

**Exodus 20:8-12**  
**September 21, 2014**

**Open with Prayer**

**HOOK:**

Q: What do you think is the enemy to “rest?” [Busyness]

Q: What do you think is driving our “busyness?” [Poor boundaries on time? Over-commitments? The need to achieve? The need for significance?]

Last week we began our study of the Ten Commandments, and not surprisingly, we only got through three commandments! Today we are continuing our study beginning with the fourth commandment, which is “Remember the Sabbath and keep it holy.” Let’s begin with our Scripture reading.

**BOOK: [Read Ex 20:8-11]**

V.8:

- “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.”
- Q: How does that look today? Are we succeeding? [It will look different to each of us. God gives us the room to create a Sabbath that suits whatever stages of life we’re in.]

V.9:

- Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

V.10:

- but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your animals, nor the alien within your gates.
- Observation: Jewish families had servants, and they would try to honor the Sabbath by resting themselves, but they would put their servants to work, along with the animals on the seventh day. The Lord wants all of His creation to rest!

V.11:

- For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.
- Sermon Theme (Dr. Haney): This commandment is designed to protect us from living out of control lives because we are in relentless pursuit of significance and accomplishment.
- Sermon Points (Dr. Haney):
  - It protects us from being too busy (promise of efficiency). We need to trust the Lord that we can accomplish what needs to be done in six days. The question is “What has God given me to do vs what I am able to do or want to do?”
  - It protects us from being too self-absorbed. It protects us from being so caught up with our “to do” lists. If we rested, we can use our new margin of time to interact with our loved ones. Thus, this commandment creates compassion and consideration for others.
  - It protects us from being too unsatisfied. God created satisfaction. He didn’t rest on the Sabbath because He was “tired,” but because He was pleased with His six days of work. We are fashioned for satisfaction.

V.12:

- “Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.”
- Q: What does it mean to “honor” our parents? What does this look like?
- Commentary (Toussaint): The fifth commandment enjoins respect (**honor**) of parents. It implies obedience and submission to them (cf. Eph. 6:1–3). The promise of longevity that accompanies the command (**live long**) refers to duration as a nation in covenant relationship with God (**in the land the LORD your God is giving you**) rather than a lengthened lifespan for each obedient individual. Cursing one’s parents, tantamount to repudiating their authority, was a capital offense (Lev. 20:9; Prov. 20:20).
- Sermon Theme (Dr. Haney): We are not told how to honor our parents, but we can learn the three most important things that it DOESN’T say.
  - First, it doesn’t say “Teach” your children to honor your parents. To honor our parents means to be better sons and daughters. It’s caught, not taught.
  - Second, it doesn’t say “Love” your parents, but give them their proper influence in their lives (Col 3)
    - “Obey” in Hebrew means “be thoughtful, pay attention, give consideration.” In other words, give proper weight to what they say to the best of our abilities.
    - Realize your parents’ humanity, flaws, strengths, and blessings.
  - Third, it doesn’t say “honor your parents ‘if they are worthy of honor.’” Most common Q: How do I honor parents who abused me, abandoned me, damaged me, etc? A: You still honor them because the Lord has commanded you. It’s mandatory (Deut 5). So figure out a way to honor them, i.e. “break the chains.” For some that means:
    - Forgive your parents for their flaws and limitations
    - Don’t blame your parents, but try to understand them
- Enjoy the promise that comes with obeying your father and mother: live long in the land the Lord your God has given you (in peace); Eph 6:1-3 “that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on earth.”

### LOOK:

Perhaps the best way to sum this up is to apply these two commandments the following way:

1. Love yourself. Show yourself the way of grace by resting on the Sabbath.
2. Honor your parents by loving your parents unconditionally. Forgive them and accept that they have flaws and limitations just like you.

