Commands for the Individual Believer

What remains of biblical law after four exclusions are applied

Method

Every command in the Old and New Testaments was passed through four filters. A command was **removed** if it is:

- **(1) Particular** — addressed only to a specific person or group in a specific historical context (e.g. Noah, Abraham, Israel's conquest of Canaan, Timothy's wine).
- **(2) Fulfilled by Christ on the cross** — the sacrificial system and what the NT explicitly treats as shadow fulfilled in him (purity, food, festival and circumcision laws).
- **(3) Priestly** — instructions given only to priests and Levites for sanctuary service.
- **(4) Penal / civil** — sanctions to be carried out by judges, elders of the city or governing authorities (death penalties, restitution regimes, cities of refuge).

Two working rules governed the result. First, where a filter removes only the *sanction* attached to a law (criterion 4), the underlying prohibition still stands for the individual: adultery remains forbidden even though the believer does not execute the adulterer. Second, an OT case law that survives the filters is listed by its *principle* where the NT does the same (e.g. Deut 25:4 in 1 Cor 9:9). Commands addressed to people in a role every believer may occupy (spouse, parent, child, employee, employer, citizen) are retained, since they are not tied to one historical group. Commands restricted to church office-holders are treated as the NT analogue of criterion (3) and removed.

The list is consolidated: overlapping commands (often dozens of verses saying the same thing) are grouped under one instruction with representative references, not enumerated verse by verse. Items where the four criteria do not yield a clear verdict are set aside in Appendix B rather than silently included or excluded.

Two categories. Sections I–VIII are **to be obeyed**. These include the Sabbath (Section II) and the tithe (Section VI). Section IX is **optional**. It lists Torah practices kept by many Messianic and Torah-observant believers. They may be observed as acts of devotion and identification with Israel's Messiah, but they are not required of the believer, and those who keep them and those who do not should not judge one another (Rom 14:1–6; Col 2:16).

I. The Summary Commands

#	Instruction	OT basis	NT basis
1	Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength.	Deut 6:4–5	Matt 22:37–38; Mark 12:29–30
2	Love your neighbour as yourself.	Lev 19:18	Matt 22:39; Rom 13:8–10; Gal 5:14; Jas 2:8
3	Love one another as Christ has loved you.	—	John 13:34–35; 15:12; 1 John 4:7–11
4	Do to others what you would have them do to you.	—	Matt 7:12; Luke 6:31
5	Do justice, love mercy, walk humbly with your God.	Mic 6:8; Deut 10:12–13	Matt 23:23

II. God, Worship and Devotion

#	Instruction	OT basis	NT basis
6	Have no other gods before the LORD.	Exod 20:3; Deut 5:7	1 Cor 8:4–6; 1 John 5:21
7	Do not make or worship idols.	Exod 20:4–6; Lev 19:4	1 Cor 10:14; Col 3:5 (greed as idolatry)
8	Do not misuse the LORD's name; let your yes be yes.	Exod 20:7; Lev 19:12	Matt 5:33–37; Jas 5:12

