

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS INTRO

Deuteronomy 5:6-21

For the start of this series we want to focus in and talk about one key area: how do you obey Jesus' demand for obedience and yet at the same time rest in forgiveness? Take a look at verse six. Verse six is an important starting point to the whole list. Notice that the 10 commandments don't start with a command, but with a declaration of God's gracious provision of rescue.

One hard thing for followers of Jesus to wrestle with is the reality of Jesus' provision of forgiveness on one hand, and the intense demand of obedience on the other hand. We have to be careful here because we don't want to give ourselves to "legalism" where we have to earn God's approval, but we also don't want to give ourselves to living however we want because "God will just forgive me."

So... How do you balance this in your own life? How do you obey Jesus while resting in his forgiveness? How can faithfulness to Jesus' demand be accomplished?

- A couple of places where Jesus gives the expectation of obedience: John 8:31-32; 13:35; Matthew 7:16-20.
- A couple of places where Jesus declares the offer of forgiveness: Matthew 11:28-30; Mark 10:45; Luke 24:44-47.

COMMANDMENT ONE

The first commandment is in Deuteronomy 5:7, "You shall have no other gods before me." The explanation for the first two commandments is in Deuteronomy 12:1-13:8.

While there is significant overlap between the first three commandments, each one has their own distinct focus. All three have their focus on the love and worship of Yahweh, yet each has their own angle. Our worship of Yahweh is a huge topic with many different facets, which takes a lifetime to explore.

Our questions and conversations will have a lot of overlap and connections as we encourage each other to destroy the idols in our lives and to be more wholly devoted to Yahweh.

1. This first commandment is about exclusive worship and allegiance to Yahweh. He is not just one god among many, he alone is God and therefore deserves creation's devotion and allegiance. What are some common allegiances we make that take the place of Yahweh?

2. We can love Yahweh by demonstrating our allegiance to him. What is one specific action you can do this week to demonstrate your absolute devotion to Yahweh alone?

3. A common way of worshipping God in light of this commandment is to say "there is no other god like you" (to name a few...Exodus 8:10, 15:11; Deuteronomy 4:39; Psalm 86:8; Isaiah 40:18-26; Mark 12:32). When is the last time your heart declared this to God? During your prayer time for this group, it might be a good practice to spend time declaring this phrase to God.

"I have sent to you all my servants the prophets, sending them persistently, saying, 'Turn now every one of you from his evil way, and amend your deeds, and do not go after other gods to serve them, and then you shall dwell in the land that I gave to you and your fathers.' But you did not incline your ear or listen to me. The sons of Jonadab the son of Rechab have kept the command that their father gave them, but this people has not obeyed me. Therefore, thus says the Lord, the God of hosts, the God of Israel: Behold, I am bringing upon Judah and all the inhabitants of Jerusalem all the disaster that I have pronounced against them, because I have spoken to them and they have not listened, I have called to them and they have not answered" (Jeremiah 35:15-17).

4. These verses are where the Lord accuses Israel in regards to this commandment. But as you read the end of verse 17, what is God actually disciplining them for? How does this instruct our own response when we find out we are breaking this commandment?

COMMANDMENT TWO

The second commandment is in Deuteronomy 5:8-10, "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments." The explanation for the first two commandments is in Deuteronomy 12:1-13:8.

1. Are you glad God is jealous for his own honor or does this make you feel uncomfortable?
2. The subject of last week and this week continues to be about not bowing down and serving other gods (idols), whether they have a physical form or not. What idols in your heart has the Spirit exposed in you and how can we not give ourselves to them anymore? How can you stop serving idols?
3. What is the one thing in creation that is already in God's image? What are the implications of this reality?
4. When you see Jesus portrayed in paintings or movies, is this helpful or harmful to your spiritual life?

COMMANDMENT THREE

"You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain" (Deuteronomy 5:11). The explanation for this commandment is in Deuteronomy 14:1-21.

In the Bible, "name" is not just what you call a person, but it has to do with their identity and character. So, this commandment has to do with our representation of God's character to society. We ought to represent him accurately, especially in our speech. If we act with love and justice, then we proclaim God to be loving and just. If we lie, then we proclaim God to be a liar.

1. Our whole life proclaims something about our creator. What specific changes do you need to make about your routines or habits that would represent Him more accurately?
2. Jesus says that we can ask anything "in his name" and he will do it. Are you praying for things that actually go against his character and his vision for a situation? Could that be why he says "no" to certain prayers we are praying?
3. The narrow meaning of this has to do with our speech. The typical understanding is that we simply shouldn't say "O my G—" because it is irreverently speaks about God. While this is true, it also is a bit of an oversimplification. What other types of speech might we prohibit in light of this command? What does it look like to honor God with our speech toward Him and others?
4. How do we follow this command without becoming self-righteous toward others?

COMMANDMENT FOUR

"Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day." (Deuteronomy 5:12-15). The explanation for this commandment is in Deuteronomy 14:22-16:17.

