



**Adult Sunday School Lesson Summary for July 5, 2009**  
**Released on Wednesday, July 1, 2009**

**"Accepting God's Rules for Living"**

**Lesson Text:** Deuteronomy 5:1-9a, 11-13, 16-21.

**Background Scripture:** Deuteronomy 5:1-27.

**Devotional Reading:** Matthew 22:34-40.

**Deuteronomy 5:1-9a, 11-13, 16-21**

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.

**2 The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb.**

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

**4 The Lord talked with you face to face in the mount out of the midst of the fire,**

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

**6 I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.**

7 Thou shalt have none other gods before me.

**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:**

9a Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them.

.....

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.

**12 Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee.**

13 Six days thou shalt labor, and do all thy work.

.....

**16 Honor 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.**

17 Thou shalt not kill.

**18 Neither shalt thou commit adultery.**

19 Neither shalt thou steal.

**20 Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbor.**

21 Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbor's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbor's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any thing that is thy neighbor's.

## **Today's Aim**

**Facts:** to analyze the Ten Commandments given by God through Moses at Mount Sinai. See who can recite them from memory.

**Principle:** to conclude that moral law based on the Ten Commandments is relevant today.

**Application:** to encourage people to know, appreciate, and obey God's Ten Commandments through the Spirit's power.

## **Introduction**

### **Keeping the Rules**

Have you ever received a speeding ticket? It's irritating. I could justify myself very easily, for I had been following a slow-moving car for about 3 miles. The speed limit was 55 mph; the other car was doing 50 mph, and I couldn't pass. Finally, I saw my opportunity to pass and did so. Then I saw the flashing lights of the town police. At first I was puzzled, but then I realized he was after me, not the slow driver!

He said I was doing 65 mph in a 55 mph zone. "But officer, I had to reach that speed to get around this slow driver," who was still slow-poking his way down the road. "Sir, I thought I was being safe by getting around the car as quickly as I could so that I could get back on the right side of the road." His response? "You really were doing over 65, but I'll write the ticket for only 10 mph over the limit, which will cost you \$175."

Did I think I deserved the ticket? Nooooo! Did I learn my lesson about the law? Yes: break the law and pay the consequences. Obey the law and everyone is safer.

God gave rules of conduct by which Israel was to live. There were hundreds of rules, but the most familiar expression of these is the Ten Commandments. Paul stresses that today we are not under law, but under grace (Romans 6:14). This does not mean that rules of conduct are thrown out the window—quite the contrary. The church has been given rules in a new format by Jesus (see Matthew 22:34–40). Commandments that are expressions of the nature of God are unchanging since God himself does not change (Malachi 3:6). We ignore the Old Testament origin of such commands at our peril.

### **Lesson Background**

The book of Deuteronomy is a covenant renewal treaty, delivered by Moses in a series of speeches (Deuteronomy 1:1–4:43; 4:44–28:68; etc.). The recipients were the Israelites of a new generation who were about to enter the promised land. Moses was about to die on Mount Nebo, located in Moab (Deuteronomy 34).

Deuteronomy 5–11 is the high point of the book. Here the Ten Commandments are recounted (Deuteronomy 5; compare Exodus 20:1–17 and Deuteronomy 4:13; 10:4). This is followed by an exposition of how to love and obey the one true God (Deuteronomy 6–11).

There are different ways to categorize the laws in the Bible. One helpful way is to distinguish between laws that are conditional and those that are unconditional. The first kind has a conditional clause (beginning with "if" or "when," either expressed or implied), followed by a declarative judgment (beginning with "then," either expressed or implied; examples: Exodus 21:28; 22:26, 27). Unconditional laws are what we have with the Ten Commandments. They are foundation principles for Israel's covenant relationship. Covenant creates a relationship, and the rules maintain the relationship.

### **Our Relationship with God (Deuteronomy 5:1-9, 11-13)**

## **1. Where were the Israelites when Moses repeated the Ten Commandments contained in Deuteronomy?**

The title "Deuteronomy" originated with the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament produced by Jewish scholars prior to the time of Christ. "Deuteronomy" literally means "second law." It was not actually a second law but rather a repetition of the law already given to Moses on Mount Sinai.

