

Thou Shalt

Exodus 20:3-17



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FOCAL Read Responsively Exodus 20:3-17 **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 showing 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 labor, and do all thy work: {10} But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God ... {12} Honor 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 neighbor. {17} Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.**

King David had been fighting Philistines all day – and the Lord had given him great victories. While David's heart was focused on the Lord none could stand before him. Yet at the end of the day Bethlehem was still under Philistine occupation, and David grieved. **“Oh, that this time was over. Oh, that I could drink water from the**

well of Bethlehem once more". As David uttered these words three of his mighty men heard him and sprang into action. They immediately charged the enemy lines, fought their way to the well, and drew water from Bethlehem. The King's men should always want to fulfill the desires of the King's heart. The King wanted water from Bethlehem's well, so they would bring him water from that well.

As God prepared His people to enter the Promised Land He wanted them to follow the desire of His heart. God always wants what is best for us. He wants to give His people the Promised Land, wants His people to rule and reign by faith in this life. When God partners with a people He expects them to love Him enough to follow Him wholeheartedly. Israel would come up against great enemies when they entered Canaan. The Israel that would enter Canaan for the first time would not have well trained armies. Unlike David there would be no "mighty men" who would be able to defeat the foe. If Israel was going to succeed she would need to learn to trust God with her whole heart. She would have to learn to love God and love herself. For this reason God gave Israel – and us – the Ten Commandments.

God gave us all the Ten Commandments to convict us of the need for faith in Christ and in His salvation. Righteousness could not come by the Law. **The Law was a schoolmaster to bring us to Christ (Galatians 3:24)**. It was God's desire that Israel be saved by faith in Him. **The just shall live by faith (Habakkuk 2:4)**. Not faith in themselves, but faith in God, trusting and loving Him. Israel refused to trust the Lord. They hardened their

hearts like stone, so God sent ten messengers to them written on tablets of stone (**Exodus 31:18**). God wanted to write these words on their hearts by faith, but the heart that will not surrender to the Lord can be harder than diamond. These Ten Laws – all very perfect – would stand to convict of sin. They would point out Israel's – and our – failing, and our universal need for Jesus. Would the Commandments save? Could keeping them lead to eternal life? No, not at all. Jesus said **"I give unto you eternal life, and you shall never perish" (John 10:28)**. Salvation by faith **"is a gift of God, not of works, lest any man should boast" (Ephesians 2:8-9)**. The Law did not take Israel through the parted waters of the Red Sea. The Law did not bring water out of the Rock at Meribah nor at Rephidim (**Exodus 17**). Who alone turned bitter to sweet at Marah (**Exodus 15:23**)? God alone is our Savior.

The Ten Commandments – like the sign of "tongues" (**1 Corinthians 14:22**) in the early Church – was given for the unbeliever. The jeweler knows that the beauty of the diamond is better seen when placed against the blackest of colors. God presented mankind with a ten facet diamond in His holy Commandments. Seen against the backdrop of the dark unbelieving life the Commandments remind us we must turn our eyes upon Jesus. They remind us that **"he that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36)**.

Do the Ten Commandments have any use for the believer in Christ? Yes, they do. If you have believed in

Him and have been saved then you, like David's mighty men of old, want to do what is pleasing to your King. We say along with King David **“With my whole heart have I sought thee, {O God}: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O LORD: teach me thy statutes” (Psalms 119:10-12).**

We love God, so we love His Commandments. The thunder and the lightening of Sinai does not frighten us, but reminds us that our God is an Awesome God. We love Him for He first loved us.

1. Do You Love God Wholeheartedly?

A Christian is always easily seen in a crowd, for he or she loves the Lord God with their whole heart.

It is interesting what the Ten Commandments of God *do not* contain. The Ten Commandments have nothing to say about music. Though many local Churches today fight over styles of music God did not consider musical styles and tastes to be important enough to regulate. The Ten Commandments mention *nothing* about foods. It is true that later God would establish clean and unclean foods for His Israel. God would later tell Peter in

Acts 10:15 ... What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

Clean and unclean foods were established by God as a teaching tool to tell Israel about the coming Christ. Once Christ came food restrictions were lifted. **What God**

hath cleansed call not thou common. What else is not mentioned? Eschatology – the study of last things and of prophecies – is not mentioned. The building that the Church occupies is not mentioned. Though God made provision for the Tabernacle and the Holy Things of the priests, these things are mentioned in later laws. What do the Ten Commandments focus on? The Ten Commandments focus on love.