#	Instruction	OT basis	NT basis
9	Fear the LORD and worship and serve him only.	Deut 6:13; 10:20	Matt 4:10; 1 Pet 2:17
10	Do not put the Lord to the test.	Deut 6:16	Matt 4:7; 1 Cor 10:9
11	Have nothing to do with divination, sorcery, omens or mediums. *The death penalty of Lev 20:27 is removed (criterion 4); the prohibition stands.*	Lev 19:26, 31; Deut 18:10–12	Gal 5:20; Acts 19:18–19; Rev 21:8
12	Do not follow false prophets or teachers; test the spirits.	Deut 13:1–4; 18:20–22	Matt 7:15; 1 John 4:1; 2 John 10
13	Do not add to or take away from God's word.	Deut 4:2; 12:32; Prov 30:6	Rev 22:18–19
14	Remember the LORD; do not forget him in prosperity.	Deut 8:11–18	1 Tim 6:17
15	Repent and believe the gospel.	Ezek 18:30–32	Mark 1:15; Acts 2:38; 17:30
16	Be baptized.	—	Matt 28:19; Acts 2:38
17	Observe the Lord's Supper in remembrance of him; examine yourself.	—	Luke 22:19; 1 Cor 11:23–29
18	Pray continually, with thanksgiving, without anxiety.	—	1 Thess 5:17–18; Phil 4:6; Col 4:2
19	Do not neglect meeting together; encourage one another.	—	Heb 10:24–25
20	Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy: set apart one day in seven for rest from ordinary work and for worship. *Part of the Decalogue and grounded in creation. Whether it is kept on the seventh day or on the Lord's Day is a matter of conviction.*	Gen 2:2–3; Exod 20:8–11; Deut 5:12–15; Isa 58:13–14	Mark 2:27–28; Luke 4:16; Acts 20:7; Heb 4:9; Rev 1:10
21	Meditate on and keep God's word; teach it to your children.	Deut 6:6–9; Josh 1:8	Col 3:16; 2 Tim 3:14–17; Eph 6:4
22	Be holy, for God is holy.	Lev 19:2; 20:7	1 Pet 1:15–16; Heb 12:14
23	Give thanks in all circumstances; rejoice in the Lord.	Ps 100:4	1 Thess 5:16–18; Phil 4:4
24	Seek first the kingdom of God.	—	Matt 6:33
25	Abide in Christ; walk by the Spirit; be filled with the Spirit.	—	John 15:4; Gal 5:16, 25; Eph 5:18
26	Do not love the world or the things in the world.	—	1 John 2:15–17; Jas 4:4; Rom 12:2
27	Submit to God; resist the devil; be sober and watchful.	—	Jas 4:7; 1 Pet 5:8–9; Eph 6:10–18
28	Do everything, including eating and drinking, to the glory of God.	—	1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17
29	Abstain from blood and from the meat of strangled animals. *Laid on all Gentile believers by the Jerusalem Council; grounded in the Noachic command given to all humanity before Sinai.*	Gen 9:4; Lev 17:10–14; Deut 12:16, 23	Acts 15:20, 29; 21:25
30	Confess Christ before others and be ready to give a reason for your hope.	—	Matt 10:32–33; 1 Pet 3:15
31	Use your spiritual gifts to serve one another.	—	Rom 12:6–8; 1 Pet 4:10–11
32	Respect and submit to faithful church leaders.	—	Heb 13:7, 17; 1 Thess 5:12–13

III. Family and Authority

#	Instruction	OT basis	NT basis
33	Honour your father and mother.	Exod 20:12; Lev 19:3; Deut 5:16	Matt 15:4; Eph 6:2–3
34	Children: obey your parents in the Lord.	Prov 1:8; 6:20	Eph 6:1; Col 3:20
35	Parents: do not provoke your children; bring them up in the Lord's instruction.	Deut 6:7; Prov 22:6	Eph 6:4; Col 3:21
36	Husbands: love your wives as Christ loved the church; live with them with understanding.	Prov 5:18–19	Eph 5:25–33; Col 3:19; 1 Pet 3:7
37	Wives: submit to your husbands as to the Lord.	—	Eph 5:22–24; Col 3:18; 1 Pet 3:1–6
38	Provide for your own household and care for widowed relatives.	—	1 Tim 5:4, 8, 16
39	Rise before the aged and honour the elderly.	Lev 19:32	1 Tim 5:1–2
40	Submit to governing authorities; pay taxes and honour; pray for rulers.	Jer 29:7	Rom 13:1–7; 1 Pet 2:13–17; 1 Tim 2:1–2; Titus 3:1
41	Workers: serve employers sincerely, as serving the Lord. *Addressed to slaves; applied by analogy to employees.*	—	Eph 6:5–8; Col 3:22–24; 1 Pet 2:18
42	Employers: treat workers justly and without threats.	Lev 25:43; Deut 24:14	Eph 6:9; Col 4:1