Forty years earlier, the people of Israel had been miraculously delivered from slavery. They could have entered the Promised Land a short time after leaving Egypt, but they did not because they listened to the ten faithless spies (Num. 13 -14). This resulted in the Lord decreeing that they would wander in the wilderness until that entire generation died (14:22-28). Only Joshua, Caleb, and those under the age of twenty would live to see the new land (vs. 29,30).

Knowing that his own time was short (Deut. 3:23-28), Moses gathered the people of Israel on the plains of Moab and reiterated God's law to them (1: 15). Not only were they called upon to listen to God's law, but they were also enjoined to "learn them, and keep, and do them" (5:1). Far too many people know what God's Word says but are unwilling to obey. As James said, "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only" (James 1:22).

## **2. Why did Moses summon "all of Israel" (Deuteronomy 5:1)?**

*Israel* must *hear* and obey these laws. No one is exempt, because all are part of the covenant community. *Hear, O Israel* is a special phrase in Deuteronomy (compare Deuteronomy 4:1; 6:3, 4; 9:1; 20:3; 27:9). "To hear" includes the idea of obedience. Moses emphasizes obedience by using the additional words *learn them, and keep and do them*.

## **3. Whom did the Mount Sinai covenant apply to (vs. 2,3)?**

The name "Horeb" is another name for Sinai. This was the place where God made a covenant with Israel. Though God made a variety of covenants with Israel, the primary covenant between God and Israel was the one made at Mount Sinai. Jeremiah envisioned a "new covenant" (Jer. 31:21), which was fulfilled in Christ (cf. Gal. 3:24; Heb. 8:7-13).

The covenant at Horeb was made not just with the Israelites present at that time (most had since died) but also with those standing before Moses right now (Deut. 5:3). This covenant would also be in force for future generations. Depending on their obedience or disobedience, blessings or curses would come upon the nation of Israel.

## **4. Did the Lord really talk to Israel "face to face" (vs. 4-6)?**

Unlike the general revelation God provides for all men (Ps. 19:1-3; Rom. 1:19-20), Yahweh spoke face-to-face with Israel (Deut. 5:4). This does not mean that the people literally saw God's face but that His revelation was given in a unique manner. As their mediator, Moses stood between God and His people. Not even Moses was permitted to gaze upon God's glory (Exod. 33:17-23).

The awesome manifestations of God's power at Mount Sinai caused the people to be in great fear (Exod. 19:16-20). As Moses reminded them, "Ye were afraid by reason of the fire, and went not up into the mount" (Deut. 5:5). Indeed, the people were forbidden to even touch the mountain (Exod. 19:12-13).

The nation of Israel certainly didn't bring itself *out of the land of Egypt!* It was none other than *the Lord thy God* who did that. This is important to stress at this point in light of what immediately follows: a restating of the Ten Commandments. The fact that it is the Lord who provided the deliverance is a vital part of the basis for obedience to Him.

## **5. What is the difference between having no other gods and making graven images? (vs. 7-9)**

During that time period, polytheism was the norm. This meant it was not unusual for people to worship different gods for their different needs. One might have a god for farming and another god for health. God, however, wanted the Israelites to know that He was all they needed. In verse 9, he reminds them that He is a jealous God. He will not tolerate anyone worshipping anyone or anything else besides him.

In fact, anything that takes the place of God is an idol god. God should be our number one priority. He is Lord over all, and no one or nothing is going to take His place. In our daily lives, we have things that capture our attention. Whether its work, school, a loved one, or a hobby, if we put those things above God, we are creating idols in our hearts. As a result, they take the place of God in our heart. Isaiah reminds us that God will not share his glory and worship with another (cf. 42:8; 48:11).

God also prohibits making graven images. Unlike people who put other gods before the Lord, the people who make graven images may not necessarily be serving other Gods. Mankind has the natural desire to see what he is worshipping. Not only is God invisible (Col. 1:15), but he also lives in unapproachable light (1 Tim. 6:16). Since no one can survive the experience of seeing God (Exod. 33:30), He had a better plan: send His Son as the perfect representation of Himself (John 1:14; Heb. 1:1-3).

