

“The Ten Commandments”

(Part IV: How Do They Apply To Me?)”

Exodus 20:16-26

Message by Michael J. Barnard

July 13, 2025

Teaching Aim: To realize the purpose of God’s law is to reveal His holy character and our sinfulness. To recognize God’s law functions both as a mirror to reveal our sin and as a restraint to keep us from evil. To understand the law of God condemns our sin but has no power within itself to save us or enable us to live the Christian life; only the regeneration of the Holy Spirit does that. To realize the Ten Commandments (*God’s Moral Law*) are for our good and for the welfare of society.

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (BIBLE STUDY)

Part I: The ninth and tenth commandments (Exod. 20:16-17)

1. What does it mean to “*bear false witness*” against another person (**vs. 16**)? Why is this such a serious offense in God’s eyes? Has anyone ever born false witness against you or slandered you in any way? How did being lied about affect you? Can you ever completely reel in a lie once it has been cast into the open ocean of life?

2. List some ways that lying can hurt people:
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

3. What is meant by the word “*covet*” (**vs. 17**)? (See Dictionary) Why is coveting such a serious offense in God’s eyes? If you were given only 10 laws to govern a brand-new nation, would coveting be among them? Why or why not? What can we learn about an individual’s view of God when he or she covets what belongs to another person? What can we learn about this individual’s love for God? What about their love for others? (See **Matt. 22:37-40**)

4. Does money and success bring happiness for the long haul? Why or why not? What will bring true happiness? Name some famous people who have had great success and lots of money, but their success and money only led to an early death. What went wrong in each case? (See **Matt. 6:19-21; 20:28**)

5. According to Jesus, how can the law of God be summed up in a simplified form? Examine **Matt. 22:37-40**. Where do commandments 1-4 and commandments 5-10 of the Ten Commandments fit into this teaching of Jesus? Why is the inclusion of the Ten Commandments essential to the wellbeing of our justice system and to a healthy American society?

Part II: Once again, we see the ominous theophany of God at Sinai (Exod. 20:18-25)

1. What is a “*theophany*?” (See Dictionary) According to **verse 18**, how did God manifest Himself to the nation of Israel at Mount Sinai? Describe the events in **verse 18** and discuss why they terrified the people. Earlier the people had wanted to approach the mountain (**Exod. 19:12-13**), but how did they react in **verse 18**? Why? Why do you think God revealed Himself to the people in such a frightening way?
2. What is the function of a “*mediator*?” (See Dictionary) Why did the people ask Moses to be their mediator (**vs. 19**)? Moses is the mediator of the Old Covenant, but who is the Mediator of the New Covenant? (See **Deut. 18:15-19; 1 Tim. 2:5-6; Heb. 9:14-15; 12:24**) Was Moses frightened at the majestic theophany of God on Mount Sinai? (See **Heb. 12:18-21**) Did Moses continue to obey God anyways? Are you willing to obey God regardless of your circumstances in life?
3. What did Moses tell the people in **verse 20**, even though he was trembling in fear? Notice God had not come to destroy the Israelites. What had He come to do? Is there a difference between “*tempting*” and “*testing*?” If so, what is it? Does God ever “*tempt*” anyone? (See **Jam. 1:13-14**) Why is a healthy fear of God a good thing? What did the people do as Moses drew near to God (**vs. 21**)?
4. How did God speak to the Israelites (**vs. 22**)? What warning did God give to the Israelites in **verse 23**? Could any manmade representation of God adequately reflect the majesty and aseity of God? Why or why not? What makes God’s attribute of aseity so special? (Hint: Search online)

5. Why do you think God commanded the altar to be made out of dirt and stone from nature (**vs. 24**)? What can we learn from **verse 24** about the only way we can approach a holy God? To whom does the shed blood of a substitute on the altar ultimately point to? (See **Rom. 5:8-9; Heb. 7:26-27; 9:23-28**)
6. Why did God command for the altar not to be made of hewn (*meaning cut or dressed*) stones (**vs. 25**)? How does this command relate to **Eph. 2:8-9**? According to **verse 26**, why were there to be no steps leading up to the altar? What does this passage teach us about our need to come into God's presence covered by the blood? Why? Under God's law, the Levitical priests were commanded to wear sacred undergarments. (See **Exod. 28:42-43; 39:27-30; Ezek. 44:16-19**) What are we to be covered with as we approach God's presence today? (See **Eph. 2:13; Col. 1:19-20; 1 Pet. 1:18-19**)

Part III: Understanding the purpose of the law and applying it to our lives.

1. Today many in the church are "*antinomian*" (*the belief that Christians are under no obligation to follow the law*). Should they be? (See **Rom. 7:12**) In what way is the law "*good*" for us today? How does the law function similarly to a mirror?
2. Does keeping the commandments of the law save anyone? Why or why not? (See **Rom. 3:19-20; Gal. 2:16; Eph. 2:8-9**) How does the life and death of Jesus relate to God's law? (See **Matt. 5:17-19**)
3. What will happen to those who seek salvation through following the law? (See **Gal. 3:10-11; Jam. 2:10**). What is the only way to salvation? (See **Eph. 2:8-10**)

4. What can we learn from **Gal. 3:23-25**? According to some, the three-fold purpose of the law is: 1) As a mirror; 2) To reveal our sin and point us to our need for Jesus Christ as Savior; 3) To reveal what is pleasing to God. How do you see the law of God at work in each of these?
5. Although the law reveals our sin, it gives us no power to live the Christian life. What is the prerequisite for walking in the Spirit and having a desire to keep the commandments out of love for God? (See **John 3:3,5,16**) According to **John 14:15**, what will we do if we truly love Jesus? Where can we find the empowerment to do this? (See **Acts 1:8; Gal. 5:22-23**)
6. Finally, examine each of the Ten Commandments and explain how the person walking in the Holy Spirit will want to respond in each case. Once you do this exercise you will see that the Ten Commandments are really "*The Tender Commandments*," given to us by God for our good and for the welfare of society. (See **Exod. 20:1-17**)
- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

MINER'S CORNER ~ *Manna to live by!*

- To covet is to strongly and wrongfully long for the possessions or the status of another person.
- Materialism won't make us happy for the long-haul, only a right relationship with Jesus Christ will do that.
- Under the Old Covenant, the role of mediator was temporarily fulfilled by Moses; under the New Covenant, Jesus Christ permanently fulfills the role.
- The altar teaches us that the only way sinful men and women can approach a holy God is through the shed blood of a substitute; the only substitute that brings salvation is Jesus Christ.
- We are saved by grace through faith in Christ alone apart from the works of the law.
- God's Moral Law (*The Ten Commandments*) can be summed up by one word – *LOVE*.
- As believers in Christ, we are to love God and love our neighbors. (See **Matt. 22:37-40**)
- We will naturally fulfill the Ten Commandments if we are walking in the Holy Spirit.