### Close in Prayer

### **Commentaries for Today's Lesson:**

**Wiersbe, W. W. (1993). *Wiersbe's Expository Outlines on the Old Testament (Ex 19–20)*. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

## **I. Introductory Notes: The Law's Importance**

No topic has been more misunderstood among Christians than the Law of Moses and its application to the NT believer today. To confuse the covenants of God is to misinterpret the mind of God and miss the blessings of God, so the believer is wise to examine the Word to determine the place and purpose of the whole Mosaic system.

## **II. Name**

Beginning with Ex. 19 and continuing to the cross of Christ (Col. 2:14), the people were under the Mosaic system. This is called “the Law of Moses,” “the Law,” and sometimes “the Law of God.” For the sake of convenience, we often speak of “the Moral Law” (referring to the Ten Commandments), “the Ceremonial Law” (relating to the types and symbols found in the sacrificial system), and “the Civil Law” (meaning the everyday laws that governed the lives of the people). Actually, the Bible seems to make no distinction between the “moral” and “ceremonial” laws, since the one was definitely a part of the other. For example, the fourth commandment about the Sabbath Day is found in the Moral Law yet is certainly a part of the ceremonial system of Jewish holy days as well.

## **III. Purposes**

To understand the Law, we must remember that God had already made an everlasting covenant with the Jews through their father Abraham (Gen. 15). He promised them His blessing and gave them the ownership of the land of Canaan. The Mosaic Law was “added” to the Abrahamic Covenant later, but it did not disannul it (Gal. 3:13–18). The law “entered in alongside” God’s previous covenant (Rom. 5:20) and was but a temporary measure (Gal. 3:19) on His part. It was given only to Israel to mark them as God’s chosen people and His holy nation (Ex. 19:4–6; Ps. 147:19–20). God did not give the Law to save anybody, because it is impossible to be saved by the keeping of the Law (Gal. 3:11; Rom. 3:20). He gave the Law to Israel for the following reasons:

- A. *To reveal His glory and holiness (Deut. 5:22–28).*
- B. *To reveal man's sinfulness (Rom. 7:7, 13; 1 Tim. 1:9ff; James 1:22–25).*
- C. *To mark Israel as His chosen people, and to separate them from the other nations (Ps. 147:19–20; Eph. 2:11–17; Acts 15).*
- D. *To give Israel a standard for godly living so that they might inherit the land and enjoy its blessings (Deut. 4:1ff; 5:29ff; Judges 2:19–21).*

*E. To prepare Israel for the coming of Christ (Gal. 3:24).*

The “schoolmaster” was a trained slave whose task it was to prepare the child for adult living. When the child matured and entered adulthood, he received his inheritance and no longer needed the schoolmaster. Israel was in her “spiritual childhood” under the Law, but this prepared her for the coming of Christ (Gal. 3:23–4:7).

*F. To illustrate in type and ceremony the Person and work of Christ (Heb. 8–10).*

The Law is compared to a mirror, because it reveals our sins (James 1:22–25); a yoke, because it brings bondage (Acts 15:10; Gal. 5:1; Rom. 8:3); a child-trainer, because it prepared Israel for the coming of Christ (Gal. 3:23–4:7); letters written on stones (2 Cor. 3) in contrast to the law of love written on our hearts by the Spirit; and a shadow in contrast to the reality and fulfillment we have in Christ (Heb. 10:1; Col. 2:14–17).

#### **IV. Weakness**

It is important to note what the Law cannot do. It cannot accomplish these things: (1) make anything perfect, Heb. 7:11–19, 10:1–2; (2) justify from sin, Acts 13:38–39 and Rom. 3:20–28; (3) give righteousness, Gal. 2:21; (4) give peace to the heart, Heb. 9:9; and (5) give life, Gal. 3:21.

#### **V. Christ and the Law**

“The Law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). There is obviously a contrast between the legalistic system of Moses for Israel and the gracious position the Christian has in the body of Christ. Christ was made under the Law (Gal. 4:4–6) and fulfilled the Law in every respect (Matt. 5:17). His Person and work are seen in the Law (Luke 24:44–47). He is the end of the Law for righteousness to the believer (Rom. 10:1–13). He paid the penalty of the Law and bore the curse of the Law on the cross (Gal. 3:10–14, Col. 2:13–14). The Law no longer separates Jew and Gentile, for in Christ we are one in the church (Eph. 2:11–14).

