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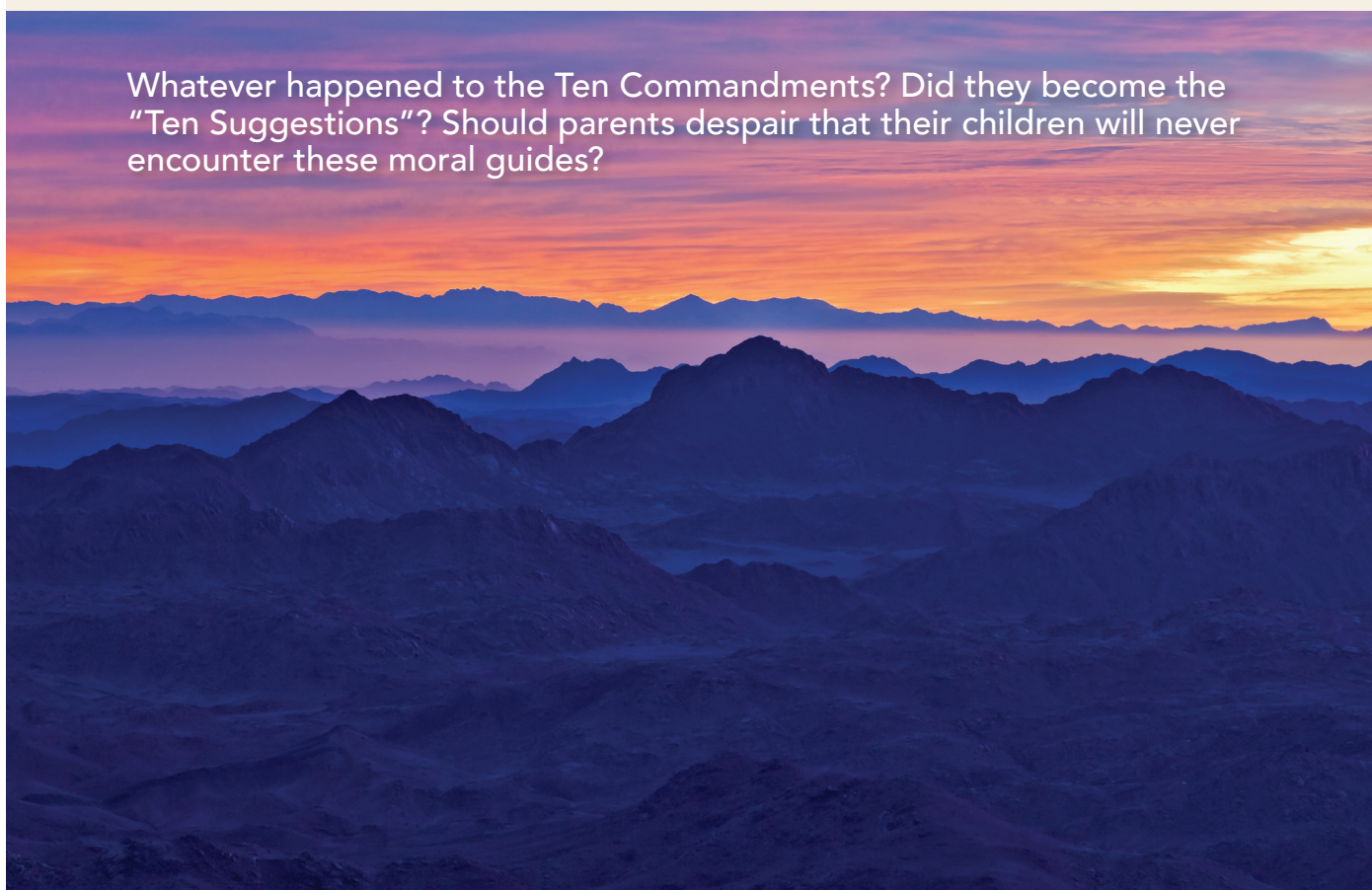
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The Ten Commandments

SOUNDS OF LOVE FROM SINAI

BY ALFRED MCBRIDE, OPRAEM

Whatever happened to the Ten Commandments? Did they become the "Ten Suggestions"? Should parents despair that their children will never encounter these moral guides?



Relax. The Ten Commandments are more alive than ever because now they're seen not just in terms of the sins they forbid, but also the values they espouse. Moses heard the sounds of love as well as the cadences of the law when he went to Sinai. Divine love created us as a people of faith and provided us with ten core values that show us how to love.

Covenant is the key to the richest understanding of

the commandments. Covenant is a love bond between God and us. Love liberates the human person. The Ten Commandments propose ten statements of liberty *from* attitudes and behaviors that undermine love. They liberate us *for* the acquisition of attitudes that enhance love. Far more than being restrictive laws, the Ten Commandments are liberating values and loving directives for our moral lives. Look, then, at each commandment in this light.

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I. BELIEVE IN THE REAL GOD.

I, the Lord, am your God. You shall not have other gods beside me.

The First Commandment invites us to faith in the real God, a God of love. The real God guides us to happiness, offers forgiveness, seeks the company of the imperfect, walks with us on our journey, cares deeply about what will enhance our worth and dignity—and fosters our freedom to grow in virtue.

The First Commandment liberates us from faith in too small a God and frees us for a lifelong relationship with our God who loves to be with us. It teaches that our first moral task is a call to a life of *gratitude before the real God of loving graciousness*. It teaches us to begin our moral life with a God of love and make our lives a responsive song of love that echoes the sounds of love from Sinai.

II. REVERE THE SACRED.

You shall not take the name of the Lord, your God, in vain.

The Second Commandment invites us to search for signs of the sacred in the midst of life and develop an attitude of reverence. When we appreciate the sacredness of God, we also acquire a reverence for ourselves, others, and the environment.

The best translation for this commandment is “You shall not make *wrong use* of God’s name.” Of course, we shouldn’t utter God’s name carelessly or irreverently. Nor should we use it to justify wars, slaughter enemies, brutalize heretics, or impose unjustified political and ecclesiastical power.

Reverence and appreciating the sacred aspects of human existence is the liberating purpose of the Second Commandment. The right use of God’s name recognizes God’s power and loving presence in the human person, relationships, and the universe. Religion offers visible signs of the sacred—in the person of Jesus, the Church, and sacraments. We’ll appreciate those obvious signs of the

