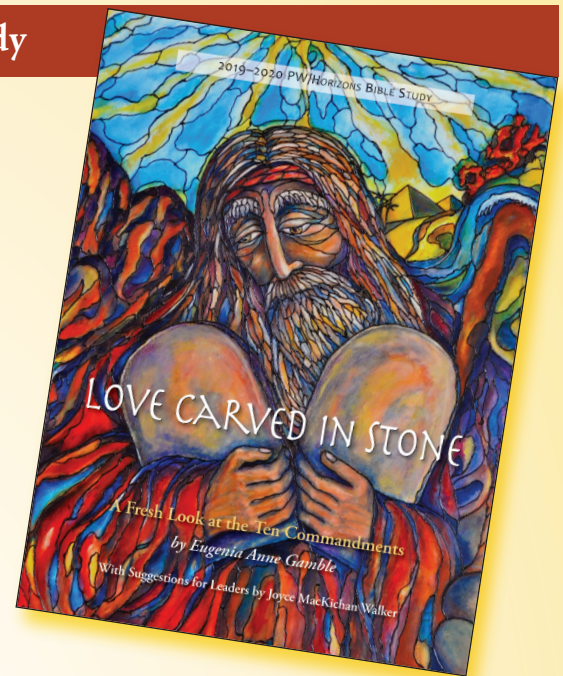
By Eugenia Anne Gamble

With Suggestions for Leaders by Joyce MacKichan Walker

What would it mean to consider the Ten Commandments not as a harsh list of what not to do but, instead, as a “love letter” from a loving God? A fresh embrace of the Ten Commandments (or Words), author Eugenia Gamble suggests, may ultimately contribute to the restoration of ourselves and our communities and the furthering of the gospel in the world. “Moral behavior matters, not simply because immoral actions can anger or disappoint God, but because principled behavior is how love becomes real, both toward God and in community.” *Love Carved in Stone* is a Bible study that helps us reframe the way we look at and live in the world.

Why the Ten Words? The author notes that nowhere in the Hebrew text does the word for “commandment” appear. She says, “In the Bible, these utterances are called just what they are: ‘words.’ I’ve chosen to use the term ‘Ten Words’ because it is the biblical form and opens us up to looking at the Ten Commandments in fresh ways.”

Each lesson begins with an exploration of one of the Ten Words in its biblical context. From there we consider a moment from Jesus’ life that shows us how he lived out that Word. We then consider the Word for our own lives and contexts. We conclude with an invitation to pray with the Word in our circles or study groups and in our personal devotions.



Summary of the Ten Words

The **First Word** calls us to allow God to be our One and Only.

The **Second Word** asks us not to be fooled into substituting other things for God.

The **Third Word** summons us into deep and honest intimacy with God for who God is and not for what God can do for us.

The **Fourth Word** calls us, regularly and without fail, to stop and rest in the beauty and provision of God for us and for the whole human family.

The **Fifth Word** calls us to honor that which is honorable in our heritages and give a place of precedence to those who bring us to the fullness of life.

The **Sixth Word** calls us, as individuals and as a society, to refuse to “take life,” whether in literal or metaphorical ways.

The **Seventh Word** reminds us that life-long commitments matter, not just to us but to the whole community.

The **Eighth Word** reminds us not to take from others—not their possessions, their self-esteem, or their livelihood. This word asks us to ponder how our choices take from or lift up others.

The **Ninth Word** calls us to fundamental honesty in all of our dealings and in the institutions of our society.

The **Tenth Word** calls each of us to trust God’s provision and to welcome the unique lives that we live.

About the authors



Eugenia A. Gamble is a PC(USA) pastor who has served the church for more than thirty years. She is an author, speaker, preacher, and retreat leader who loves nothing more than to help the Bible come alive in people’s lives. In addition to *Love Carved in Stone*, Eugenia wrote *Glimpses of Home*, the 1995–1996 PW/*Horizons* Bible study. Eugenia is

married to Rob Phillips; they live on the central coast of California with their beloved keeshond, Abigail. Eugenia joined her first PW circle in seminary and says she would not have been able to negotiate life without her sisters.



Suggestions for Leaders writer **Joyce MacKichan Walker** recently retired as the minister of education and mission at Nassau Presbyterian Church in Princeton, New Jersey, where she served for thirty years. A 1979 graduate of the Presbyterian School of Christian

Education (now Union Presbyterian Seminary), her first love has always been teaching. She enjoys consulting in education ministry, writing, and traveling—she’ll go almost anywhere!

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