

God Gives Laws

HOW SHOULD WE LIVE AS GOD'S PEOPLE?

Focal Verses • EXODUS 20:1-21

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

"Grandma Lottie, how did you and Granddad manage to stay married for 50 years? It seems like I see so many divorces or people just not getting married, and you two have done it for a lifetime. I want that for me and my husband," Monique asked.

"Well, baby, the most important thing was that we would always pray together and put God first. The other key thing was having clear boundaries after some tough years at the beginning. Your grandfather had to learn what I needed, and I had to learn what he needed. I needed him to listen to me and not yell at me. He needed me to be honest and not tell him what to do. Those are just some examples, but I guess it comes down to respecting each other and communicating," Grandma Lottie responded.

"I think that's really good advice. But I don't know if I know what I need well enough to ask for it yet," Monique admitted.

"What you need first is to rest and seek God. Did you know that is one of the Ten Commandments?"

"I hear you, Grandma. You know I'm always working and planning. But I'll give it a rest because you said it!"

How can learning about God's laws from elders we respect make a difference in how we view God's laws?

SCAN FOR VIDEO



Keep in Mind

"And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments"
(Exodus 20:6, KJV).

Focal Verses

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.

12 Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

13 Thou shalt not kill.

14 Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 Thou shalt not steal.

16 Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

17 Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

18 And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw it, they removed, and stood afar off.

19 And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

20 And Moses said unto the people, Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.

21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

The People, Places, and Times

Mount Sinai. This mountain was a very important landmark for the Israelites. Mount Sinai is both the site of Moses receiving his call from God (Exodus 3:1) and the Children of Israel receiving God's Law and covenant (Exodus 19–20). After the Israelites were rescued from Egypt, they crossed the Red Sea into the wilderness; there they camped at the

foot of Mount Sinai while Moses climbed the mountain to enter God's presence. God revealed Himself to Moses and gave to him His law and covenant affirming Israel as His holy nation: they would be one nation under one God, who would be their leader (Exodus 19:3–6).

Moses. Moses' parents were Amram and Jochebed, who were of the tribe of Levi. In order to save him from death at Pharaoh's

order, Moses' mother made a basket, placed him in it, and set it in the Nile River (Exodus 2:1–10). Years later, God called Moses to lead His people out of slavery in Egypt (Exodus 3–4), and his older brother Aaron was made his spokesperson. After Pharaoh's refusal to listen to Moses, God sent ten plagues upon Egypt. Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt and across the parted Red Sea, but the Egyptians who chased them drowned (12:37–15:20). God provided the Hebrews' daily needs as they traveled through the wilderness. Moses and the people arrived at Mount Sinai, where God gave the Ten Commandments to them, as well as instructions on building a tabernacle as a center of worship.

Background

The Ten Commandments are God's first commandments given for the Children of Israel to obey in their covenant relationship with God after they had been delivered from slavery in Egypt. These commandments serve as the foundation for most of the other commandments in the Laws of God. They were inscribed on stone tablets and placed in the Ark of God's Covenant to show how they were the foundation of God's instructions for relating to God and to other people as God's covenant people.

At-A-Glance

1. Remember God (Exodus 20:1–2)
2. How to Love God (vv. 3–11)
3. How to Love People (vv.12–21)

In Depth

1. Remember God (Exodus 20:1–2)

God had delivered the Children of Israel from slavery in Egypt, and now they were in the wilderness of Sinai to meet God at the

mountain where he had met Moses in a burning bush. 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 consecrating and 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 making the mountain holy for God's presence. 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 holy 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. We must continue to remember what God has done in our lives and associate His marvelous works with His name.

Why does God command us to remember what He has done in the past?

2. How to Love God (vv. 3–11)

God's first commandment is that the Lord is God, and to have no other gods before Him. Having no other gods before Him is best translated as "You shall not prefer other gods to me." The meaning is that God is the only God the Israelites should worship and obey. Ultimately, the Lord is the Most High God, and He who expects faithfulness to the covenant made with His people. If something takes us away from honoring and obeying the God of heaven who created us, that is considered a false "god" or idol in our lives. Therefore, we must be careful not to elevate anything else above our God.

The second commandment is not to make any images of our God or other gods to worship. God is not a creature and cannot be worshipped through created statues the way other gods

can. We should worship God the Creator and never the things created, including our family, education, work, and material possessions. The third commandment is to not take God's name in vain, which means not to take it lightly or treat it casually. God is holy, and we should only say God said something, did something, supports something, or doesn't support something with the most respect, seriousness, and fear we can. We certainly shouldn't use curses or swears and involve God as people do in popular culture.

The fourth commandment in verse 8 is for God's people to have time set aside to worship God, totally dedicate themselves to Him, and rest. 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.

How can we prioritize God first in our daily lives?

3. How to Love People (vv. 12–21)

The fifth commandment is a fascinating hinge commandment to honor your father and mother. It is accompanied with a promise for long and abundant life in the land God promised to the Children of Israel. The meaning is that as children care for their elders and obey the commands they pass down from the Lord, God will allow them to prosper in the Promised Land. The sixth commandment is you shall not kill, meaning murder, which directs you not to take another person's life. The seventh commandment, you shall not commit adultery, is particularly directed at married people. They are to honor their exclusive marriage covenant as part of their exclusive covenant with God. You cannot take someone else's spouse. The eighth commandment, you shall not steal, is you cannot take someone else's possessions.

The ninth commandment, not to bear false witness, is a legal commandment not to lie so that another person is punished for something they did not do. You cannot take another person's innocence. The tenth commandment, not to covet, means we should not lust after anything that belongs to someone else. If you avoid wanting what is someone else's, then you won't take it and will keep the other commandments. The overall principle of these last five commandments is that you cannot take what is not yours. God will give you what you need; you should respect God's and your neighbor's boundaries.

The Children of Israel hear these commandments, see God's displays of power, and are afraid. Moses reminds them that we should also remember that fear of God should not drive us away from God but help us stay near to God and not break His commandments.

How does understanding boundaries help us keep God's commandments?

Search the Scriptures

1. What type of love does God show to those who love Him (v. 6)?
2. What is the last of the Ten Commandments that supports the others about neighbors (v. 17)?

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. How do the Ten Commandments apply to our lives today? Do they apply to just believers or all people? Why or why not?

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, and His Word. Pray that God will aid you in successfully living in a way that reflects the commands that He has given. Remember that how we relate to others is connected to how we relate to God. Which of the commandments is most challenging for us to keep? Ask God for help to honor Him and His commandments.

Follow the Spirit

What God wants me to do:

Remember Your Thoughts

Special insights I have learned:

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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
