

**The Ten Commandments**  
**Lesson 2: The Law of God (Part 2)**  
**Understanding the Heart of God for His People**

Last week we looked at:

- Boundaries and Blessings
  - We looked at Genesis 1 and 2; 9; and 11.
  - God put rules in place not to hurt or hinder us but to protect his people.
- The Law
  - Psalm 19; Psalm 119; and Romans 7:12.
  - The Law is perfect, sure, right, pure, and holy.
  - By the law we have the knowledge of sin and “by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His (God) sight.”
- The Meeting at Mount Sinai
  - God knew that his people would need rules to live by in the Promise Land.
  - They spent eleven months receiving instructions concerning a wide variety of subject matters. There were 613 laws, and all of them were for the good of the people as they prepared to enter the land and become the nation God intended them to be.
  - But the heart of the Law is the Ten Commandments.

**Lesson 2. The Law of God, Understanding the Heart of God for His People.**

This lesson covers two major topics: 1) God’s Guidelines for Righteous Relationships and For Me to Follow God.

- A. **God’s Guidelines for Righteous Relationships.** Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5 give us a complete list of the Ten Commandments. Exodus 20 records the events of the first occasion when God spoke to them from Mount Sinai and gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. Then, after forty years of wandering in the wilderness, Moses presented a series of messages to prepare the new generation to enter the Promise Land, Canaan. Those messages are given to us in Deuteronomy, which literally means “second law” (the second giving of the Law to the people). In Deuteronomy 5, Moses presents the Ten Commandments once again and explains why they are so vital for the life of the people.
- a. If you read Exodus 20:1-17, looking at each commandment carefully and count or circle the words ***Thou*** and ***Thy*** (KJV) or ***You*** or ***Your*** (NLT), you will see these words 34 times. What does their use tell you about these commands and about the relationship between the Lord and His people?
    - i. How God came to the people and what He said reveals the very personal nature of the meeting. The Lord came personally to Mount Sinai to meet with them and speak to His people.
    - ii. The use of the words *you* and *your* reveal how personal the commandments are.
    - iii. The Lord is entering into a covenant with the entire nation, but a “nation” does not make choices; individuals do. So, these commands were meant not only for the whole body of people but also for each individual person, including you and me.
    - iv. They were not written or spoken in a distant and objective fashion. God spoke face to face with His people in a close, personal covenant: “You shall...” or “You shall not...”

- b. Exodus 31:18 and 32:15-16 tell us that the tablets were written by the finger of God. The tablets were written on both sides, and they were God's work, and the words were written by God Himself.
- c. The first set of tablets were broken by Moses when he came down from the mountain. He was angry because when he came down, he saw the people dancing and saw the golden calf. He threw them down at the foot of the mountain, smashing them (Exodus 32:19).
  - i. Three thousand died because of Israel's direct disobedience. Later, as explained in Deuteronomy, the Lord instructed Moses to prepare two more stone tablets upon which God would once again write His commandments.
  - ii. In spite of Israel's rampant disregard for the Lord, He continued to show His personal care for His people.
- d. According to Exodus 25:16, Deuteronomy 10:4-5, and Hebrews 9:4, God instructed Moses to place the tablets of the Law in the Ark of the Covenant.

The tablets containing the Ten Commandments were also known as *"the two tablets of the testimony,"* meaning that they contained personal testimony of the covenant between God and the people of Israel. God gave instructions for the preservation and the protection of the stone tablets on which He had written the Ten Commandments.

Most artistic representations of the two tablets show them with half of the commandments on the face of the first tablet and the other half on the second tablet. Actually, each tablet was written on both sides, and each tablet contained the entire Law. So, Moses had two copies. Then, as now, the custom of entering into a covenant (agreement) included creating two copies of the agreement. Each party received a copy of the covenant to take home. Moses received both copies, one for the people and the other belonging to the Lord. Moses placed God's copy in the ark of the Covenant, in the Holy of Holies, because that symbolized God's dwelling place and was thus an appropriate place for His copy. Moses also placed Israel's copy there because the Tabernacle was the place where the people would meet with God.

The Law was actually given three times, once orally and twice written on stones. All three times it was personally from the Lord.

These truths about a personal relationship with God are spelled out in the New Testament in both Mark 12:28-31 and Matthew 22:34-40. *"And **you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength. The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'** No other commandment is greater than these."* (Mark 12:30-31 NLT). Matthew 22:40 gives further insight, "The entire law and all the demands of the prophets are based on these two commandments."

- When asked by the scribe what is the greatest commandment of all, Jesus quotes from Deuteronomy 6:5. Then Jesus added the second commandment in quoting Leviticus 19:18.
- It was clear to Jesus that the Law was a personal word from a personal God for the building of personal relationships. The Law is a guideline for a personal relationship with God and then a personal relationship with man. It deals with heart-to-heart issues.