IV. Life, Anger and the Neighbour

#	Instruction	OT basis	NT basis
43	Do not murder; do not harbour murderous anger or contempt.	Exod 20:13; Deut 5:17	Matt 5:21–22; 1 John 3:15
44	Do not hate your brother in your heart; rebuke him frankly.	Lev 19:17	Matt 18:15; Luke 17:3; Gal 6:1
45	Do not take revenge or bear a grudge.	Lev 19:18; Prov 20:22; 24:29	Rom 12:17–19; 1 Pet 3:9
46	Do not retaliate; turn the other cheek; go the second mile. *Jesus personalises what Exod 21:24 assigned to judges (criterion 4).*	—	Matt 5:38–42
47	Love your enemies; do good to them; pray for persecutors.	Exod 23:4–5; Prov 25:21–22	Matt 5:44; Luke 6:27–28; Rom 12:20
48	Do not stand idly by when your neighbour's life is in danger.	Lev 19:16b; Prov 24:11–12	Luke 10:30–37
49	Take reasonable care that your property does not endanger others. *Principle of the parapet law; the civil liability clause is removed.*	Deut 22:8; Exod 21:33–34	—
50	Do not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind.	Lev 19:14; Deut 27:18	Rom 14:13
51	Do not cause a weaker brother or sister to stumble.	—	Rom 14:13–21; 1 Cor 8:9–13
52	Forgive as the Lord forgave you.	—	Matt 6:14–15; 18:21–35; Col 3:13; Eph 4:32
53	Do not judge hypocritically; first remove the log from your own eye.	—	Matt 7:1–5; Rom 14:10
54	Live at peace with all, as far as it depends on you; overcome evil with good.	Ps 34:14	Rom 12:18, 21; Heb 12:14
55	Bear one another's burdens; restore the fallen gently.	—	Gal 6:1–2
56	Practise hospitality; welcome strangers.	Lev 19:33–34; Deut 10:19	Rom 12:13; Heb 13:2; 1 Pet 4:9

#	Instruction	OT basis	NT basis
57	Visit the sick and remember those in prison.	—	Matt 25:35–40; Heb 13:3; Jas 1:27
58	Be kind to animals in your care.	Deut 22:4, 6–7; 25:4; Prov 12:10	1 Cor 9:9 (applied); Luke 14:5

V. Sexuality and Marriage

#	Instruction	OT basis	NT basis
59	Do not commit adultery, in act or in the lustful look. *Death penalty (Lev 20:10) removed under criterion 4.*	Exod 20:14; Deut 5:18	Matt 5:27–28; Rom 13:9
60	Flee sexual immorality; control your own body in holiness.	Prov 5–7	1 Cor 6:18–20; 1 Thess 4:3–8; Eph 5:3
61	Do not commit incest.	Lev 18:6–18	1 Cor 5:1
62	Do not engage in same-sex intercourse.	Lev 18:22	Rom 1:26–27; 1 Cor 6:9–10; 1 Tim 1:10
63	Do not engage in bestiality.	Lev 18:23; Exod 22:19	—
64	Honour marriage and keep the marriage bed pure.	Gen 2:24; Mal 2:14–15	Heb 13:4; Matt 19:4–6
65	Do not divorce (save on the grounds Scripture permits); do not break faith with your spouse.	Mal 2:13–16	Matt 19:3–9; Mark 10:2–12; 1 Cor 7:10–15
66	Do not deprive one another sexually within marriage.	Exod 21:10 (principle)	1 Cor 7:3–5
67	Marry only in the Lord; do not be unequally yoked.	Deut 7:3–4 (principle)	1 Cor 7:39; 2 Cor 6:14
68	Do not cross-dress to blur sexual identity. *Retained by many as moral; some treat it as cultic-particular.*	Deut 22:5	1 Cor 11:14–15 (debated)