What things do the Ten Commandments *not address*?
What do the Ten Commandments *emphasize*?

God's people – those who are saved by faith in Christ – must be a people who love. They must love God, (vertical love) and they must love one another (horizontal love). Jesus Christ said:

Matthew 22:37-40 ... Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. {38} This is the first and great commandment. {39} And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. {40} On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.

Though each of the Commandments start out with the words **“Thou Shalt Not”** what they are forbidding is *lovelessness – either to God or to one another.* God expects us to love Him. God expects us to love one

another.

The first Three Commandments form the foundation of the Law. If you are saved, you must love God! Loving God means more than lip service. Love requires *action*. God said:

FOCAL 1st Commandment Exodus 20:3 **Thou shalt have no other gods before me.**

Do you love God? Are you a Child of God saved by faith? Then God must be first and foremost in your lives.

The Lord says “**Thou shalt have no other gods before Me**”. The Great I AM – Eternal Father – Living Word – Blessed Spirit – will be first in the lives of His people. His whim should be our will. He loves us with an infinite love. He drew us to Himself, called us out of this world, and saved us by His precious Blood. Can you say with King David ...

Psalms 40:1-3 ... I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me, and heard my cry. {2} He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. {3} And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise

unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.

Do I have any little *household gods* that I worship above the Eternal God? Do I worship the gods of pride, or money, or fame, or drugs, or sex?

What a joy it is to know the Lord our God! What a pleasure it is to serve only Him. Ancient Israel had to put away her household gods, her little idols, and follow the Lord wholeheartedly. **The land cannot be conquered if our hearts are not fixed on Him.** If you cannot love God above all other false gods then you will never have an overcoming faith.

FOCAL 2nd Commandment Exodus 20:4-5 .. **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;**

God is **jealous** for His people. Jealousy is not sin. Envy is sin. Envy is when I look at that which is yours and say “I want it”. Envy is a violation of God's Tenth Commandment, “**Thou shalt not covet**”. Envy often

leads to other forbidden sin. But jealousy – this is when a person says “I will covet that which is mine”. God tells us over and over in Scripture that **God is jealous** over His people:

Deuteronomy 4:24 For the LORD thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God. (also see Deuteronomy 5:9; Deuteronomy 6:15)

As long as Israel focused her love on God and followed Him wholeheartedly the Lord blessed them in all other ways. Jesus tells us:

Matthew 6:24 "No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money." ^{NIV}

God must be more loved than any other thing that we have in this life. If we will **first seek the Kingdom of God and His righteousness** (Matthew 6:33) then all these things – the land, clothing, food, shelter – shall be given unto us. The Bible tells us:

Psalms 37:23-27 The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way. {24} Though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down: for the LORD

upholdeth him with his hand. {25} I have been young, and now am old; yet **have I not seen the righteous forsaken, nor his seed begging bread.** {26} He is ever merciful, and lendeth; and his seed is blessed. {27} Depart from evil, and do good; and dwell forevermore.

God has promised His children “**Love Me first and foremost. Hear My Voice. Follow Me, and I will insure that you are given the blessings of life**”.

Why did the first Generation of Israel die in the wilderness? The children of Israel fell in the wilderness because they would not love the Lord wholeheartedly

Even though God had taken them out of Egypt, Egypt was still in them. Each time a trial came their way they murmured the same litany:

Exodus 16:3 ... Would to God we had died by the hand of the LORD in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.

The Lord Who saves His people out of Egypt will surely sustain them. They are to spend their time **speaking well**

of God, praising Him, telling others about Him. They are not to be cursing God nor demeaning Him in any way. The Third Commandment states:

FOCAL 3rd Commandment Exodus 20:7 **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.

Israel “murmured” or bitterly complained against God rather than praising Him for what He had done. This is a form of “**taking the name of the Lord in vain**”.

