

The Ten Commandments

In Deuteronomy 5, Moses restates the Ten Commandments that God first gave to the people in Exodus 20. These commandments articulated the covenant obligations for God's people as they lived in the land that they were soon to enter. Obedience to these commandments was not the way into a relationship with God; obedience was how Israel was to live in light of the fact that they were already in a relationship with God. As believers living under the new covenant, we too are to obey these commandments, but the vision that the New Testament gives for obedience is not only avoid the negative, it is that we would fulfill the positive expression of each of these commands. It is a high calling; a high challenge. Thankfully, we have been given the Spirit so that we can indeed live out the true intent of the Law, which Jesus expressed in terms of loving God and loving our neighbor.

Opening Discussion: What were two or three of the most important rules in your home when you were growing up?

Read Deuteronomy 5:1-21

1. Before communicating the Ten Commandments, God reminds the nation of what He has done for them (v. 6). What had He done? What does this reveal about God's heart for Israel?
2. The first three commandments concern a believer's relationship with God (vv. 7-11). What do they reveal about the kind of relationship God wants with His followers?
3. What is the Sabbath command and what rationale is given for it (vv. 12-15)?
4. The final six commandments concern human relationships. What do these communicate about the kind of relationships God desires for His followers (vv. 16-21)?

5. How important is what God says in Deut. 5:29 to Israel's ability to do what he commands? As believers living under the new covenant, what resources do we have to obey God's commands?
6. Read Matthew 22:34-40. How would obeying the Ten Commandments be an expression of what Jesus says here?
7. By stating that love is the fulfillment of the Law, Jesus is essentially saying that each of the Ten Commandments has a positive expression. How would you describe what each commandment would look like expressed in its fullest positive expression?

Steve said:

Just as Israel's obedience was vital for their mission, so too is ours. As we give fullest expression to the true intent of the Law, others come to understand the beauty and power of Jesus. They should see in us people who not only don't take God's name in vain, but who positively enhance His reputation. We should be those who not only don't murder people; we don't even hate people. We not only don't steal from people; we are eager to be generous, sharing what God has given us. The Ten Commandments can give us this vision for our lives.

8. When you look at the Ten Commandments from the paradigm of giving the fullest expression to the true intent of the Law, how can this give us a vision for our lives?