

The Ten Commandments, Part 2

22 November, 2009

By Rev. Lonny R. Bower

Scripture Reference – Deuteronomy 5:16-33; Matthew 5:21-22, 27-30; 15:3-6; Ephesians 4:25, 28; James 4:1-3

Unit Theme: “The Gospel Fulfills the Law”

Central Truth: The Ten Commandments teach wholesome relationships.

Focus: Examine and obey the Commandments addressing our relationship with others..

Key Verse: Deuteronomy 5:33

Introduction:

In part one of our study of the Ten Commandments, we looked at the first four Commandments which primarily focused on our relationship with God. Today we will look at the final six and find that the focus is still on relationships, but more specifically our relationships with one another. The Commandments were given to us by God in order to make us complete. Prior to creating Eve, God looked at Adam and said, “It is not good that man should be alone,” so He created him a help-mate. We need relationships just as much as Adam did, but the Lord knew that if He did not give us rules that we would not be successful. So then the Ten Commandments are for our good and should be viewed from a positive perspective. We cannot expect to foster solid relationships apart from the Commandments; we cannot expect to truly live a successful life apart from the Commandments. We need them so much that God wrote them upon our hearts. Living by them, however, is a choice, a choice that not only we as individuals make, but governments too. Those who choose to obey them are choosing life – everlasting life, and those who choose to ignore them are choosing death. The moral law shows us the right way of living.

I. Honor Your Parents – Deuteronomy 5:16; Matthew 15:3-9

God is the one who instituted marriage between a man and a woman and commanded them to bear children. He, and only He, is the life force of the family, remove God and the family becomes dysfunctional in every way. Children rebelling against parents, hate instead of love, disrespect instead of honor, is the exact opposite of what God commanded. There is absolutely no room for excuses not to honor our parents, even when parents are ungodly – heathen to the greatest extent; we are still obligated to honor them. The Pharisees tried to make a way around this, but Jesus rebuked them sharply exposing their heart. Failure to follow this commandment will affect our ability to have a meaningful relationship with the Lord.

➤ **Think about it:**

In what ways can you honor your parents?

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II. Honor Life – Deuteronomy 5:17; Matthew 5:21, 22

First we need to understand that the Hebrew verb here [רָצַח *rāṣah*] refers to murder (premeditated murder) and therefore should not be translated as “kill”. If it was “kill” then God would have required His own children to break this command when he told them to go in and conquer the land of Canaan. The Lord places great value on human life regardless of age. His value is so high that He came to die in our place, so that we could live. Society has tried to redefine life in order to avoid the guilt associated with this command (abortion, euthanasia). What must be understood, however, is when man stands before God to be judged (2 Corinthians 5:10), he will be judged according to God’s commands and not his own understanding of God’s commands. Jesus took this command and made it a matter of the intent of the heart – knowing that if the heart is not changed it will lead one to fulfill it’s evil desire (Jeremiah 17:9, Matthew 12:34).

➤ **Think about it:**

In what ways can you honor life?

“For us, murder is once for all forbidden. It makes no difference whether one take away the life once born, or destroy it as it comes to birth. He is a man, who is to be a man; the fruit is always present in the seed.” – Tertullian

III. Honor Marriage – Deuteronomy 5:18; Matthew 5:27-30

God places high standards upon those who enter the marriage covenant, the same standard which He requires regarding our personal relationship with Him. Just as He does not want us to have other idols, within the marriage covenant He does not want us to have intimate relationships with those who are not our spouse. Jesus again makes this a matter of the heart and reveals that if in our heart we lust then we have committed adultery. It is vitally important to understand the ramifications of following after the evil intent of the heart – the heart that is not transformed will lead the mortal body to an eternal death. That is, the body will follow after the heart, this is why we are to set our minds (hearts) on things above and to dwell on whatsoever is pure, lovely, true and noble (Colossians 3:2; Philippians 4:8).

➤ **Think about it:**

How can a young man or woman keep their way pure and free from the charge of adultery (Psalms 119:9)?

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IV. Do Not Steal – Deuteronomy 5:19; Ephesians 4:28

In this Commandment, God establishes and recognizes the right to personal ownership, what I have belongs to me and not to the masses. I do however, have a responsibility to give to the poor and help them in such a way that they would not have (or feel that they have to) to steal (1 John 3:17).

➤ **Think about it:**

Why do you think God commanded us not to steal?

V. Be a Truthful Witness – Deuteronomy 5:20; Ephesians 4:25

Wrongful motivation is what often causes someone to lie. Either they desire to protect themselves (or someone else) or they have something to gain by lying. Either way, once again it is the evil intent of the heart that drives one to lie. David, after breaking several of the Commandments (concerning Bathsheba), said to the Lord, “Create in me a clean heart.” This ought to be our prayer continually, then perhaps we won’t be led astray by our evil heart, as we often are.

➤ **Think about it:**

Is it ever okay to lie?

“I hope I shall possess virtue and firmness enough to obtain what I consider the most enviable of all titles – the character of an honest man.” – George Washington

VI. Do Not Covet – Deuteronomy 5:21; James 4:1-3

The Lord is not saying that we are not to desire good things, but the heart of this command addresses what unchecked covetousness often leads to; to desire the very thing our neighbor has in the extent that given the opportunity we would take it from him/her. In essence, covetousness can lead to adultery, stealing, and even lying. Therefore, God said don’t do it less it cause you to transgress even more. We must understand, especially in the material world we live in that it is not necessarily wrong to desire good things, that is, for a young man to desire a good wife, a nice car, or comfortable home. However, God wants us to attain these things through righteous living and not in a way that would harm someone else.

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➤ **Think about it:**

What was James talking about when he said you ask amiss?

VII. Epilogue: The Life That God Blesses – Deuteronomy 5:22-33

John Adams said, “*The Ten Commandments prove the Old Testament nation of Israel was the first to be erected on the basic principles of God’s creation. These commandments show us what a godly nation can be—a land of freedom, peace, and holiness.*” We cannot choose which of the moral commands to follow; we must choose to follow all of them, or none of them, both as individuals and as a nation. God has promised blessings of long life if we obey His commands, therefore as I have already mentioned, the Commandments are for our good, but it does not stop there, living by them not only benefits us personally, but also those who live around us. Think about the different world we would live in if everyone would obey the Ten Commandments. It would be a world that had no need for jails, for there would be no murderers, thieves, adulterers, or liars. Of course this is impossible while sin is so rampant and the devil is allowed to deceive the residents of the world. One day soon however, the Lord Jesus will put an end to it and sin will be conquered along with the devil. Then, and only then, will we live in peace as God intended from the very beginning. I don’t know about you, but I’m looking forward to this day when the mortal puts on immortal and sin is put away for eternity!

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Except where I have paraphrased all scripture is taken from the NKJV unless otherwise noted.

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Next Week’s Lesson – The Greatest Commandments

- I. Love God Supremely – Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Matthew 22:34-38**
- II. Love Your Neighbor – Leviticus 19:15-18; Matthew 22:39-40**
- III. Everyone Is My Neighbor – Luke 10:25-37**