Those who love the Lord - those who have been *purchased by His shed Blood* - will not demean the One Who so loved them. God saved Israel from Egypt with a mighty hand. God saves us who believe with a mighty Sacrifice. “**God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us**” (Romans 5:8). Israel saved from Egypt was required to love the Lord Who saved them with their lips. We who are Christians, saved by faith in Jesus Christ are convinced that

2 Corinthians 5:15 **{Jesus} .. died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again.**

We who are saved belong to God. His law of Love is

written in our hearts, and we are pleased to serve Him wholeheartedly. Let others build a golden calf to dance around and worship. We worship the One True God Who made the gold, the earth, and all that is in it. We will love Him and expect Him to meet our needs.

FOCAL 4th Commandment Exodus 20:9-10 Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work: {10} But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God ...

We who belong to the Lord, saved by His Grace, shall set aside a day in His honor. In ancient Israel the **seventh day** was the day that God was worshiped. When our Jesus Christ rose from the dead on the **first day of the week** the early Church began a tradition of **worshipping Jesus on the first day of the week (John 20:19; Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:2)**. We give Him one day to focus on Him and love Him wholeheartedly. Some worship the idol called “The Super Bowl” and say that this is the “holiest day of the week” because of football. Cast away your idols, dear ones. You have been saved from Egypt to worship Him. If you belong to Him, you are called to worship and love Him.

Does it please God that I will not worship Him *one day a week*? What does the Fourth Commandment tell me?

2. Do You Love Others Wholeheartedly?

Israel could not take the land until she march in unison with God *and* with one another. **Adrian Rogers** once

said – and it's still true today – that “**Anything with no head is dead, and anything with more than one head is a freak**”. God does not call His people together to freakishness. We who are saved are “**to walk in newness of life**” (Romans 6:4). Just as God's Israel is called to unity, God's Church is called to unity and love.

If we will take the land and bring Revival to America we must walk together with God.

FOCAL 5th Commandment Exodus 20:12 **Honor thy father and thy mother:** that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

The place where love and unity are first learned is *in the family* – so it is no wonder that God's Fifth Commandment focus on *honoring your parents*. God gives a promise to His people that – *if you honor your mother and your father – then your lives will be very long*. God designed the family to have one mother – a woman – and one father – a man. This is God's design. Adam and Eve, father and mother, bound together in love one toward another, bearing children that they love and who, in turn, love them. When the family unit is marred and disrupted by sin the echoes of this evil are felt throughout the nation. A strong Israel was made up of strong loving families that loved the Lord. A strong America – and a strong local Church – will only be seen when each family loves the Lord and one another.

As the family fails, so fails the nation and the Church

What of the other Commandments? The Apostle tells us:

6th Through 10th Commandments Romans 13:8-10

Owe no man any thing, but **to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.** {9} For this, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, **Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.** {10} **Love worketh no ill to his neighbor: therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.**

Love works no ill toward its neighbor. The remaining Commandments focused on aberrant behavior and lovelessness.

Murder, adultery, theft, lying, and covetousness or envy are all works of the flesh that find their root in selfishness.

These works all *take away from your brother*, and show disrespect for those whom Christ has died. Lovelessness in a person is a sure sign that *God has not given you new life*. We are plainly told in the Scripture:

1 John 3:14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

How do I know that I am saved, that I am a Child of God? How do I know that **I have passed from death to life**? How do you know that **you have passed from death to life**? “**Because we love the brethren**”. We love to join together and worship the Lord. We love one another. We love the local Church, for we are God's people united in Him for His glory. The Bible even goes further by saying:

1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

We love – not just in word – but in deed. The person who says “I love you, my brother” and yet never demonstrates that love does not love his brother. Jesus Christ said to us “I love you, My brothers”, and then went on to prove that love by “**laying down His life for His friends**” (John 15:13). Love is not merely a word. If we love then we **will do no murder to one another**. This includes **hatred** or grudge bearing. God has said

“Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him” (1 John 3:15).

If your brother has wronged you, forgive him as Christ

would have you do. The local Church – just like Israel before it – cannot take the land while squalling and fighting. Treat your brother like you would want to be treated. Never **steal or lie to him**, but treat him as precious in the sight of the Lord. The local Church, like Israel, is only strong when it stands together in Jesus.

Those who hate and carry grudges *may not be saved*.

**3. Do The Rumbblings of The Law Frighten You?
Seek The Mediator. Seek The Christ.**

FOCAL Exodus 20:18-20 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.**

I would not want to leave this text without making sure you understand this: **the Law has no ability to save**. The unbeliever cannot stand under the fiery gaze of the Law. When he hears its rumbblings it is a precursor to Judgment Day.

