

Deut. 5:1 And Moses called all Israel, and said unto them, Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your ears this day, that ye may learn them, and keep, and do them.

This chapter begins with the people gathered to hear Moses as he reinforces their understanding of all that God has commanded them. Moses calls for them to “Hear,” to listen carefully with the intent to obey (from the Hebrew). That truth is affirmed as he instructs them to—learn them, keep them, and do them. I thought part of Webster’s definition for *learn* gave the best emphasis, “to fix in the mind.” The Hebrew for *keep* includes, “to guard, attend to, preserve.” This seems to be a reference to not only the importance of these instructions to the individual, but also the need to train your children and each succeeding generation accordingly. Of course, no matter how well you know or have understanding of the instruction, it does you absolutely no good unless you put that knowledge into action.

Deut. 5:2 The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.

Deut. 5:3 The LORD made not this covenant with our fathers, but with us, even us, who are all of us here alive this day.

Moses goes on to remind the people that YHWH, the self-existent eternal God, the God of Israel, made a covenant with the people at Sinai. This *covenant* was an agreement between God and the people of Israel. Webster’s definition is again very clear:

The promises of God as revealed in the Scriptures, conditioned on certain terms on the part of man, as obedience, repentance, faith, etc.

It is interesting to me that Moses emphasizes that covenant to have been not with their fathers, but with the generation of people he was now addressing. One reason for that emphasis was probably to encourage each person to recognize their responsibility in maintaining their part of that agreement and ensuring blessing for the nation.

Deut. 5:4 The LORD talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire,

Deut. 5:5 (I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to shew you the word of the LORD: for ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount;) saying,

As in the previous chapter, Moses again points out the privilege these people had been given of talking “face to face” with God at the burning mountain. I think this phrase was used in reference to the truth that they had communicated directly with YHWH in His very presence. The people trembled at the sound of God’s voice coming from the midst of the fiery mountain, so He called Moses up the mountain to receive His instruction with the mandate to go back and instruct the people accordingly. The fear of the people in the awesome display of His presence was meant to affirm Moses as God’s representative.

Ex. 19:9 ¶ And the LORD said unto Moses, Lo, I come unto thee in a thick cloud, that the people may hear when I speak with thee, and believe thee for ever.

The following verses are basically a repeat of Exodus 20, and I am going to copy from that journal (done a few years ago) and add any additional thoughts I may have at this time.

Deut. 5:6 I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

Deut. 5:7 Thou shalt have none other gods before me.

The Exodus journal:

The first command is the foundation of all the other commands. If the people do not accept God as their LORD and Deliverer, there is really no motivation for obeying the rest of His words. He is the one and only GOD. They are to have no other gods before Him. That implies that He is to have the most important position, be the highest priority, and be the point of reference upon which *every* area of life is focused and guided. If we truly recognize God as Lord--the one and only--the other commands will become a piece of cake. The problem is that we all have a problem with giving anyone the position of Lord in our lives above self. I've often heard reference made to other things we make gods in our lives, but I think the key truth is that we constantly struggle with dethroning self. Your LORD determines your actions. More often than not, even the "best" Christians struggle with taking self off the throne.

Of note is the fact that God prefaces His commands with a reminder that He is The LORD, their God. There is only one LORD and that LORD is connected in personal relationship to the descendants of Abraham through Isaac through Jacob. It is The LORD, YHWH, who delivered them from their bondage in Egypt to give them freedom and establish them in a land of their own.

It also stands out to me that one can only have one "Lord," one supreme authority in one's life, whomever you choose to place in that position.

Deut. 5:8 Thou shalt not make 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 waters beneath the earth:

Deut. 5:9 Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto 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,

Deut. 5:10 And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

The Exodus journal:

The next command is not to make any graven/carved image/idol of anything in heaven above, or earth below, or in the waters under the earth. Our propensity is to want to be able to visualize/see to believe. Then, once we have a focal point, the obvious next step would be to show honor and respect--bow down. God knows us inside out. Even if they were to try to justify an image as representative of God, the act of bowing/worshipping/reverencing anything that we can interpret thru human ability lessens the truth of who God is--a divine being/power totally outside our comprehension and understanding. If we can fit Him into our frame of understanding, then He is no longer God!

