

# Obedience

## OBEDIENCE BRINGS REWARDS

Focal Verses • EXODUS 20:1-11

### Aim for Change

By the end of the lesson, we will: **AFFIRM** that the Ten Commandments are God's instructions to believers; **BE ENCOURAGED** to follow God's commands; and **DEVELOP** ways of living that reflect godly obedience.

### In Focus

Cheryl was very excited yet had some trepidation when it was time to take her son, Jordan, to get his learner's permit. She knew he had come of age, and she celebrated that fact. But Cheryl also realized that there were many problems and pitfalls that a teenage driver, especially a young Black male, could encounter in our often unjust society. She made sure that Jordan studied the driver's manual diligently. In addition, Jordan's father taught him what to do if police officers accosted him.

"Listen to me, son, if an officer ever pulls you over while driving, memorize this rhyme, and you'll know what to do:

*Lights in the mirror,  
Rolling in my ride.  
Turn on my signal,  
Pull to the side.  
Wallet on the dashboard.  
Hands at ten and two.  
Smile at the officer,  
And say, "How may I help you?"*

When Cheryl felt that Jordan was ready, she asked some of her coworkers to remember Jordan in prayer and drove him to the local Department of Motor Vehicles to take the driving test.

*Like the rules we must follow when we drive a car, God also gives us rules to protect us. In today's lesson, God gave the Children of Israel His Law (the Ten Commandments) as a covenantal agreement. This agreement was binding between God and the people. What motivates you to obey man-made and God-made laws?*

### Keep in Mind

"I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:2-3, KJV).



## Focal Verses

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**KJV** Exodus 20:1 And God spake all these words, saying,

2 I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

4 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

5 Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

6 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

7 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

10 But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:

11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it

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### The People, Places, and Times

**Jethro.** This Midianite priest became a crucial person in Moses' timeline. He welcomed Moses into his home at a time when Moses really needed help because he was fleeing from the Egyptian king. Jethro's daughter Zipporah became Moses' wife and, while tending Jethro's sheep, Moses encountered God and learned about his destiny as leader of God's people. Though not an Israelite, Jethro became a worshiper of the true God. In Exodus 18, the chapter just before the account of Moses' experience with God that resulted in the Ten Commandments, Jethro visited him. After Moses told Jethro all that God had done for him and the people of Israel, Jethro proclaimed, "Now I know that the LORD is greater than all gods," (18:11).

**The Times.** Egyptian dynastic history dates back to 3100 B.C., when the kingdoms of upper and lower Egypt, already highly sophisticated, were united. Egypt's golden age coincided with the 18th and 19th Dynasties (sixteenth

to thirteenth centuries B.C.), when the New Kingdom phase of Egypt began. The book of Exodus was probably written between 1450–1410 B.C. Some scholars prefer a later date.

### Background

The Law (the Ten Commandments) is "(1) A law of God's making and (2) a law of God's own speaking. God has many ways of speaking to the children of men (Job 33:14); he never spoke, at any time, on any occasion, as he spoke the Ten Commandments. This law God had given to man before (it was written in his heart by nature); but sin had so defaced that writing that it was necessary, in this manner, to revive the knowledge of it" (*NIV Matthew Henry Commentary in One Volume*, 97).

The Ten Commandments is also called the Mosaic Law because God gave these commands to Moses on Mount Sinai, His "holy mountain or hill," to present to the Children of Israel. They were to live by this Law.

## At-A-Glance

1. God Reminds the Israelites of Past Blessings (Exodus 20:1–2)
2. God Gives the Israelites His Law (vv. 3–11)

### In Depth

#### 1. God Reminds the Israelites of Past Blessings (Exodus 20:1–2)

The Children of Israel had come out of the land of Egypt and were now in the wilderness of Sinai. In chapter 19, we read that the Lord had told Moses to be ready because He would come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of the people. Moses and the people prepared by sanctifying themselves (consecrating, setting themselves apart) and washing their clothes. They only came to the foot of the mountain, because God set boundaries that the people could not cross. Here we see God speaking to the people, after Moses went down from the mountain to the people. God ties the promise of deliverance of His people from Egypt with His name. The Lord is now proclaiming His name again, now that the deliverance is reality for the Children of Israel. God reminds the Israelites of past blessings, of His deliverance of them from slavery in Egypt.