VI. Property, Work and Economic Justice

#	Instruction	OT basis	NT basis
69	Do not steal; work so as to have something to share.	Exod 20:15; Lev 19:11	Eph 4:28; Rom 13:9
70	Do not covet anything that belongs to your neighbour.	Exod 20:17; Deut 5:21	Rom 7:7; 13:9; Col 3:5
71	Use honest weights, measures and dealings.	Lev 19:35–36; Deut 25:13–16; Prov 11:1	1 Thess 4:6
72	Do not defraud; pay wages promptly.	Lev 19:13; Deut 24:14–15	Jas 5:4; 1 Tim 5:18
73	Do not move your neighbour's boundary marker. *Retained as the principle of respecting legitimate property.*	Deut 19:14; Prov 22:28	—
74	Return lost property to its owner.	Exod 23:4; Deut 22:1–3	—
75	Do not deprive the poor of necessities taken in pledge.	Exod 22:26–27; Deut 24:6, 10–13	—
76	Do not oppress the sojourner, widow or fatherless; care for them.	Exod 22:21–24; Deut 24:17	Jas 1:27
77	Be openhanded to the poor; do not harden your heart.	Deut 15:7–11; Prov 19:17	Matt 5:42; 1 John 3:17; Gal 2:10
78	Leave margin in your income for those in need. *Principle of the gleaning laws; the agrarian form is particular to Israel.*	Lev 19:9–10; Deut 24:19–22	Eph 4:28
79	Give generously and cheerfully, in proportion to what you have.	Prov 3:9–10	2 Cor 8:12; 9:6–7; 1 Cor 16:2

#	Instruction	OT basis	NT basis
80	Bring a tithe (a tenth) of your increase to the Lord, for the support of his work and his workers. *Pre-Mosaic in Abraham and Jacob, and affirmed by Jesus. With no Levitical priesthood, it goes to the local church and its ministry.*	Gen 14:20; 28:22; Lev 27:30; Deut 14:22; Mal 3:8–10	Matt 23:23; Luke 11:42; 1 Cor 9:13–14; Heb 7:1–10
81	Work diligently; do not be idle.	Prov 6:6–11	2 Thess 3:6–12; 1 Thess 4:11–12; Col 3:23
82	Be content; keep free from the love of money.	—	Heb 13:5; 1 Tim 6:6–10; Phil 4:11–12
83	Do not store up treasure on earth; be rich in good works.	—	Matt 6:19–21; 1 Tim 6:17–19
84	Owe no one anything except love; repay what you borrow.	Ps 37:21	Rom 13:8
85	Do not accept a bribe.	Exod 23:8; Deut 16:19	—

VII. Speech and Truthfulness

#	Instruction	OT basis	NT basis
86	Do not bear false witness.	Exod 20:16; 23:1	Matt 19:18; Rom 13:9
87	Do not lie; speak truth to your neighbour.	Lev 19:11; Zech 8:16	Eph 4:25; Col 3:9
88	Do not go about as a slanderer or gossip.	Lev 19:16a	Eph 4:31; Jas 4:11; 1 Pet 2:1
89	Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong or perverting justice.	Exod 23:2	—
90	Show no partiality.	Lev 19:15; Deut 1:17	Jas 2:1–9; 1 Tim 5:21
91	Keep your vows and promises.	Num 30:2; Deut 23:21–23; Eccl 5:4–5	Matt 5:33–37
92	Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouth; avoid obscenity and coarse joking.	—	Eph 4:29; 5:4; Col 3:8
93	Bless and do not curse.	—	Rom 12:14; Jas 3:9–10
94	Bridle your tongue; be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger.	Prov 10:19	Jas 1:19, 26; 3:1–12
95	Do not grumble or complain.	—	Phil 2:14; Jas 5:9; 1 Cor 10:10