"I the Lord thy God am a jealous God." More often than not we think of jealousy with negative connotation. I think of this as another statement of God's great love for us. He is God. He wants what is best for us and wants us to recognize that. When we look to anyone/anything else for answers, we are going to be disappointed to say the least. He doesn't want us to put ourselves in a position to receive less than all that is ours through acceptance of His love and provision. When we choose to follow other gods (really self), then we are building our lives on a lie which will impact in turn the lives of our children and in turn their children etc. It's interesting that the Lord used the designation of the 3rd & 4th generations. I just realized that those would be the normal generations of a man's lifespan at that time upon whom he would have direct impact. On the other hand, those who love Him and keep His commandments can expect God's love to be evident to their children for generations. The more submissive and obedient we are, the stronger the foundation for our progeny. God shows over and over again in the scripture how He is willing to be merciful and temper judgment in response to the desires of those who love and obey Him.

Deut. 5:11 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.

The Exodus journal:

The next commandment forbids misusing or "taking in vain" the name of the Lord. This again relates to the core truth of the first command. The Lord God is the One and Only, including all the attributes that accompany the name/title--holy, righteous, protector, provider, judge, etc. One who is willing to "make light" in using God's name is reflecting the attitude in his heart--his unbelief and unwillingness to give God the position of LORD in his/her life. One who is at the point of cursing with God's name is again declaring that he is lord of his own life and could care less what is important to God--i.e. that His name be revered, respected, honored..... He warns that the misuse of His name will not be overlooked; He does not consider this a minor infraction.

Today's culture is filled with this. Satan has accomplished a terrible thing in that the name of God is used in so many ways that aren't actually cursing but yet aren't at all reverencing Him or even acknowledging Him as God. The phrase "O my god" can be found even on the tongues of many believers. It is definitely using His name in vain (empty of meaning; worthless).

(7/06) I was listening to Chuck Missler recently and my paraphrase of his idea is: Taking God's name in vain is more than just verbal expression. If we claim relationship to Him, our actions should show Him honor and obedience or we are taking His name in vain. I had never made that kind of connection to this specific commandment before, but I agree with the application.

Deut. 5:12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee.

Deut. 5:13 Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work:

Deut. 5:14 But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou.

Deut. 5:15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

The Exodus journal:

The next command is to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. The key word here is *remember*. This would seem to refer to Genesis 2:3.

And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

The Sabbath was set apart by God long before He gave the Ten Commandments to Moses. I think this is also a strong affirmation that creation happened in six literal days. God is telling them that He worked for six days in the creation process and rested on the 7th day. After six days of work each week, they too were to rest (they and their animals and servants and any foreigners in their midst) in remembrance of God's creation. It was important that they not forget the reason for their existence and to take time to rest and meditate on just who the Lord their God is. This is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day as holy--it was to be set apart and devoted to Him, the truest expression of holiness.

I know we are no longer under the law, but I think we have truly harmed ourselves by allowing this commandment to basically fade from view. We have allowed our "holy days" to become full of so many distractions that we never have a whole day to truly focus on the Lord. This in turn directly impacts our growth in the Lord and effectiveness in His service. This is especially true of those in the "ministry" or employ of the church. Each person needs to establish a day that is totally devoted to the Lord—that includes me.

It's interesting to note that this is the one command that is not repeated in the New Testament. It is also the one command that Jesus was continually accused of breaking during His ministry. By the time of His ministry the people had turned the focus of this command into carefully adhering to a list of don'ts and devising ways to get around its limitations. This was not the intended focus of this command. It was intended to provide time for men to worship and praise the Creator for His many blessings as they also allowed time for their bodies' physical renewal. Paul wrote specifically that there was no basis for judging someone as to their keeping of Sabbath days.

Col. 2:16 ¶ Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath *days*:

Man is no longer held accountable to a system of works in maintaining fellowship with God. When we accept Jesus' sacrifice for our sin and trust Him as Lord and Savior, God is satisfied. Jesus' work on the cross was sufficient, and there is nothing further we can do to earn our salvation. Jesus is our Sabbath rest.

Heb. 4:9 There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

Heb. 4:10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God *did* from his.

Deut. 5:16 Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

The Exodus journal:

The next command is to honor your father and mother. God is the Master Creator who allows each individual to be created through an act of love (if as God intended) between two people, a man and a woman. These parents provide the love, protection, guidance, etc. necessary for our well being as we grow from child to adult. They invest of themselves unselfishly and sacrificially for our benefit (or at least should). They are our earthly guardians as designated by God and deserve our respect/honor as such. When you obey and honor your parents, you should be practicing lifestyles that are conducive to a long and healthy life. These commands are being given with an expectation that the people will follow/obey God's commands and decrees which will in turn result in long, healthy lives because the foundation of these commands and laws is God's love. The command ends with a reminder that the land they would inherit would be a gift from God.