In the American church, we have tended to focus on the Sabbath as a day to do nothing. But that puts the focus on us. Instead this commandment challenges us to create space to remember that God created everything good and right and, through Jesus, is making all things right again! We show our love for God by resting as we engage with Jesus, creation, and one another. Then we do not merely get a break, but are refreshed.

1. When people today need rest, what do they tend to do? What do you do? How are you refreshed?
2. Read verse 15. What are the Israelites to remember about themselves and Yahweh?
3. In the past, the Sabbath was a set aside 24 hours where no work was done. No businesses would be open. Would doing nothing for a day bring real rest? Why or why not?
4. How does Jesus bring us Sabbath rest? (Hebrews 4:9-10) How does reflecting on these things and being thankful help us to be refreshed?

COMMANDMENT FIVE

"Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you." (Deuteronomy 5:16). The explanation for this commandment is in Deuteronomy 16:18-19:21.

Read both passages and write out your understanding below.

COMMANDMENT SIX

"You shall not murder" (Deuteronomy 5:17). The explanation for this commandment is in Deuteronomy 20:1-21:14.

1. According to the Old Testament (see Genesis 1:27-28 and 9:6), why is murder wrong? How does this differ from other explanations you've heard as to why murder is wrong?
2. Do you think our culture agrees with this commandment? Does it agree with the reasoning in Genesis 9:6?
3. Read Matthew 5:21-24. How does Jesus clarify and intensify the sixth commandment? What is the heart problem behind murder (See also James 4:1-2 for further study)?
4. How do Jesus' words in Matthew 5:21-24 challenge you personally?

COMMANDMENT SEVEN

"And you shall not commit adultery" (Deuteronomy 5:18). The explanation for commandments seven through ten is in Deuteronomy 21:15-25:19.

God gives the 10 commandments to instruct us on what a good life is. The Bible seeks to instruct us that adultery and sexual immorality are destructive. See Deuteronomy 22:13-24:4 for specifics on immorality.

1. It's easy to pick on and point out the general immorality in American culture, but in what ways do you think the Christian culture is off base when it comes to its beliefs and practices in the area of sex and intimacy?
2. What wrong thinking have you overcome or do you need to overcome in the area of sex and intimacy?
3. What does healing in this area look like? What are the first couple of steps to experience healing in this area?

COMMANDMENT EIGHT

"And you shall not steal" (Deuteronomy 5:19). The explanation for commandments seven through ten is in Deuteronomy 21:15-25:19.

One big assumption in this command is that God is okay with private ownership of property (which is taught in Genesis 1:28). Oftentimes, we tend to think that God is against possessions and material gain. And this commandment shows us this is not true. On the other hand, the Bible often warns against materialism and the dangers of pursuing prosperity. Thinking through this commandment will help us live wisely and balanced when it comes to what "we own."

1. How do the value of life and the acquisition/protection of property relate to each other?
2. Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need (Ephesians 4:28). This verse gives us one insight into the heart of this command. Not only should we not steal, but what ought we to do instead?
3. What kind of property do you own? How often do you think of it as a gift from God?
4. How can you be more generous this week, and use your property for God's purposes?

COMMANDMENT NINE

"And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor" (Deuteronomy 5:20). The explanation for commandments seven through ten is in Deuteronomy 21:15-25:19.

The specific command in this verse is to not bear false witness in a legal context. But the rest of Scripture shows us that the commandment speaks to the general concept of lying (Leviticus 19:11, Matthew 5:33-37, James 5:12). God's people are to speak the truth always.

1. What are some human reasons for lying? Why do we lie?
2. Why are God's image bearers to tell the truth (see Numbers 23:19, Titus 1:1-3, John 8:44)?
3. How can we put this into practice? In what situations are you prone to lie? What lie are you living/believing that you need to confess and be done with?
4. We can tend to use "defending truth" as a justification for speaking rashly or rudely to children, friends, spouses, co-workers, and enemies. Read Ephesians 4:15. What value must never be separated from the value of truth?

COMMANDMENT TEN PART 1

“You shall not covet” (Deuteronomy 5:21). The explanation for commandments seven through ten is in Deuteronomy 21:15-25:19.

1. When is the last time you thought, “if only I had _____, life would be good”? Where are you getting that image of the good life from?
2. Read James 1:14-15 and 4:1-3. James says that our coveting is the reason behind much of our decisions, temptations and quarreling. What desires are driving your actions? What is good about those desires and what is bad?
3. Since many of our desires lead us to sin, what needs to change about them and how do we go about changing them?

COMMANDMENT TEN PART 2

"You shall not covet" (Deuteronomy 5:21). The explanation for commandments seven through ten is in Deuteronomy 21:15-25:19.

1. How did God speak to you through the service this past Sunday or this overall series?
2. Is there a routine or habit in your life that is encouraging you to covet? How can you re-engage that routine with thanksgiving or kill that bad habit?
3. And when they had called in the apostles, they beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name (Acts 5:40-41). How did the Apostles get to the point where they could legitimately thank God for suffering? What does that say about their desires? What do you rejoice about and what does that reveal about the order of your desires?
4. Think about what are you thankful for. Spend some time thanking.