All that the Lord is and does is embodied in His affirmation and proclamation of His name. When we consider the capacity in which God has moved in our lives and in others' lives, we are assured of His power. As a result, our faith in Him is renewed and our hope is revived. We must continue to remember what God has done in our lives and associate His marvelous works with His name. We, too, must remember past blessings and be grateful. These past blessings should cause us to worship the compassionate, merciful God, who is worthy.

#### 2. God Gives the Israelites His Law (vv. 3–11)

Clearly, throughout the existence of this world, God has demonstrated that He is a jealous God and that we are to have no other gods before Him. This is the first commandment and the phrase “before me” may seem difficult to grasp. It is best translated as “You shall not prefer other gods to me.” Whichever way we understand it, the meaning is that there is only one true God. The God that we serve is the only true God, and He is “a jealous God” who expects fidelity to the covenant made with His people. Anything that occupies all our attention and receives our total devotion is considered a “god” in our lives. If something takes us away from spending time with the God of heaven, who created us, that is considered a “god” in our lives. There is no other god that can do what the God of heaven can do. Therefore, we must be careful not to elevate anything else above our God. If we do not keep them in their proper place and give them their proper status, even our children, education, jobs, homes, cars, etc., can become “gods” in our lives. We should worship God the Creator and never the things He created.

In verse 8, God commanded His people to have a time set aside to pay homage to Him (worship Him) and totally dedicate themselves to Him. The word “Sabbath” is derived from the Hebrew verb *shabbat*, which means “to rest or cease from work.” The command was to set aside each seventh day as belonging to the Lord. The Sabbath in essence was another sign of honoring the covenant which God had with His people.

### Search the Scriptures

1. How does God refer to the land of Egypt (Exodus 20:2)?
2. In what way does God describe His feelings toward persons who bow down to carved images and other gods (v. 5)?
3. What type of love does God show to those who love Him (v. 6)?

### Discuss the Meaning

1. Was there a need for God to remind the people about Egypt? How might the people, as well as Moses, have responded if God did not bring this to their remembrance (Exodus 20:2)?

2. What makes God jealous? How might the people have responded differently to God saying not to have any other gods before Him (vv. 3–5)?

### Liberating Lesson

Clearly, God has the power to bring us out of the things that have us bound. We need to realize that God is omnipotent (all-powerful) and He can do anything but fail. So when the challenges of life knock at our door, we need to remember the God that we serve. When we are faced with obstacles and mountains that seem too high to climb, we also need to remember the God that we serve. We need to consider His track record and know that He still has a lot more that He can do in our lives. However, if we want God's blessings to continue to shower down upon us, we need to make sure that we are obedient to His Word. We should not constantly challenge Him as the Israelites, His chosen people, did.

### Application for Activation

This week, ask God to help you to follow His commands, His statutes, His Word. Pray that God will aid you in successfully living in a way that reflects the commands that He has given. Remember that our lifestyles are also a direct witness to a lost and dying world. We talk the talk of a Christian, but can we walk the walk?

### Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

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### Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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**Sources:**

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### Say It Correctly

Decalogue. DEK-uh-log.  
Hallowed. ha-lod, HA-lo-wed.  
Sabbath. SAB-uhth.

## Daily Bible Readings

### DAY 8

Genesis 25–6  
Psalm 5:1–7

### DAY 9

Genesis 27–29  
Psalm 5:8–12

### DAY 10

Genesis 30–31  
Psalm 6:1–5

### DAY 11

Genesis 32–34  
Psalm 6:6–10

### DAY 12

Genesis 35–37  
Psalm 7:1–5

### DAY 13

Genesis 38–40  
Psalm 7:6–13

### DAY 14

Genesis 41–42  
Psalm 7:14–17

## Notes

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