The Law reminds all of us that our God is Holy, and He may not be approached with unclean hands or with a soiled heart. When Israel was given the Law this unrepentant people cried out “**Let not God speak with us, unless we die. You speak for us, Moses, you represent us before God. We do not know Him and fear Him!**” The Law – like a carpenter's square – shows us how sinful sin is. It is no mere trifle, no dalliance, but sin is a thing that *God loathes*, a thing that *God forbids*. The Law leads a man to say, like Isaiah,

Isaiah 6:5 ... Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts.

We see our sin as dark when it lies against the clean purity of God's holiness. We see ourselves as people who need a Savior. We – when confronted by the Law – are driven into the arms of Grace. We cry out for mercy, seeking God's forgiveness. We need a Mediator between us and God's Law.

Have you ever told a lie? I stood with a man this very day who said to me “forgive me for lying”. Surely I will forgive you – but will God? God considers a lie so horrid that all liars:

Revelation 21:8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and abominable, and

murderers, and whoremongers¹, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

are shut up in hell alongside of **cowards, and unbelievers, and pornographers, and sexual sinners, and worshipers of false gods, and witches along with other false religious practitioners.** When you tell a lie you violate God's Ninth Commandment, and He Who never forgets and never dies sees it and records it. One lie remains in the mind of God *forever*. If you hate, this sin stands in the mind of God the same as *murder*. You might have thought when you sinned, when you violated God's Commandment, that He would not remember. We may forget God, but God never forgets. He says:

Psalms 9:17 The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God.

You who have tried to be good – have you any gods that you hold in higher esteem than the One True God? Do you forsake the Lord's Day rather than worship Him as He so richly deserves. God knows, and watches, and waits.

The Law leaves us naked and undone before God. The fig leaves of our good works are torn from us. A young

¹ G4205, *πόρνος*, pornos, *por'-nos*, From *πέρνημι* pernēmi (to *sell*; akin to the base of G4097); a (male) *prostitute* (as *venal*), that is, (by analogy) a *debauchee* (*libertine*): - fornicator, whoremonger.

man comes to Jesus. **“Master, what must I do to earn eternal life?”** Jesus tells him to keep the Law. The young man says – quite arrogantly I expect - **“All these things I have done from my youth up”**. Jesus replies, **“Oh really? Then sell all you have, give it to the poor, and follow Me” (Luke 18:22)**. The young man went away unsaved and undone for he still – like many Americans – kept money as an idol. If a man will be saved he needs to hear the rumbling and thunders of the Law, he needs to be afraid, needs to come to God and cry out as the ancient Israelites did for a Mediator. The Law is not as frightening when Jesus stands between us and it.

Moses stood between Israel and the Law and interpreted the rumblings for them. Moses said **“Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not”**. The Law was not given to dishearten you, but to let you know that you are a sinner in need of Grace. **The Law is your schoolmaster**, and I pray that you learn your lessons! If God wanted you to remain as an enemy He would not be teaching you. We do not send a convict to school to teach him how to die before we execute him. Neither does God send you to school so that He can send you to hell. If conviction is in your heart today *turn your eyes upon Jesus*. Look to Him as the Mediator of the New Covenant. He purchased your redemption from the Law with His own dear Blood. What does the Scripture say?

Galatians 3:22-25 But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to

them that believe. {23} But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. {24} Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. {25} But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

The Law – with its rumblings and flashes – was given so that you might see yourselves as sinners. It was given to make you tremble. It was written on tablets of stone until the day you came to Jesus and, because of faith in Him, God wrote that Law in your hearts. King David said **“Before I was afflicted I went astray: but now have I kept thy word.” (Psalms 119:67)**. Before we who are saved knew Jesus Christ as our Mediator the Law frightened us. Now that He has assured us that He stands between us and its rumblings we heed its direction yet do not fear. **“There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love” (1 John 4:18)** Have you been saved? If not, the rumblings from Mount Sinai frighten you. You hear the thunder, see the lightning, and are fearful because you know that you do not measure up. You stand before Almighty God as imperfect beings without hope, lost and undone. Yet the Spirit woos you, and bids you **“Come”**. **Repent and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you shall be saved**. If you have been saved the Mediator stands between you and Sinai.

John 3:18 He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

Have you believed? May God touch your hearts with His Word.

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

