

The Ten Commandments of Hiking

I am the Creator of all things, and therefore thou shalt heed my commands.

ONE: Know that all paths and trails made by those so ordained are under My order and shall not be trespassed. Therefore ***thou shalt know thy destination*** and travel by such ways as are provided for thy pleasure and safety. If thou should wish to hike alone, leave word of thy destination, for thus thy friends shall not despair of thine absence.

TWO: Thou shalt prepare thyself for the trail. Give heed to the weather, know thine own strength, and if thou carry nothing else, ***thou shalt carry water***. For My streams are lovely, but many bear the offal of wild animals and all are host to unseen creatures that may, all unknowing, harm thee. Therefore water is essential to thee.

THREE: ***Thou shalt not rely on thy phone***. In many places of My world, even amid many habitations of humans, the works of man do not prevail. Therefore, even if thy phone holds within it the map of thy hike, yet thou shalt carry a map on paper, for thine own safety.

FOUR: ***Thou shalt not bespoil My works***. Therefore, thou shalt remove thine own trash with thee and dispose of it in accordance with the laws of thy dwelling place. And if thou would gain credit in My eyes and the eyes of thy world, remove also the trash of others who came before thee.

FIVE: The waste of thy body is in no way shameful, yet it may displease others and yea, even cause them harm. Therefore, ***thou shalt step aside from the trail to a place of seclusion to relieve thyself***. And afterward, thou shalt find a stick, and with that stick thou shalt flick the waste further into the underbrush or under leaves, where it will decay into the dust. Do not entomb such waste, nor the waste of thy dogs, in the sack of plastic, for plastic will abide for centuries and yet poison the land.

SIX: Water is sacred and a source of life. *Thou shalt not foul any waters, whether still or flowing.* Thou shalt cross streams via stones or bridges set there for that purpose, and shall not create crossings except at great need. Nor shalt thou disturb vernal pools, marshes, or swamps, or the creatures thereof, for all such are under My protection.

SEVEN: You may have heard it said, “Take only pictures, leave only footprints.” I say unto thee, *thou shalt share the fruits of the land with all others*, from the unseen small beings to the great ones. Take joy in the wild foods, but leave much for those who live in the forest. For even the shed leaves and the dead wood have value in My eyes. Remember, too, that what may be poison to thee may be food for another, as the ivy that creates pustules on thy skin also can be food for My deer. I enjoin thee therefore to learn what is safe and what may harm thee, and to beware of all dangers.

EIGHT: *Thou shalt be courteous to all others in the forest.* Give way to those hiking uphill; step to the side to let large groups pass thee by; lend aid whenever needed. Remember that thou might be in need of aid or courtesy in thy turn.

NINE: *Thou shalt harm no creature, save only to protect thyself or thy companions in great need.* Remember that even the dirt under thy feet is home to My creatures. Despise not the snow fleas nor the roly-polies, for even such as they have value in My eyes.

TEN: Those who defend and protect the wilds have also My protection and approval. They are brave and wise, but often too few. Therefore, *thou shalt volunteer thy time and resources to protect My creation.* Thus thou shalt have honor among the people and grace in My eyes.