

# God Gives the Ten Commandments (Part 2)

Exodus 19:16–20:21

Last week's Bible Background concentrated on the events surrounding the giving of the Ten Commandments, while this week's concentrates on the commandments themselves. If you haven't already done so, you may want to read both Bible Backgrounds before beginning this session.

As we begin looking at the Ten Commandments, remember that God spoke these words directly to the people of Israel. These commandments contained the essence of the entire law that God would be giving to Moses.

Over the centuries, scholars have divided the commandments into categories in various ways. For the purpose of these studies, we're dividing them into two sections. The first four commandments have to do with our relationship with God; the last six have to do with our relationships with others.

These commandments were not given to force the Israelites to follow an arbitrary set of rules. These commands were intended to help the people lead holy lives that honored God and resulted in appropriate, compassionate relationships with each other.

Should Christians obey all of these laws? With the death and resurrection of Jesus, we live no longer under the law but under grace. Jesus said that he came to fulfill the law (Matthew 5:17-18). Certainly we are not bound to follow these laws to try to win God's favor, but the principles behind the Ten Commandments are valid principles for all time.

The commandments regarding our relationship with God clearly spell out the priority and honor that he is to hold in our lives. How often—even in the Christian community—do we let other things come before our relationship with God? God will be honored when we show through the way we live that he is first in our hearts.

One commandment that is often taken too lightly, especially in today's culture, is the instruction not to misuse God's name. To use it in swearing or frivolously in joking is not appropriate. How we use God's name directly reflects how we feel about God. He and his name are worthy of all the honor we can muster!

The commandments regarding our relationships with others (Exodus 20:12-17) give us lots of guidance on how to respect others. Though our culture often fails to take many of these commands seriously, living by them gives people the honor and respect due them as unique creations of God. No matter how much we see our culture denigrate these commandments—the honoring of parents, the sanctity of marriage, and the importance of honesty—we must hold true to these principles if we are to honor God and respect others the way God intends.

## **Devotion for Leaders**

**The One Thing:** As our relationship with Jesus grows, we can begin to see this world and other people through his eyes of unconditional love. We will enjoy fellowship more—and others will see Jesus' presence in our lives.

**Weaving Faith Into Your Life:** God loves his creation so much that he gave us commandments to help preserve it and glorify him. God's greatest creation is humanity—and we are surrounded by it. Every person you have contact with today gives you an opportunity to glorify God by lifting up his greatest creation—people. Who are you going to allow God to bless today through your actions? Everybody? A person who is down in the dumps? How do you expect to be blessed during this intentional service? At the end of the day, take note of who God blessed through you and how you were blessed in his service.