

The Ten Commitments, Part 2

Do you live by the Ten Commandments? Do you even KNOW them? ☺

Well ... let's see ... don't murder ... I haven't done that ... don't steal ... I haven't done that ... don't commit adultery ... I haven't done that ... (hardly anyone ever quotes the first two commandments)

But Jesus came along in the New Testament and said hating someone in your heart is murder; the Bible teaches that cheating on your taxes, wasting time at work, defaulting on loans you owe, and not giving your tithe to God's church are all stealing (ouch!); and Jesus said that if you even think lustful thoughts about someone it's already adultery!

So if God gave the "rules" and then came to earth as a man and raised the standard even further (!), is He just waiting for us to die so He can "grade" us on how well we followed the rules? That is a scary scenario!

Why is it that most people view God through the lens of the LAW?
That's ironic, because if ever God has sent the world a message, it is this ... **you won't ever find acceptance with God through your behavior!**

God actually gave the Ten Commandments to a people that He had just RESCUED out of slavery! The nation of Israel had **NO HISTORY BUT SLAVERY!** They were a family when they went into Egypt and now they were a nation, but they had never been FREE.

They had no laws up until this point, because **YOU DON'T NEED LAW WHEN YOU ARE A SLAVE, YOU ONLY NEED LAW WHEN YOU ARE A FREE PEOPLE.**

The Ten Commandments were not given to see if Israel could establish a relationship with God – they already had one! They were not given to see if God would be their God – He already was!

"We're not here to get in with God, we're already in!"

GOD'S RULES ARE NOT A CONDITION OF RELATIONSHIP, THEY ARE CONFIRMATION OF RELATIONSHIP!

Rules NEVER establish a relationship with your Heavenly Father – His rules are given because you already HAVE a relationship with Him!

RULES WITHOUT RELATIONSHIP ALWAYS RESULT IN REBELLION!

That's why many people RESIST the rules of God that would bring His blessing on their lives, their homes, their marriages, and their future!

IF GOD EVER COMPLIMENTS YOU WITH A RULE, IT'S JUST EVIDENCE THAT YOU'RE ALREADY HIS CHILD ... because God only gives His LAW to those He LOVES.

You will hardly ever meet a Christian who made a major lifestyle change because of guilt, but you will meet thousands of them who would tell you their own personal "Exodus story." They were in bondage and couldn't get out ... but then God delivered them ... and they have made all of their lifestyle changes not out of GUILT, but out of GRATITUDE!

I don't serve the Lord because I love RULES, but because I love HIM!
The Ten Commandments? Maybe. Or, maybe the Ten COMMITMENTS.

Exodus 20:1-6 And God spake all these words, saying, I am the LORD thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. **Thou shalt have no other gods before me. 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: 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; And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Commandment 1 – "Don't go to multiple gods for multiple needs; come to me for all of your needs!" This rule is more than just the first commandment; this is the starting place for a relationship with God. It teaches us to make God the center of our lives, and almost makes the rest of the commandments unnecessary if we obey it.

Commandment 2 – "Don't form anything with your hands that represents or replaces me!" (This was strange to the peoples of that day.) This rule teaches us not to make God a location, that you can be in the presence of and then out of the presence of. It also teaches us not to shrink God down to something manageable that we can compartmentalize.

When you don't obey the first two commandments, you can always find a loophole to get around breaking the rest of the commandments! (That is exactly what the Pharisees did in Jesus' day.)

The Lord said, "One thing you need to know about me in this relationship is that I am a jealous God!" He knows that our lives work BETTER when He is in the center of them, and that's why He requires it of us.

The punishment for disobeying the first two commandments is multi-generational consequences. The reward for obeying them is an even greater multi-generational blessing! Is this fair? No! Is it true? Yes!

These aren't really COMMANDMENTS, they are COMMITMENTS!
(They answer "What is going to function as the God of your life?")

Whatever your life revolves around is actually your GOD! And when it is organized around anything or anyone other than God, you will experience frustration, anxiety and emptiness. You weren't designed to live that way!

God wants your RECOGNITION even more than your OBEDIENCE!

We have been taught that God's only goal for us is to make us good. And anytime we feel like someone wants us to be "good," we assume that they are trying to keep us from something good! But God isn't trying to make bad people good, He's trying to make bound people free!

The LAW is God's agenda to **KEEP FREE PEOPLE FREE!** And when you resist His law, you end up backing yourself into bondage!

Matthew 6:33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Do you want to know what your "God" is? Just look at how you spend your MONEY and how you spend your TIME. That's what you value.

God won't even take "second place" on your priority list, because He is a JEALOUS GOD. He absolutely wants your life to revolve around Him.

Until you settle the issue of WHO IS IN CONTROL, very few of God's other commandments even make sense!