#### **VI. The Christian and the Law**

The NT makes it very clear that the Christian is not under the Law (Rom. 6:14 and Gal. 5:18) but lives in the sphere of grace. In Christ, we died to the Law (Rom. 7:1–4) and have been delivered from the Law (Rom. 7:5–6). We must not become entangled again in the bondage of the Law (Gal. 5:1–4), which means falling out of the sphere of grace and living like a servant, not a son.

Does this mean that the Christian is supposed to be lawless and ignore the holy demands of God? Of course not! This is the accusation Paul’s enemies threw at him because he emphasized the believer’s glorious position in Christ (Rom. 6:1). Second Corinthians 3 makes it clear that the glory of the Gospel of God’s grace far surpasses the temporary glory of the OT Law, and that we Christians go “from glory to glory” (3:18) as we grow in grace. Actually, the NT Christian is under a more demanding way of life than was the OT believer; for the OT Law dealt with outward acts, while the NT law of love deals with inward attitudes. Being free from the Law does not mean being free to sin—liberty is not license. We have been called to liberty, and we must use that liberty for the good of others and the glory of God (read Gal. 5:13–26). We are

under the higher law of love, the law of Christ (Gal. 6:2). We do not try to obey God in the energy of the flesh because this is impossible (Rom. 7:14); the flesh is sinful and weak and cannot submit to the law. But as we reckon ourselves dead to sin (Rom. 6) and yield to the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8), the Spirit fulfills the law in us and through us (Rom. 8:1–4).

To go back to the Law is to exchange reality for shadows and liberty for bondage. It is to forfeit the high calling we have in grace. Law means that we must do something to please God; grace means that God works in us to fulfill His perfect will.

## VII. The Ten Commandments Today

All of the OT Law is but an amplification and application of the Ten Commandments. Nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the NT for believers today:

A. *Have no other gods before Me (Acts 14:15; John 4:21–23;*

*1 Tim. 2:5; James 2:19; 1 Cor. 8:6).*

B. *Make no idols or images (Acts 17:29; Rom. 1:22–23; 1 John 5:21; 1 Cor. 10:7, 14).*

C. *Do not take His name in vain (James 5:12; Matt. 5:33–37 and 6:5–9).*

D. *Remember the Sabbath Day.*

This is not repeated anywhere in the NT for the church to obey today. Keeping the Sabbath is mentioned in Matt. 12, Mark 2, Luke 6, and John 5; but these all refer to the people of Israel and not to the church. Colossians 2 and Rom. 14–15 teach that believers should not judge one another with reference to holy days or Sabbaths. To say that a person is lost or unspiritual for not keeping the Sabbath is to go beyond the bounds of Scripture.

E. *Honor father and mother (Eph. 6:1–4).*

**Toussaint, S. D. (1985). Acts. (J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck, Eds.)The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures. (Vol. 2, pp. 138–140). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.**

### 2. THE DECALOGUE (20:1–21)

One of the great events in the history of Israel, and perhaps in the history of all mankind, is the giving of the Law. The Law was not given so that the Israelites by keeping it could attain righteousness (Rom. 3:20a; Gal. 3:11). A righteous standing (justification) before God has always been only by faith (trust) in God (Gen. 15:6; Rom. 4:3, 22; 5:1; Gal. 2:16; 3:6, 21). The Law functioned to show the Israelites their sinfulness (Rom. 3:19–20b; 7:7) in contrast with God's standards of holiness and righteousness, and to condemn mankind. The Mosaic Law in Exodus has three parts: the Decalogue (Ex. 20:1–21), the Book of the Covenant with civil and religious ordinances (20:22–24:11), and ceremonial regulations (24:12–31:18).