In Exodus the wording of this commandment emphasized the blessing of longevity in the Promised Land that He was going to give them. Moses here adds that obedience to this command had a direct bearing to their being blessed while in the land.

Many cultures throughout the world instill a great respect for one's parents. I'm afraid America is leading the way in showing lack of respect for our parents. More often than not, as parents get older and need the care of their children, they are resented and/or even ignored. Often, they are considered a burden rather than viewed with a loving heart that cares for them with gratitude. Sadly, I've heard many instances of parent abuse in the news. I can't help but make a connection to how scripture declared things would be in the last days.

Matt. 24:12 And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

Deut. 5:17 Thou shalt not kill.

The Exodus journal:

The next command is not to murder. I think this is the taking of life with deliberate intent. God is the giver of life and the only authority for the taking of life. God breathed His breath to give life to Adam and Eve. Each breath we take is a reminder of our Creator. Only He has the authority to remove the breath of life. If we choose to disobey, again we

are rejecting God's authority. By the way, you can be a murderer without being the actual perpetrator of the act—i.e., David and Uriah (2Samuel 11).

Deut. 5:18 Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

The Exodus journal:

You shall not commit adultery is the next command. God's perfect plan is one man for one woman. Adultery is having intimate relations with one who is not your husband/wife. I guess the idea of having more than one wife was a way of justifying one's self in the light of this command. But then we have Solomon and all his concubines, etc. It's obvious all thru the OT scriptures that the consequences are serious and unavoidable each time man goes outside God's plan—but it doesn't stop "godly" men from going with their lust rather than obedience to God. The word *adulterate* means "to make inferior or impure by adding a harmful or prohibited substance." That is just what adultery does to a marriage—it infects a relationship and begins to destroy it. Frankly, that's exactly what happens in our spiritual relationship to the Father when we choose to add things that are harmful and forbidden to our lives. Again, the core truth of the command is focused on our relationship to God. We will either accept His authority because of who He is, knowing that He will only command us in light of His attributes for our own benefit, OR we will reject that authority and disobey. Again, it's a matter of the heart.

Deut. 5:19 Neither shalt thou steal.

The Exodus journal:

The next command is not to steal, or take anything that doesn't belong to you. The Hebrew includes the idea of taking what is not yours through the use of deceit (i.e., Jacob). God, who numbers the hairs on our head, is our provider. He will give us ALL that we need (and much of what we want) if we will simply "trust and obey." When we steal, we are making the statement that God is not sufficient or able. Again, we are going back to a heart attitude in our relationship with the Father--the root of every command given so far in my opinion.

It is interesting to note that the Hebrew for the word "steal" also includes the idea of kidnapping. I had never thought of this commandment in that light before.

Deut. 5:20 Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour.

The Exodus journal:

"You shall not bear false witness (give false testimony) against your neighbor." Why would someone lie about someone else? Because of selfishness, pride, resentment, fear--all of which reflect a heart attitude that is unaccepting of or discontent with God's sovereignty or provision in our own lives.

I think this commandment also applies to gossiping. Just because you heard whatever from someone “trustworthy” doesn’t make it true. I can think back over many instances in which I wish I had had the wisdom just to stop someone from sharing things with me that were nothing but heresay. If we as Christians would just refuse to listen, this wouldn’t be a problem in the body of believers.

Satan understands that this is a very destructive sin among God’s people. One of his titles is the “father of lies.”

John 8:44 Ye are of *your* father the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own: for he is a liar, and the father of it.

Deut. 5:21 Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour’s wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour’s house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbour’s.

The Exodus journal:

"You shall not covet....." To covet is to want for yourself something which belongs to someone else. The Hebrew indicates that we shouldn’t even desire or take pleasure in something that belongs to our neighbor. I’m sure we cross the line more often than not in this regard. This again is a direct response to feeling that God hasn't provided for you sufficiently.

I think it all boils down to the fact that there is one root sin—rejecting God as LORD with all authority and sovereignty in our lives. If we are living in obedience and trusting in Him, we will be happier and healthier. His guidelines are for our benefit and protection.