VIII. Character and the Inner Life

#	Instruction	OT basis	NT basis
96	Put off the old self (anger, malice, impurity, greed); put on the new.	—	Eph 4:22–24; Col 3:5–14
97	Do not get drunk with wine; be sober-minded.	Prov 20:1; 23:29–35	Eph 5:18; 1 Pet 1:13; Rom 13:13
98	Do not be anxious; cast your cares on God.	—	Matt 6:25–34; Phil 4:6–7; 1 Pet 5:7
99	Clothe yourselves with humility; count others more significant.	Prov 3:34	Phil 2:3–4; 1 Pet 5:5; Jas 4:6, 10
100	Do not envy or be conceited.	Prov 23:17	Gal 5:26; 1 Cor 13:4
101	Think on what is true, honourable, just, pure, lovely.	—	Phil 4:8
102	Do not be conformed to this age; be transformed by renewed minds.	—	Rom 12:2

#	Instruction	OT basis	NT basis
103	Present your bodies as living sacrifices.	—	Rom 12:1; 1 Cor 6:19–20
104	Use Christian freedom to serve, not as cover for the flesh.	—	Gal 5:13; 1 Pet 2:16
105	Do good to all, especially the household of faith; do not grow weary.	—	Gal 6:9–10; Heb 13:16
106	Endure suffering and discipline; persevere in faith.	Prov 3:11–12	Heb 12:1–11; Jas 1:2–4; 1 Pet 4:12–19
107	Make disciples, teaching them to obey all Christ commanded. *Given to the apostles, but its 'teaching them to observe' clause extends it to every disciple.*	—	Matt 28:19–20

IX. Optional: Torah Practices of Messianic Observance

These commands are not binding on the believer, but they may be kept freely as an expression of devotion. Whether one keeps them or not, Rom 14:5–6 governs: 'Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.'

#	Instruction	OT basis	NT basis
108	Observe a seventh-day (Saturday) Sabbath, with traditional Sabbath practice. *The Sabbath principle is required (Section II); the choice of the seventh day and rabbinic Sabbath practice are optional.*	Exod 20:10; 35:3; Lev 23:3	Luke 4:16; 23:56; Acts 17:2
109	Keep Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread.	Exod 12:14–20; Lev 23:5–8	Luke 22:15; 1 Cor 5:7–8
110	Count the omer and keep Shavuot (Pentecost).	Lev 23:15–21; Deut 16:9–12	Acts 2:1; 20:16
111	Keep Yom Teruah (Trumpets), Yom Kippur and Sukkot (Tabernacles).	Lev 23:23–43; Zech 14:16–19	John 7:2, 37–38; Acts 27:9
112	Mark the new moons.	Num 10:10; Ps 81:3; Isa 66:23	Col 2:16
113	Eat only the animals Torah designates as clean. *Mark 7:19; Acts 10:15; Rom 14:14 and 1 Tim 4:3–5 are cited for freedom here.*	Lev 11; Deut 14:3–20	Acts 10:14
114	Do not boil a kid in its mother's milk; separate meat and dairy.	Exod 23:19; 34:26; Deut 14:21	—
115	Do not eat the fat of ox, sheep or goat.	Lev 3:17; 7:23–25	—
116	Wear tzitzit (tassels) on the corners of your garments, with a thread of blue. *The command's stated purpose is to remember and do God's commands (Num 15:39–40), and that purpose binds every believer.*	Num 15:37–41; Deut 22:12	Matt 9:20; 14:36; 23:5
117	Do not round the corners of your head or mar the edges of your beard.	Lev 19:27	—
118	Do not tattoo or cut your body for the dead.	Lev 19:28; Deut 14:1	—
119	Affix a mezuzah to the doorposts and gates.	Deut 6:9; 11:20	—
120	Wear tefillin (phylacteries).	Deut 6:8; 11:18	Matt 23:5
121	Do not wear wool and linen woven together (sha'atnez); do not sow mixed seed.	Lev 19:19; Deut 22:9–11	—
122	Circumcise sons on the eighth day as a covenant sign. *Never a condition of salvation (Gal 5:2–6; 1 Cor 7:18–19).*	Gen 17:10–14; Lev 12:3	Luke 2:21; Acts 16:3; 21:21–24

#	Instruction	OT basis	NT basis
123	Abstain from marital relations during menstruation; wash after emission.	Lev 15:16–24; 18:19	—
124	Leave the corners of your field and gleanings; observe the third-year tithe and the shemittah release. *The principle of generosity to the poor is required (Section VI).*	Lev 19:9–10; Deut 14:28–29; 15:1–11	—

Appendix A — What the Four Criteria Removed

Representative examples only, to show how each filter was applied.

