

# Raise Your Standard of Living

Text: Matthew 5:17-20

**Introduction:** *In every area of life, there are those who do only what they need to do to get by, and there are those who do what is necessary to excel. “When we live below a standard, it is simply human nature to redefine the standard as unreasonable and establish standards that our patterns (habits) are already accomplishing. (In other words), we keep lowering the bar until (we) can clear it” (An Unstoppable Force, by Erwin McManus, p.203).*

The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17; Deuteronomy 5:1-21) were not given as some ideal standard human beings should strive to live by, but as man’s minimum standard of living. Any-thing less than living by the Ten Commandments makes us no better than animals or barbarians.

Jesus didn’t come to do away with the Ten Commandments, but to fully explain their true meaning (5:27&28, 33-37, 38-42, 43-48). Grace is more than God’s way of allowing us to sin and be forgiven of it. Grace empowers us to live above God’s minimum standard for living.

The first century church was a movement whose assignment was so huge that it required ALL God’s people to complete (Acts 2:44; 4:32; Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8; II Corinthians 5:18-20).

Common and ordinary people, empowered by God are able to do extraordinary things (John 4:28-30, 39-42; Mark 5:19&20); II Corinthians 8:1-5).

There is one calling to those who would be Christians, and that one calling demands sacrifice from all who respond (Romans 12:1&2; Galatians 2:20; Philippians 1:21; Romans 14:8; Matthew 16:24; 10:34-39; Hebrews 12:14; I Peter 1:16)

**Conclusion:** We are called to a higher standard of living than the rest of the world (Matthew 5:43-48). Let us accept the challenge that comes from living in grace and raise our standard of moral living to a level greater than we are living right now.

## ***Small Group Questions:***

- Compare your current standard of living to that of your parents. Compare it to their standard of living when they were your age.
- Do you think God’s Ten Commandments are the ideal we should all strive to live? Or, are they the starting point for a new believer?
- If the disciples were unschooled, ordinary people used by God to do extraordinary things (Acts 4:13), what prevents God from using ordinary people like you and I from doing extraordinary things?
- What will you do this week to raise your standard of moral living (Hebrews 12:14)? What specific actions will you commit to?