

Exodus 20

July 17, 2011

Introduction:

The Israelites had just come from Egypt, a land of many idols and many gods. Because each god represented a different aspect of life, it was common to worship many gods in order to get the maximum number of blessings. When God told his people to worship and believe in him, that wasn't so hard for them, he was just one more god to add to the list. But when he said, "You shall have no other gods before me," that was difficult for them to accept. But if they didn't learn that the God who led them out of Egypt was the only true God, they could not be his people; no matter how faithfully they kept the other nine commandments.

Exodus 20:1-26 In today's lesson, God gives Moses the Ten Commandments. Are these commandments still relevant today?

- Absolutely! God's laws are timeless. Since He is eternal, all knowing, and perfectly wise, God knows that His laws are relevant in any culture at any point in history.

What is the purpose of God's laws?

- *God's laws have two purposes: (1) They reveal His character. His laws tell us how we are to live since we are to be like Him. Jesus invites us into living a certain way, not just having certain "beliefs" about God. (2) They cause us to recognize our need for a Savior (Jesus). See Romans 3:20 For no one can ever be made right with God by doing what the law commands. The law simply shows us how sinful we are. And Galatians 3:21 & 24 21 Is there a conflict, then, between God's law and God's promises? Absolutely not! If the law could give us new life, we could be made right with God by obeying it. 24 Let me put it another way. The law was our guardian until Christ came; it protected us until we could be made right with God through faith.*

Are God's laws "good" or "bad"? Explain your answer.

- *God's is good. All of His intentions are good. Therefore, all of His laws are good. If He tells us to do something, then doing that something will bless us. If He tells us not to do a certain thing, then doing that thing will hurt us. Sin hurts people... God loves people...so God hates sin. All of God's laws are "protective"; they are not "restrictive".*

God gave Adam and Eve one rule. What did they think about that rule and, therefore, about God who gave it?

- *The one rule was not to eat of the forbidden tree. They decided that it was a bad, restrictive rule that was keeping them from a better life. In doing so they assumed that God was not good, did not love them well, and that doing what God wanted was ultimately a bad idea that would keep them from their best life possible.*

Were Adam and Eve right or wrong?

- *They were "dead" wrong. They "died" spiritually that day. They became sinners who were now afraid of and opposed to God that day. They began to have guilt and shame and they turned on each other that day. They lost "paradise" (Eden) that day. This is how sin always works: it promises us "more" but leaves us with "less". See John 10:10. God is the "giver"; the devil is the taker.*

20:1-17 Let's read through the Ten Commandments in **verses 1 to 17**.

The Ten Commandments divide up into two categories. What are they and which commandments belong to each?

- *The first four categories have to do with how we relate to God; the last six have to do with how we relate to man.*

Read **Luke 18:18-24**. What do you notice about the commandments Jesus mentioned in **verse 20**?

- *They all had to do with how we relate to people.*

How does what Jesus told the man to do in **verse 24** relate to the **Ten Commandments**?

- *The man failed to put God first. Gold was this man's "god"; he worshipped and served money.*

Why did Jesus leave out the command on coveting?

- *He was rich. He did not covet what others possessed because he had more; others coveted what this man had.*

Why did Jesus say what He did in **verse 19**?

- *Jesus was giving the man an opportunity to confess that Jesus was good because He was God.*

Had this young man actually kept all of the commands mentioned by Jesus since his youth?

- *No. He had likely broken all of those laws since his youth.*

Is there a difference between the "letter" of the law and the "spirit" of the law? Explain.

- *The letter of the law is what the law clearly states; we are not to commit murder; we are not to have sex with another person's spouse, we are not to take something that does not belong to us. The spirit of the law is the full and deeper meaning of the command.*

Who can give us an example from Scripture of the difference between the "spirit" of a law and the "letter"?