(1) Particular to a person or group in context

- Specific commissions: build the ark (Gen 6:14); sacrifice Isaac (Gen 22:2); go to Nineveh (Jon 1:2).
- Israel-in-the-land legislation: conquest and *herem* (Deut 7:1–2; 20:16–17); sabbatical and Jubilee years (Lev 25); land inheritance and levirate marriage (Deut 25:5–10); pilgrimage feasts at the central sanctuary (Deut 16:16).
- Individual NT directives: sell all you have (to the rich ruler, Luke 18:22); take a little wine (1 Tim 5:23); bring my cloak (2 Tim 4:13); the Twelve's travel instructions (Matt 10:5–10).

(2) Fulfilled in Christ's death and its new-covenant consequences

- The whole sacrificial system: burnt, grain, peace, sin and guilt offerings (Lev 1–7); Day of Atonement (Lev 16) — Heb 9:11–14; 10:1–18.
- Food laws (Lev 11; Deut 14) as binding — Mark 7:19; Acts 10:9–16; Rom 14:14. (Moved to Section IX as optional.)
- Purity and impurity regulations: childbirth, skin disease, discharges, corpse impurity (Lev 12–15; Num 19) — Heb 9:13–14.
- Circumcision, festivals, new moons, tzitzit and holiness-separation signs as binding — Gal 5:2–6; Col 2:11–17. (Moved to Section IX as optional.)

(3) Priestly and sanctuary instructions

- Priestly ordination, garments and anointing (Exod 28–29; Lev 8).
- Priestly marriage, mourning and bodily qualifications (Lev 21–22).
- Levitical duties (Num 3–4; 18). The tithe itself is retained in Section VI.
- Tabernacle and temple construction and maintenance (Exod 25–31; 35–40).
- NT analogue: qualifications and duties specific to elders and deacons (1 Tim 3; Titus 1:5–9).

(4) Penal sanctions administered by civil authority

- All capital sanctions (e.g. Exod 21:12–17; Lev 20; Deut 13:6–11; 21:18–21; 22:20–24).
- *Lex talionis* as judicial measure (Exod 21:23–25; Deut 19:21).
- Restitution schedules for theft and damages (Exod 22:1–15).
- Cities of refuge and blood-avenger procedures (Num 35; Deut 19:1–13).
- Judicial flogging limits (Deut 25:1–3); procedures for witnesses and trials (Deut 17:6; 19:15–21).

Appendix B — Items the Criteria Do Not Settle

These are commands on which the four filters, applied honestly, return a contested verdict. They are neither listed above nor dismissed; each depends on a further hermeneutical decision.

Item	Why it is contested
Lending at interest	Exod 22:25 and Lev 25:35–37 forbid interest to a poor fellow Israelite; Deut 23:19–20 allows it to foreigners. Particular to Israel's covenant economy, or a standing principle of not profiting from the needy?
Head coverings	1 Cor 11:2–16 grounds the practice in creation order yet also appeals to 'nature' and custom; particular to Corinth or transcultural?
Women's speech in the assembly	1 Cor 14:34–35; 1 Tim 2:11–12 — universal, or particular to situations in Corinth and Ephesus? Turns on whether criterion (1) applies.

Item	Why it is contested
Holy kiss and foot-washing	Rom 16:16; John 13:14–15 — commanded forms, or culturally specific expressions of a standing command to love?
Anointing the sick	Jas 5:14 instructs the sick to call the elders: a command to the individual believer that depends on an office-specific act (criterion 3 analogue).