



Unit .05

Session .03

A Law for God's People

Scripture

Exodus 19:3-6; 20:1-8,12-17

3 Moses went up the mountain to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain: “This is what you must say to the house of Jacob and explain to the Israelites: **4** ‘You have seen what I did to the Egyptians and how I carried you on eagles’ wings and brought you to myself. **5** Now if you will carefully listen to me and keep my covenant, you will be my own possession out of all the peoples, although the whole earth is mine, **6** and you will be my kingdom of priests and my holy nation.’ These are the words that you are to say to the Israelites.” ... **1** Then God spoke all these words: **2** I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. **3** Do not have other gods besides me. **4** Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth. **5** Do not bow in worship

to them, and do not serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the fathers’ iniquity, to the third and fourth generations of those who hate me, **6** but showing faithful love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commands. **7** Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God, because the LORD will not leave anyone unpunished who misuses his name. **8** Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” ... **12** “Honor your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. **13** Do not murder. **14** Do not commit adultery. **15** Do not steal. **16** Do not give false testimony against your neighbor. **17** Do not covet your neighbor’s house. Do not covet your neighbor’s wife, his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

What rules from your parents have you come to appreciate and respect more over the years?

Why do you think God wanted His people to live differently from the surrounding nations? What might this communicate about God to others?



99 Essential Doctrines

Special Revelation

Special revelation refers to God revealing Himself to humanity through historical events, His Word, and through Jesus Christ. Through special revelation, human beings learn about God's character, His will, His purpose for creation, and His plan of redemption. Special revelation shows us the nature and character of God, and because God has revealed Himself in this way, we can know Him—through a saving relationship with Him in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Main Point

Our relationship with God influences our relationship with others.

How do people break these commandments today?

What are some ways God's name is misused today? Why does God take this so seriously?

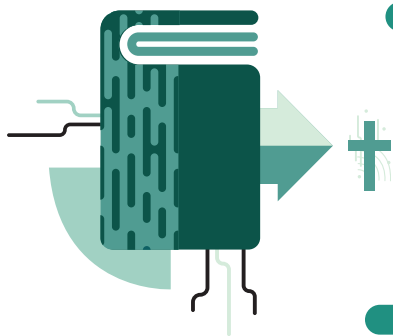
In Defense



Apart from God, the concept and reality of goodness would not exist. In other words, apart from having a moral lawgiver who's character is completely good, we would be unable to say with any authority that acts are either good or bad, right or wrong. All morality would be relative—good for some, maybe bad for others. We would be unable to say acts of terrorism are wrong or that torturing an infant for fun is an act of evil. Of course, the very thought of horrific things like that not being declared evil and wrong is unsettling to us, and rightly so. Why? Objective goodness does exist because God exists. Though evil may prevail for a time, as Christians we take refuge in Jesus—the One who promises that one day He will wipe away every tear, making all wrongs right, as He makes all things new again (Rev. 21:4)

In what ways do you sometimes struggle to honor your parents?

What commandment do we tend to ignore the most when it comes to relating to other people?



Christ Connection

The Law reveals how we properly live in relationship with God and others. Because of sin, it is impossible to keep the Law. Jesus, the sinless Savior, is the only One who has kept the law of God perfectly, and we are credited with His righteousness when we trust in Him.



Head

How might your relationship with God influence your relationships with other people?

What might this look like in your own life moving forward?



Heart

What is the connection between stealing and coveting? How is idolatry at work in the heart of the person who steals?

What are some examples of stealing non-monetary items that seem commonplace today? How should a Christian respond to these things?

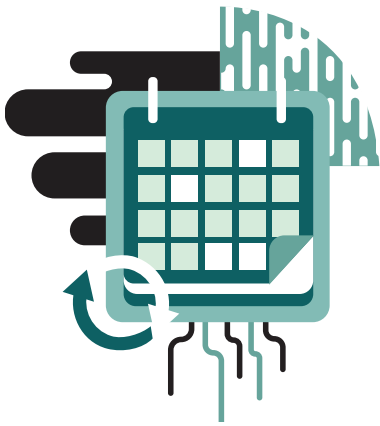


Hands

What do the commandments teach us when it comes to interacting with people outside the church?

How can the people of God love our unbelieving friends, family, and neighbors with the gospel this week?