a. *The introduction to the Decalogue (20:1–2)*

20:1–2. The Ten Commandments (in 34:28 “Ten Commandments” is lit., “Ten Words”), the hub of all of Israel’s religious and civil laws, has two parts. The first four commandments pertain to the relationship of the Israelites with God, and the other six deal with social relationships within the covenant community. Before giving these 10 stipulations, **God** in the preamble spoke of His unique relationship with His people (**I am the LORD your God**, 20:2a) and in the historical prologue He briefly summarized what He had done for them (**brought you out of Egypt ... the land of slavery**, v. 2b; cf. 13:3, 14; Deut. 5:6; 6:12; 7:8; 8:14; 13:5, 10). Centuries before, God had led Abraham out of Ur (Gen. 15:7); now He led Abraham’s descendants out of Egypt.

The Ten Commandments are an excellent summary of 10 divine rules for human conduct. They might be called rules of (1) religion, (2) worship, (3) reverence, (4) time, (5) authority, (6) life, (7) purity, (8) property, (9) tongue, and (10) contentment.

b. *The first commandment (20:3)*

20:3. The first of the Ten Commandments is that Israel was to worship the one true God. Worshiping false **gods** would be setting up rivals to Him (**before Me** may mean “in opposition to Me” as well as “in My presence”) and thus overlooking His uniqueness (cf. vv. 22–23). Unfortunately Israel often disobeyed this very first command by worshiping the idols of other nations. This eventually resulted in her being exiled to Assyria and Babylonia.

c. *The second commandment (20:4–6)*

20:4–6. The worship of God was to be spiritual, not material. Israel was forbidden from worshiping idols (v. 3) and also from making images of God. **Idol** is *pesel*, “carved wood or stone,” from *pāsal*, “to carve.” Later (34:17) “cast idols” made from molten metal were forbidden too. Since God is spiritual no material representation can possibly resemble Him. To make an idol of God like something in the sky (sun, moon, stars), **or on the earth** (animals), **or in the waters below** (fish, crocodiles, or other sea life) was forbidden because God is **a jealous God** (cf. 34:14; Deut. 5:9; 6:15; 32:16, 21; Josh. 24:19), that is, He is zealous that devotion be given exclusively to Him. His uniqueness (Ex. 20:3) requires unique devotion. Absence of such dedication is sin and has its effect on future generations. Those who thus are influenced to **hate** God will be punished by Him. By contrast He is loyal (**showing *hesed***, “loyal love”) to those who **love** Him and who show that love by their obedience (cf. 1 John 5:3).

d. *The third commandment (20:7)*

20:7. **The name of ... God** should be honored and protected. The Israelites were not to use His name for any idle, frivolous, or insincere purpose (such as speaking His name when taking an oath with no intention of keeping it, Lev. 19:12). People should not use His name for selfish or evil purposes (cf. Ps. 139:20; also see comments on Deut. 5:11), thereby seeking to usurp His authority.

e. *The fourth commandment (20:8–11)*

20:8–11. A day of solemn worship of **God** should be kept weekly. Keeping **the Sabbath Day ... holy** means to separate it, **the seventh day**, from the other six as a special day **to the LORD**. People are to work in **six days** and worship on the seventh. This contrasted with the Israelites' slavery in Egypt when, presumably, they had no break in their daily routine. The basis for this commandment is God's creating the universe **in six days** and resting **on the seventh** (Gen. 2:2–3; Ex. 16:23). This was not to be a day of slothful inactivity but of spiritual service through religious observances. For the violation of this command God imposed on Israel the death penalty (Ex. 31:15; Num. 15:32–36). In the present Church Age the day of worship has been changed from Saturday to Sunday because of Jesus' resurrection on the first day of the week (cf. Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:2).

*f. The fifth commandment (20:12)*

20:12. Commandments 5–10, the second portion of the Law (vv. 12–17), deal with one's relationships to others. All the commandments include a negative except the fourth (the last in the first group) and the fifth (the first in the second group). The fifth commandment enjoins respect (**honor**) of parents. It implies obedience and submission to them (cf. Eph. 6:1–2). The promise of longevity that accompanies the command (**live long**) refers to duration as a nation in covenant relationship with God (**in the land the LORD your God is giving you**) rather than a lengthened lifespan for each obedient individual. Cursing one's parents, tantamount to repudiating their authority, was a capital offense (Ex. 21:17; Lev. 20:9; Prov. 20:20).