In Romans 13:8-10, The Holy Spirit directed Paul to focus on love for one's neighbor. In loving one's neighbor, one fulfills the Law. Paul states that all of the commands against adultery, murder, stealing, coveting as well as all other commands are summed up in the statement, "you shall love your neighbor as yourself," a quote from Leviticus 19:18.

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Every law recorded in the Old and New Testament eventually comes back to one of these two main laws—love for God and love for one’s neighbor. Every Law is an expression of love in some form. How can we apply these laws in daily life? How can we love in God’s way and please Him? Let’s consider these questions next.

**B. For Me to Follow God.** What is the place of the Law in our lives today? Does God still want His guidelines to form boundaries in our lives? Of course, He does. That is clear in the Old Testament as well as in the words of Jesus and in other parts of the New Testament. In applying God’s Law, we must understand that the Ten Commandments were not given as a staircase to climb in order to achieve righteousness. We should not come to the Ten Commandments to make our hearts right or to perfect our relationship with God. We should come to Jesus as our Lord and Savior so that He can make our hearts right and lead us in our walk with Him.

The first commandment lays an immovable foundation. It can be stated in this way: “Because I am the Lord your God, make sure you follow Me alone. Follow no other gods whatsoever”. Without this commandment, the others would have no power or authority, no reality. If God is not our God, and if we do not honor Him, then all the others fall—we will look for other gods, we will not honor His name, we will not work and rest according to His schedule. We would be our own guide to what we want to do, when we want to do it.

- a. The Ten Commandments are *consequential* rather than *causative*. They do not cause us to live in the power of the Spirit. When someone tries to follow the Law only to be a “good person,” he or she ends up frustrated and filled with either the gloom of failure or the pride of “success.”
  - i. The Ten Commandments were never meant to be the source of our righteousness.
  - ii. They are evaluative, helping to show us where we are in our Christian maturity.
  - iii. When we live in the power of Christ by His Spirit, then we see these aspects of His heart flowing out of our lives. The fullness of His Spirit is the fullness of these ten commandments.
- b. We are not required to obey these laws to **become** children of God and receive eternal life. Anyone who has come to Christ in repentance and faith, receiving Him as Lord and Savior, being born from above by the Spirit of God, has a new heart with a desire to love and obey Jesus Christ.
  - i. We obey because we **have become** children of God.
  - ii. How are we to obey the Ten Commandments in God’s way?
  - iii. How are we to Love Him and others?
- c. Romans 13:10 says, “...love therefore is the fulfillment of the law.”
  - i. Read Galatians 5:14-16 and 5:22. How are we to love in God’s way?  


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  - ii. Who produces genuine love, according to Galatians 5:22?  


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  - iii. What are the manifestations of genuine love, according to Galatians 5:22-23?  


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Each of us must **“walk by the Spirit,”** which means that we must follow the urging or leading of the Holy Spirit in obeying God’s Word. As we do, He produces genuine love in our lives. That love appears in the form of much needed patience when we are in the midst of trying circumstances. It appears as self-control when we are tempted to lose control. It appears in the form of peace when all around is turmoil and chaos. It appears the way Jesus must have looked when He walked on the Earth, always full of the Spirit. Joy, peace, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, and gentleness will be apparent in us; these are the fruit of the Spirit.

Look at the list below, keeping the fruit of the Spirit in mind, and evaluating your life.  
How is God’s love and fruit shown through your life?

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT	IN MY OWN LIFE
<b>Love</b> (caring; giving unconditionally with a servant’s heart)	
<b>Joy</b> (the joy that comes being linked to Jesus, living a grace filled life)	
<b>Peace</b> (a heart and mind set at rest by the Spirit of God)	
<b>Patience</b> (longsuffering, endurance with people)	
<b>Kindness</b> (a gracious disposition showing helpfulness to others)	
<b>Goodness</b> (benefitting others, loving what is morally good and showing that kind of good to others)	
<b>Faithfulness</b> (the consistency that comes through a life of faith and love)	
<b>Gentleness</b> (strength under control, self-controlled force, or kindness according to the need, meekness)	
<b>Self-control</b> (holding the self in check, restraining passions and desires that are wrong and aiming for what is right by following the Spirit)	

Read Galatians 5:24-26 with 6:1-2. How do you see the fruit of the Spirit fitting with *the law of Christ* (6:2)?

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The Christian Life begins by crucifying the flesh and it continues in a lifestyle of daily crucifixion, each day’s choices staying in line with that first choice to die to self through the death of Christ.

Considering what you have seen in Galatians, look at James 2:8-13. What additional insights do you glean about “the royal law” and “the law of liberty?” What does it mean to show favoritism and how does that break Christ’s law? (Look at James 2:7 to see the full context)

**Homework: Next Week’s Lesson, Worship God.** Topics: One True God, “No Other Gods Before Me,” and The Testimony of the New Testament. Review the ten plagues in Exodus 7-12.