## **6. What are some ways that people take God's name in vain? (v. 11)**

Since God Himself is holy, it makes sense that His name is to be kept holy, or revered. Therefore, God's name should never be used in a light frivolous, or casual manner.

So seriously did the Jews reverence God's name after the exile that they began to avoid using it altogether. Even today, when reading the Scriptures, if Jews come upon the name "Yahweh," they say instead, "Adonai," another name meaning "Lord," lest they misuse God's sacred name.

God forbids us from using his name in magic and to curse someone. He does not allow us to use God's name to falsely attribute to a wrong act. A person who swears by God's name has broken this commandment. In fact, any use of God's name outside of reverencing Him is using the Lord's name in vain.

## **7. What are some similarities and differences between the Sabbath Day and the Lord's Day? (vs. 12-13)**

Ever since Jesus' resurrection, there has been a debate as to whether Christians should worship the Lord on the Sabbath Day (7th day of the week, or Saturday) or the Lord's Day (Sunday). Regardless of which day a Christian chooses to worship, we need to give at least one day back to Him.

Both the Sabbath Day and the Lord's Day requires His people to focus on worshipping and serving Him. Both require His people to come together in praise and worship to Him. On both days, the Lord is to be the focus on the day.

The Sabbath Day symbolized the day in which God rested from His work in the creation of the earth. Since God rested on this day, He commands that no work is to be done on this day. When Christians celebrate the Lord's Day, it does not include the prohibition from work. However, it should be noted that restraining from work once a week has some beneficial health benefits, so people shouldn't be workaholics and work every single day. Everyone needs a break sometimes. Even Jesus himself often withdrew from his work to be alone and spend time with God (Luke 5:15, 16).

## **Our Relationship with Others (Exodus 5:16-21)**

### **8. In what ways can children honor their parents (v. 16)?**

It is normal and natural to love one's parents. Under normal circumstances, children should not find it difficult to also honor and respect their parents. Parents make this easier when they are good, fair, and loving toward their children (Eph. 6:1-4; Col. 3:20-21).

Inherent in this commandment is obedience to one's parents. Of course, godly parents will never ask their children to break one of God's commandments. Honoring one's parents includes not only being obedient when children are young but also helping parents when they get older (1 Tim. 5:4-8). The Pharisees of Jesus' day created a loophole for this aspect of the commandment (Mark 7:9-13).

Attached to the command to honor parents was a specific promise related to longevity in the land (Exod. 20:12; Deut. 5:16). Paul seems to have seen this as general longevity (Eph. 6:2,3).

### **9. Does the prohibition against murder include all killing? (v. 17)**

The commandment "Thou shalt not kill" prohibited murder specifically and did not forbid killing in all circumstances (Eccles. 3:3, 8). For instance, under the old covenant, capital punishment was mandated by God for a number of crimes (cf. Exod. 21:12-17; 22:18-20; Lev. 20:10-16). The sixth commandment also did not apply to killing animals (Gen. 4:4; 9:3-4; Exod. 20:24; Deut. 14:4-6). Some instances of warfare are exceptions as well (cf. Deut. 7:1-2), although we should not conclude that all wars are just.

Malicious intent was the major factor in determining whether the killing of a fellow member of the Israelite community was indeed murder (cf. Num. 35: 16-27). The New Testament reinforces that what is in the heart is the central issue (Matt. 5:21-22; Mark 7:18-23; 1 John 3:15). The underlying reason why murder is forbidden is that man is made in the image of God (Gen 9:6).

### **10. What was the punishment for adultery according to God's law? (v. 18)**

Marriage is depicted throughout the Bible as an honorable and holy institution. Sexual activity between two people who are not married to each other is sinful in God's sight. So serious was this sin that it carried the death penalty for the guilty parties (22:22).