**Cabal, T., Brand, C. O., Clendenen, E. R., Copan, P., Moreland, J. P., & Powell, D. (2007). The Apologetics Study Bible: Real Questions, Straight Answers, Stronger Faith (pp. 115 – 119). Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers.**

**20:1–17** God and Moses perceived obedience to the laws, not as a way of or precondition to salvation, but as the grateful response of those who had already been saved. God did not reveal the law to the Israelites in Egypt and then tell them that as soon as they had measured up to this standard He would rescue them. On the contrary, by grace alone, through faith they crossed the Red Sea to freedom. All that was required was belief in God's promise that He would hold up the walls of water on either side and see them safely through to the other shore.

The Decalogue begins, not with the first commandment, but with a preamble: "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery" (v. 2; Dt 5:6). Obedience to the Decalogue or any other law has never been intended as the way of salvation but as the appropriate response to salvation already received.

**20:8–11** How are Christians obligated to "remember the Sabbath day," or seventh day of the week? May a Christian work on Saturdays? The fourth commandment is unique among the Ten Commandments in containing both ceremonial and moral elements. It establishes a key element in a religious calendar, designating one day in seven as holy. But it is also moral, directing people to be imitators of God in His rest from the work of creation, and to use His gift of time for sacred purposes. Because it can be taken in both a ceremonial and moral sense, this commandment became a center of controversy in Jesus' ministry, and continued to be so in the history of the church.

Jesus violated first-century Jewish ceremonial customs regarding the Sabbath (Mt 12:10–13; Lk 13:10–17). He also defended His disciples when they violated the Sabbath customs (Mt 12:1–8), even though OT law mandated the death penalty for those who worked on that sacred day (Ex 31:14–15; 35:2). The apostle Paul likewise de-emphasized the need for Christians to maintain Jewish customs related to the calendar (Rm 14:5; Col 2:16). At the same time, Jesus was careful to keep the moral aspects of this command, stating that “it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath” (Mt 12:12). Jesus saw beyond the ceremony to the sacred use of time. Every day, but especially the Lord’s Day, is to be used to accomplish the work of God.

Should Christians use Saturday as their day of worship? Before the coming of Jesus, Jews used the seventh day as a sacred day of rest, and of prayer and study of the scriptures. However, the first day of the week could also be a special day of worship during the annual Feast of Tabernacles (see Lv 23:36). In honor of Jesus’ resurrection, which occurred on the first day of the week, early first-century Christians made that day their regular day of worship (see Acts 20:7; 1 Co 16:2), calling it “the Lord’s Day” (see Rev 1:10). At the same time, the NT makes it clear that Christians are not bound to rigid rules regarding days for worship (see Rm 14:5–6). It is vital for Christians to gather regularly for worship (Heb 10:25), but many interpreters believe that no day of the week is inherently better than another for doing so.

**20:12** The Bible consistently teaches that we should honor and obey our parents (Lv 19:3; Dt 5:16; Pr 23:22; Mt 15:4; 19:19; Mk 7:10; 10:19; Lk 18:20; Eph 6:1–2; Col 3:20), following the example of Jesus Himself (Lk 2:51). At the same time, we are taught to make God our highest authority, esteeming Him above any earthly authority, including parents (Mt 10:37). On those rare occasions when one must choose to reject parental authority in order to obey God, family conflicts will be inevitable (see Lk 12:51–53). In spite of the tension and potential consequences, it is necessary to follow God’s way (Acts 5:29). Although Jesus speaks of hating our parents (Lk 14:26), the expression does not mean what we mean by “hate”; it means simply to avoid making them the highest authority in our lives.

**Dr. Dave Haney – Sermons on the Ten Commandments:**

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