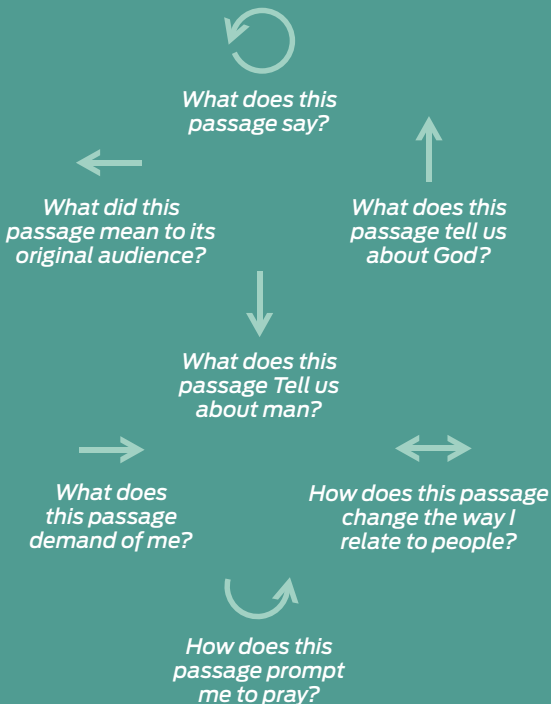
Daily Devotions



Day 1

Exodus 19:1-25

The 7 Arrows of Bible Reading



When Moses returned from the mountain and shared what God had told him, the people's response was clear: "We will do all that the LORD has spoken" (v. 8). The Bible doesn't give us much else to evaluate this response, but we would have to believe it came from a sincere heart and a genuine desire to obey God. However, we also know it didn't last. As we continue through Exodus, we read more about the law God gave to the people through Moses. Then we come across Exodus 32 where the people who pledged obedience to God disobey Him by having Aaron make the golden calf. Their words of obedience quickly dissolved into acts of defiance.

Israel declared they would obey God at the foot of the mountain where God was meeting with Moses, but their obedience was tested when God seemed distant, or maybe even gone. Our challenge is the same. Our obedience is tested in the crucible of daily life, when God is not as apparent to us either. It is in these moments that the strength of our faith will be revealed both to ourselves and to the watching world around us.

When is it most difficult for you to maintain faith and obedience to God? Why?

Exodus 20:1-2

In these opening two verses, God expressed why He has the authority to give these commands to His people (He is the LORD, their God) and why they should follow each one (what He has done for them). Why should the Israelites not have any other gods? Because God is their one true God. He is the One who created and who sustained them. Why were the Israelites not supposed to steal? Because they have seen God provide so generously to them and should trust that He will provide all they need without needing to resort to taking from someone else.

Like the Israelites, we need to consider our obedience through this same lens: who God is and what He has done. Both are essential for us to remember, because both fuel the love and gratitude in us that is the proper motivation for our obedience. This is at the heart of the gospel: We do not obey God for His acceptance and love, but from His acceptance and love bestowed upon us in Christ. What we do matters, but why we do it matters just as much.

What tends to be your motivation to obey God?

Exodus 20:3-11

As the preamble of the Ten Commandments was essential for Israel to understand *why* they should obey them, the first command was foundational to understand *how* to obey them. If someone refrains from having other gods, the rest of the commands will follow. At this first command's core is the uniqueness and primacy of God over everything else, including ourselves. If we hold to this proper view of God—that He alone is good and worthy of our love and full devotion—we will come to see the commandments as natural expressions of our lives of worship rather than burdens.

How could we make an idol to worship when the one true God is always with us and worthy of all our worship? How can we misuse the Lord's name and disrespect Him when we understand how glorious He is and what He has done for us? How can we refuse to set aside time to worship Him when our hearts, transformed by the gospel, want to worship Him non-stop? How can we mistreat other people for our own selfish gain, when Christ served us with such humility?

When it comes to obeying God, it all begins with knowing Him, loving Him, and revering Him.

In what area—knowing God, loving God, or revering God—can you grow more to fuel your obedience?

Exodus 20:12-17

As you read through the last six commands, you might notice that not all of the commandments concern external actions. Instead, some are focused on the internal posture of one's heart. Not murdering someone is surely external, but not coveting is internal. Honoring parents is both. There is an external act of obedience in mind, but honor goes deeper than that—there is an internal respect and love as well. When you consider the commandments more deeply, they each have an internal and external aspect to them. They each begin in the mind and heart and carry over to the actions of our hands.

This is what Jesus expressed in the Sermon on the Mount when He referenced two of the commandments: murder and adultery (Matt. 5). Jesus' point was that obeying these commands runs deeper than just monitoring behavior; they begin in the heart—in the forms of hate and lust respectively. If hate and lust do not have a foothold in our hearts, then murder and adultery will not follow. Obedience begins in the heart before it is ever seen in our lives.

Why is it important that we look to the internal condition of our hearts when addressing external sins in our lives?

Exodus 20:18-26

Moses used “fear” in two senses. The first is to be afraid like we often think of it—as the people were demonstrating by recoiling from God. This is a fear we can cast aside in Christ, because for those of us in Him, there is no condemnation (Rom 8:1). We do not have to be afraid of judgment. Holy God has brought us close to Him. He has adopted us as His children through His Son's righteousness and sacrifice on our behalf.

Our identity as God's children is precisely what fueled Moses' second use of “fear.” This speaks of reverence, of ascribing weightiness to God. God is no less holy. He is no less just. God's punishment of sin did not go away; it was poured out on Jesus. For this reason, we fear Him—we never forget who He is and what it took for us to be declared right with Him. We never forget the cross. We never forget the gospel.

Do you tend to have the proper fear of God? Or are there times when you are afraid of Him, forgetting about grace? Or do you take Him too lightly, forgetting about His holiness?