

The Ten Commandments

Deuteronomy 5:1-33

@ Home Study Guide

Two movies illustrate the relationship that many have with the Ten Commandments in our society. The first one is entitled "The Ten Commandments." This movie, starring Charlton Heston, is a classic and one of my favorite movies. However, despite its title, the 220 minute movie only contains 3 total minutes on the Ten Commandments!

A second movie is more recent and also a favorite of mine. This movie, starring Harrison Ford is "Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark." The "Ark" in the title is referring to the Ark of the Covenant, the keeping place of the Ten Commandments. While Dr. Jones was interested in the historical value of such an artifact, the Nazis wanted to harness its powers to fuel their military machine. The movie was filled with romance, action, and adventure, but in the end, the tablets of stone containing the Law were reduced to a pile of sand at the bottom of the Ark -Very insignificant to the overall story.

I believe that they illustrate well the attitudes prevalent today for two reasons. First, the Ten Commandments are over-emphasized. They are often viewed as the only important thing that the Bible has to say. Many of our homes contain plaques of the Ten Commandments. Courthouses are currently engaged in huge legal battles over their proper place in society. Washington D.C. has them written in stone monuments. Preachers have even been arrested for engaging in civil disobedience, a direct violation of the New Testament, to "protect" the Commandments.

But more serious than the fact that they are given a more lofty position than the rest of Scripture, is the fact that they are still ignored! Many people who exalt the Ten Commandments do not have a clue about what they say! The ratio of 220 minutes to 3 probably pales in comparison to the ratio of time the average person gives to thinking about the Commandments. People who say they would die to have them displayed in the public square seem not to care about living them out. This is a serious problem.

In our study this week, we will examine the Ten Commandments. They are important, but they have their proper place within the framework of God's revealed plan. They certainly should not be ignored. They should be taught and learned, for they display the greatness and the glory of God, and they reveal how His people were to respond to that display.

Day 1

Read Deuteronomy 5:1-33

1. What were the two reasons Moses gave Israel for listening to his reiteration of the Law?
2. Moses says in verses 2 and 3 that the covenant given at Horeb (Sinai) was not made with their "fathers." Who were Israel's "fathers?"
3. Why did Moses have to stand between the Lord and Israel at the time of the giving of the Law?
4. As we saw in question number 1, in order to *observe* God's commands, it is important to *learn* them. Does your personal Bible study have a direct correlation with your obedience or disobedience to God? Explain why.

Deuteronomy 5:9,10 Visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children...but showing mercy to thousands of those who love me. This verse does not mean that children are punished for their parent's sins (see Deut. 24:16 and Ezek. 18:19-32). This is a warning for parents to walk in obedience, so that their children will not have to feel the impact of the consequences for their sins. This was a loving warning that God gave. Fortunately, God's mercy is shown in the fact that the impact of a sinful generation does not last past a couple of generations. God's grace is also shown in these verses as He promises to bless the children of those who love Him for thousands of generations. Think about this fact: Everyone who is alive today is currently being blessed with life because of the obedient life of Noah. The possible future children of Noah's brothers and his contemporaries never even had a chance at life.

4. From the first two commandments, we can see that God requires the exclusive devotion of His people. Read Matthew 16:24-27. What three actions of the New Testament believer manifest his exclusive devotion to Christ? Are you doing these things? If not, in verse 26 what does Christ say you will loose?

5. Pray that God will help you to practice exclusive devotion to Him by living in obedience to Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit. Make a conscious effort today to put Him first in all things. Start denying and dying to your own fleshly desires and commit to following what He desires you to do.

Day 2

Read Deuteronomy 5:11.

1. Before you study this command in more detail, write down what you currently think it means to "take the name of the Lord your God in vain"?

2. The word "name," meant much more to the Hebrews than a title or address. Look up the following verses, and write down beside each grouping what aspect of God His "name" includes.

a. Psalm 20:1; Luke 24:47; John 1:12.

b. Psalm 22:22; John 17:6, 26.

c. Micah 4:5.

3. Now that you have a better understanding of what God's name stands for, look up the following verses from the book of Jeremiah, and write down a definition of the word "vain".

Jeremiah 2:30; 4:30; and 6:29.

4. Therefore, to take God's name in vain means to use God's person, His doctrine, and His ethical values for no purpose. It is to misuse God. You use God's name in vain whenever you:

d. Use it to express surprise:

e. Use it to fill in the gaps in speeches or prayers:

- f. Swear by it to make your story or oath believable:

- g. Use God, His Word, or His Church to advance your own personal agenda. (For example: Talking about God to get in good favor with a Christian teacher, boss, or client).

Look back over your lifestyle and examine the way that you use God's name. Under each of the 4 areas above, write down how you have misused His name this way in the past. Also record what you plan to do in order to see that it does not happen again.

- 5. Ask for God's forgiveness for the times that you have used His name for no purpose other than your own. Magnify and exalt His worthy name. Thank Him for the security that believers have in His name as you meditate on Proverbs 18:10.

<p>Proverbs 18:10 "The name of the Lord is a strong tower; The righteous run to it and are safe."</p>
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Day 3

Read Deuteronomy 5:12

- 1. Which day of the week was to be reserved for the keeping of the Sabbath?

2. The term "Sabbath" means "to rest or cease from work." What historic event did Moses appeal to as the precedent for such an observance?

3. The Sabbath was a day when Israel could cease from every day labor and worship the Creator. The observance of this day is clearly nullified by God for the Christian living under the New Covenant (Col. 2:16, 17). This does not mean that it has no lasting value or use for us today. What principles can you learn about God from this command that you can apply to your life?

4. What does it mean to "honor" your father and mother? What is the promise given to Israelites who obey this command?

Day 4

5. Read Ephesians 6:1-3. What is the two-part promise given to the New Testament believer who honors his mother and father?

6. While obedience speaks to action, honor speaks to attitude. Can you improve your attitude toward obeying your parents? In what ways?

7. Ponder the reality that God provided His people with a day that they could reflect on His mighty works. Notice how gracious God was to them to require that even slaves and animals have a chance to rest. Pray that God will give you the discipline to set aside time often just to “cease” and contemplate Him.

8. Pray that God will help you to obey and honor Him by obeying and honoring the parents He has placed over you. Ask for His, and their forgiveness every time you fail in these areas.

Day 5

Read Deuteronomy 5:17-32

1. How does the final commandment relate to the commandments “Do not murder,” “Do not commit adultery,” and “Do not steal”? Write down a New Testament reference in which Christ teaches this relationship.

2. "To bear false witness" against a neighbor specifically meant not to lie against him in a court of law. Its use in Hosea 4:2 shows that this commandment had a broad application to all forms of lying. To not tell the truth is to despise God whose very nature is truth. Read Colossians 3:9, 10. What reason does Paul give for the believer not to lie?

3. From verse 29, what was God's utmost desire for Israel?

4. Some people view God as a big cosmic hater. From verse 33, what three reasons did God give for wanting Israel to obey Him? What does this say about God?

5. After being exposed to the Law of God, the people said, "Surely the Lord our God has shown us His glory and His greatness" (v. 24). Thank God for His revealed word which exposes you to His glory and greatness. Remember that sins such as murder, adultery, stealing and lying all start in a lustful heart. If you struggle in these areas, understand that behavior modification will not work. Your heart first needs to be changed by Christ, then constantly renewed by meditating on Spirit-inspired Scripture.

Recognize that your motivation for obeying God is not because you are trying to get into heaven, but because obedience is only natural for the man who has put off the old self and is putting on the new. Ask Him to help you with this daily battle as you engage in the agonizing struggle to become more and more like Him.