- *In **Matthew 5:21-22** Jesus quotes the letter of the law: "don't murder". He then proceeds to tell us the spirit of that law: that hating someone is a form of murder. In **Matthew 5:27-28** Jesus quotes the letter of the law: "don't commit adultery". He then proceeds to tell us the spirit of that law: lust is a form of adultery.*

Has anyone ever actually kept the "spirit" of all of the Ten Commandments?

- *Jesus did. **2 Corinthians 5:21** says that He *knew no sin*. **Hebrews 4:15** tells us that Jesus was *tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin*. See **Romans 3:10 & 23**.*

What we are going to do next is to read each of the **Ten Commandments** and then see how **Jesus** stated these commands in the New Testament.

"10 Commandments"

1. **Thou shalt have no other gods before me.** **Matthew 4:10** "Get out of here, Satan," Jesus told him. "For the Scriptures say, 'You must worship the Lord your God and serve only him.'" **NLT**
2. **Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image.** **Luke 16:13 13** "No one can serve two masters. For you will hate one and love the other; you will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."
3. **Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain.** **Matthew 5:34** But I say, do not make any vows! Do not say, 'By heaven!' because heaven is God's throne.
4. **Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy.** **Mark 2:27-28** Then Jesus said to them, "The Sabbath was made to meet the needs of people, and not people to meet the requirements of the Sabbath. **28** So the Son of Man is Lord, even over the Sabbath!"

5. **Honor thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.** **Matthew 10: 37** *“If you love your father or mother more than you love me, you are not worthy of being mine; or if you love your son or daughter more than me, you are not worthy of being mine.*
6. **Thou shalt not kill.** **Matthew 5:21-22** *“You have heard that our ancestors were told, ‘You must not murder. If you commit murder, you are subject to judgment.’ 22 But I say, if you are even angry with someone, you are subject to judgment! If you call someone an idiot, you are in danger of being brought before the court. And if you curse someone, you are in danger of the fires of hell.*
7. **Thou shalt not commit adultery.** **Matthew 5: 27-28** *“You have heard the commandment that says, ‘You must not commit adultery.’ 28 But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart.*
8. **Thou shalt not steal.** **Matthew 5:40;** *If you are sued in court and your shirt is taken from you, give your coat, too.*
9. **Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.** **Matthew 12:36** *And I tell you this, you must give an account on judgment day for every idle word you speak.*
10. **Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor’s house, nor any thing that is thy neighbor’s.** **Luke 12:15;** *Then he said, “Beware! Guard against every kind of greed. Life is not measured by how much you own.”*

What are the kinds of things that can become “idols” in our lives?

- *(people, money, possessions, traditions, etc.)*

Is the Sabbath, a day for worship and rest, still important to God and to us today?

- *Yes! We are not to live under ridiculous standards of legalism (**Mark 2:27**), but we are to rest and take a day to remind ourselves that God is and that we are His. The Sabbath was on the seventh day: they rested after they worked. The “Lord’s Day” is Sunday (the first day): we rest and worship and then we work.*

Does honoring our parents mean that now as adults we do whatever they say?

- *No! Adult Christians should not be controlled or manipulated by emotionally unhealthy parents. This command does not give parents the right to do anything they want to do and then have no consequences for their bad behavior. This command does not mean that you become financially responsible for their irresponsibility. It does not mean that they have a right to live in your house and that you owe it to them to pay their bills. Some parents are so emotionally unhealthy or evil that their grown, healthy children must protect themselves and their families (mate and children) from those parents.*

Does the command not to “murder” mean that we are not to “kill”? Explain.

- *To murder someone is take the life of someone for wrong reasons. This command does not prohibit killing animals for food (**Genesis 9:3**). It does not prohibit capital punishment. **Romans 13:4** tells us that the government does not bear the sword for nothing; for it is a minister of God, an avenger who brings wrath on the one who practices evil. The books of the Law (**Genesis through Deuteronomy**) are filled with crimes that **Israel** was to punish by death to purge the evil from among them. If someone breaks into your home and you kill the intruder, then you are not guilty of murder or a crime (**Exodus 22:2**).*