In today's society adultery is the norm. We must understand the consequences for adultery. The children who result from such sinful liaisons are often unwanted, neglected, and abused. Abortion, sexually transmitted diseases, and emotional dysfunction are also attributable to loose sexual conduct.

Christ pointed to the heart as the chief concern. Stating that lust was actually committing adultery in the heart (Matt. 5:27-28). It is not enough to restrict our behavior in this regard; we must control our thoughts and desires as well.

### **11. What are some ways people steal and bear false witness that are not illegal? (vs. 19,20)**

Taking what belongs to another, whether by force or in some legal but ungodly manner, is forbidden by God. Cheating on a time card at work, failing to return things that are borrowed, are just a couple of ways people steal and think nothing of it.

All societies must depend on the truthfulness of testimony for justice to be done in the courtroom. The penalty for lying under oath (perjury) is severe: the perjurer is to suffer the punishment of the crime involved (see Deuteronomy 19:16-21). At

least two witnesses are required to establish the truth (19:15). When justice is perverted in the courtroom, the result is a corrupt society.

God's people are to be honest in all of their dealings. We should be so well-known for our truthfulness that we will not have to back up anything we say with swearing or oath taking (Matt. 5:33-37).

## **12. Why is covetousness such a serious sin? (v. 21)**

Coveting is the unnatural and excessive desire for something. While this commandment may not seem as serious as the others, it may be the most serious! Breaking this commandment naturally leads to breaking other commandments.

We could say that the Tenth Commandment treats the real cause for the violation of all God's rules. By coveting another man's wife, King David illustrates how that one sin can lead to adultery and murder (2 Samuel 11, 12).

We are to be content with what we have (Luke 3:14; 1 Timothy 6:8; Hebrews 13:5). Covetousness is a sin of the mind that will lead to sins of the flesh if left unchecked.

Although not discussed in this commandment, it is even possible to covet one's own possessions; Failing to recognize covetousness in our heart may give us a false sense of security with regard to the other commandments, as with the rich young ruler (Mark 10:17-25).

## **Conclusion**

Any society that adheres to the principles of the Ten Commandments will experience stability in various ways. Christians believe that these rules came from God himself to the people of God. Christ said, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil" (Matthew 5:17). We must not substitute human traditions for God's good commands (Mark 7:8, 9).

The apostle Paul stresses that we are under the system of grace, not the system of law, for salvation (Romans 6:14). But Paul also applies the Fifth Commandment to all Christian parents and children (Ephesians 6:2, 3). He proclaims boldly in Romans 13:10 that "love is the fulfilling of the law"; this statement follows his quotation of four of the Ten Commandments in Romans 13:9. Paul advises in Romans 7:7 that the law has made us knowledgeable about sin; as an example, he quotes the Tenth Commandment. Thus the Ten Commandments are by no means obsolete!

God has entered into a new covenant with His people through Jesus Christ. Since Christ is the "end" (culmination) of the law (Romans 10:4), we now continue the new covenant relationship with God by keeping the law of Christ. This is a committed love for God and our neighbor (see Galatians 6:2). By living in the power of the Holy Spirit, Christians fulfill the "righteousness of the law"; the Ten Commandments help us to "walk not after the flesh" (Romans 8:4).

## **Prayer**

Father, may our look to Israel's past help guide our Christian future. May Your Ten Commandments teach us most of all about You. In Christ's name. Amen.

## **Thought to Remember**

Obeying God's rules pleases Him.

## **Anticipating Next Week's Lesson**

The next lesson deals with the Jewish Passover, commemorating God's passing over Israelite homes in Egypt where blood was sprinkled on the doors. Read Exodus 12:1-8 as background to Deuteronomy 16:1-8 "**Remembering and Celebrating.**" Many see Christian communion as a replacement for the observance of Passover.

Lesson Summarized By  
Montario Fletcher  
Jesus Is All Ministries  
[www.jesusisal.com](http://www.jesusisal.com)

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The Pulpit Commentary, Spence-Jones, H. D. M. (Hrsg.), Bellingham, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc.

The KJV Parallel Bible Commentary, by Nelson Books