I think I need to make clarification regarding desiring or taking pleasure in something that your friend might have. I think the point of this command is that you should not desire to possess what is theirs. It’s ok to desire similar things according to God’s will and provision. It’s also ok to enjoy the hospitality of your neighbor.

As I come to the end of this famous list of commandments, I am reminded of my recent study of the Sermon on the Mount. Jesus was very clear in teaching that more than just keeping the letter of the law, these commands are meant to make a connection in our heart with our attitudes and intents. (See topical study “Sermon on the Mount.”)

Deut. 5:22 These words the LORD spake unto all your assembly in the mount out of the midst of the fire, of the cloud, and of the thick darkness, with a great voice: and he added no more. And he wrote them in two tables of stone, and delivered them unto me.

Obviously, as one continues reading the book of Exodus, the Lord instructed Moses concerning many other things pertaining to making righteous judgments and preparing the tabernacle. I believe the point in this verse is that these are the ten commands singled out by God that summarize righteous living. The commands He gave then had not changed. God personally wrote these commandments on stone tablets and gave them to Moses. Because of the

wording, I tend to think that this was the first order of business when Moses ascended the mountain to God's presence. Evidently, as Moses continued with the LORD 40 days and nights to instruct him in other matters, the "voice" of God was no longer heard. The people quickly forgot their fear and persuaded Aaron to make them an idol to worship. It was then that Moses came down the mountain and broke the first set of tablets in anger.

Deut. 5:23 And it came to pass, when ye heard the voice out of the midst of the darkness, (for the mountain did burn with fire,) that ye came near unto me, even all the heads of your tribes, and your elders;

Deut. 5:24 And ye said, Behold, the LORD our God hath shewed us his glory and his greatness, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire: we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.

Deut. 5:25 Now therefore why should we die? for this great fire will consume us: if we hear the voice of the LORD our God any more, then we shall die.

Deut. 5:26 For who *is there* of all flesh, that hath heard the voice of the living God speaking out of the midst of the fire, as we *have*, and lived?

Deut. 5:27 Go thou near, and hear all that the LORD our God shall say: and speak thou unto us all that the LORD our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear *it*, and do *it*.

Again, Moses makes a point of the fact that the people had been terrified when God's voice spoke out of the midst of the burning mountain. They declared that this display convinced them of God's glory and greatness and that He desired to have fellowship with them. Still, they were terrified, and the elders and heads of the tribes came and asked Moses to be their representative before the LORD and then come back to teach them accordingly. Even before hearing God's message, they promised to listen carefully and obey Him.

Deut. 5:28 And the LORD heard the voice of your words, when ye spake unto me; and the LORD said unto me, I have heard the voice of the words of this people, which they have spoken unto thee: they have well said all that they have spoken.

Deut. 5:29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

Moses tells them that God heard what they had said, and He liked what He heard. As YHWH, who knows the end from the beginning, He knew that they would not keep their word. The wording of verse 29 expresses a desire to believe them but expectation of failure to keep their word. I can almost hear the sadness in His voice.

Still the truth declares that fear of and obedience to God will result in blessing---
--if we would but listen.

Deut. 5:30 Go say to them, Get you into your tents again.

Deut. 5:31 But as for thee, stand thou here by me, and I will speak unto thee all the commandments, and the statutes, and the judgments, which thou shalt teach them, that they may do *them* in the land which I give them to possess it.

Deut. 5:32 Ye shall observe to do therefore as the LORD your God hath commanded you: ye shall not turn aside to the right hand or to the left.

Deut. 5:33 Ye shall walk in all the ways which the LORD your God hath commanded you, that ye may live, and *that it may be well with you, and that ye may prolong your days in the land which ye shall possess.*

God heard the request of the people and instructed Moses to do as they said. He was personally instructed by God as to how to teach the people to live righteously before Him and sent back to then teach the people accordingly. Moses then boldly commands the people to do as God has commanded them. They aren't to compromise the least little bit. Again the emphasis is made that obedience will result in blessing and longevity in the land.

As I look back over my own life, I believe Satan and the flesh have been very successful in deceiving me into justifying compromise in my life. If we would but admit it, it is always a decision made against our better judgment and in direct disregard of the leading of the Spirit. It is always a decision that feeds the flesh in some way. When God instructs us not to turn aside to the right or the left, He is telling us that His way, the straight and narrow, is always the way of blessing even though it may not seem like it at the time. This brought to mind another verse.

Matt. 7:14 Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.