

OLD TESTAMENT SURVEY

Lesson 14

The Ten Commandments

(Guest Teacher: Dr. Stephen Trammell)

The Pine tree-adorned campus of Louisiana College in Pineville, Louisiana, provided the canvas upon which the paint of romantic love was applied. Tonya was a captivating cheerleader and I was an observant student. The semester prior to our meeting, I had launched an investigative work of inquiring about Tonya through personal interviews with her roommate. As the data came in, my interest level expanded. One night, I was representing the church I served at a campus-wide dessert party seeking to persuade my fellow students to consider our church as their home away from home. The cheerleaders had just completed their practice session and made their way into the commons area for a refreshing drink. Utilizing the sliding glass door that transformed into a mirror at night, I strategically fixed my gaze on the most beautiful woman my eyes had seen. My heart rate accelerated and my mind began to race. Though I was serving dessert and engaging in meaningful dialogue with students, my attention was arrested by this masterpiece made in heaven.

As the dessert party transitioned into the final moments, I gathered my belongings and sifted through the commons area to load my car. As I exited the building and stepped onto the boardwalk, within moments I heard my name called in a soothing voice that rivaled the sound waves of a soprano saxophone played by Kenny G. For the first time, Tonya walked up behind me and called out to me by saying, "Stephen!" That's right. She was pursuing me. She made the first move. She chased me! Okay, that's my side of the story. Her tone elevated as we made eye contact and my heart began to melt. Tonya then articulated in her "straight A's all of her life" vocabulary that she understood that I had been asking her roommate very personal questions about her. Tonya went on to say, "If you want to know something about me then you need to ask me yourself!"

The well of love had been uncapped and my heart palpitated with echoes of romance. As our conversation continued, I was by this time leaning back against the side of my brand new white Honda Accord (which Tonya recalls as the white horse that her man came riding in on). Looking into her breathtaking eyes, I shared with Tonya that I was about to go meet my roommate and his girlfriend to play tennis and wondered if she would be interested in joining us. Her answer was a resounding, "Yes!"

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That night launched a new level of living and a new level of loving. Sixteen months later, we stood at the altar of Horseshoe Drive Baptist Church before our three pastors and entered into a covenant relationship with each other before Almighty God. On January 5, 2011, we will celebrate our twentieth wedding anniversary. I am the most blessed among men! To God be the glory!

God originated covenant relationships. He values community and creates unity in the midst of diversity. God pursued the children of Israel with His redeeming love. He allowed Moses to experience forty years in the palace and then another forty years in the desert. There were some things God wanted to teach Moses in the desert that he could not learn in the palace. After his burning bush experience, Moses sought to deliver the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage. God unleashed His miracle working power through Moses and enabled the children of Israel to cross the Re(e)d Sea on dry ground. As Israel entered the Desert of Sinai, they camped in front of the mountain.

God was moving them out of idolatry and establishing their identity as the people of God. Now that they had been delivered out of Egypt, it was time to deliver Egypt out of them. God invited Moses to come up the mountain.

Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to tell the people of Israel: 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites" (Ex. 19:3-6).

After three days of preparation and consecration, Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God. Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, the mountain trembled violently, and the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder. The stage was set for the miracle of divine revelation. Moses spoke and God answered.

The giving of the Law is one of the great events in the history of Israel. Moses made three trips to the mountaintop and back. The Mosaic Law in Exodus has three parts: the Decalogue, the Book of the Covenant with civil and religious ordinances (20:22-24:11), and the Book of the Covenant with ceremonial

regulations (24:12-31:18).¹ Our focus in this lesson is on “the ten words” or the *Decalogue* (from the Greek *deka* [“ten”] and *logoi* [“words”]).²

The Ten Commandments rank up there with the Twenty-third Psalm and the Lord’s Prayer in both familiarity and regularity for memorization. Over the years, the Ten Commandments have been posted in homes, schools, public buildings, and churches. Much debate has been centered on the legality of featuring such commandments in the public domain. As a result, the Ten Commandments have been removed from countless venues.

The first five books of the Bible are known as the books of the Law or the Pentateuch. They are based on the commandments that God revealed to Moses. The Hebrew term, *torah*, is used more than 200 times in the Old Testament and is translated “law.” The Torah came to mean the way of life for faithful Israelites. More than just laws, the Torah includes the story of God’s dealing with humankind and Israel.³

Patrick Miller has assembled some Ten Commandment facts that are helpful and insightful:

- Ten Commandments are given twice, once in the narrative of the events at Sinai (Exod. 20) and again when Moses recalls those events as the people prepare to go into the land (Deut. 5).
- The Lord gave the Commandments *directly* to the people (“face to face,” Deut. 5:4), and this is the only time such direct speech to the whole people takes place. The rest of the statutes and ordinances are given to Moses to be taught to the people, differentiating them from the Commandments.
- They are the *first* piece of the legal material and *separated* from the statutes and ordinances that follow in the rest of Exodus and Deuteronomy as well as in Leviticus and Numbers.
- The Commandments are written by the *finger* of God on *stone*, to make clear their source and endurance.

¹ Walvoord, John F. and Zuck, Roy B., eds., *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Victor Books, 1987), 138.

² Larsson, Goran. *Bound for Freedom* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 2007), 138.

³ Butler, Trent C., ed., *Holman Bible Dictionary* (Nashville, TN: Homan Bible Publishers. 1991), 866.

- They are placed in the ark of the covenant, the Lord’s dwelling place in the midst of the people (Deut. 10:5), while the other legislation/instruction is written on a scroll and put beside the ark not in it (Deut. 31:24-26).⁴

The Ten Commandments are a summary of the Law. God gives us His top ten. Dividing the Decalogue into two sections becomes natural in that the first four commandments deal with our relationship with God while the remaining six commandments deal with our relationship with others. The first four commandments are vertical in nature while the remaining six commandments are horizontal in nature. The Ten Commandments clearly reveal how to reverence God and to respect others.

Why is the law essential? It’s God’s way of showing us our sins and stripping us of our self-righteousness so that we cry out for the mercy and grace of God.⁵ Martin Luther famously said: “This much is certain: those who know the Ten Commandments perfectly know the entire Scriptures and in all affairs and circumstances are able to counsel, help, comfort, judge, and make decisions in both spiritual and temporal matters” (Large Catechism, in Kolb and Wengert, *Book of Concord*, 382).⁶ God not only initiates the covenant relationship we enjoy with Him, but He also helps us navigate the relationship.

God has brought the Israelites out of Egypt. The relationship between them has already been established. Now, they are to learn what a redeemed life should look like.⁷ God reminded them of His provision,

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery (Ex 20:2).

In sum, by the self-presentation formula in the Prologue, both the Lord of Israel and the people of Israel are given primary identities. There is no more specific way of identifying this God, who is named the Lord, than as the one who has set free a people upon whom an oppressive slavery had been inflicted. Furthermore, the people who live by this constitutional law identify themselves as a community

⁴ Miller, Patrick D. *The Ten Commandments* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2009), 3.

⁵ Wiersbe, Warren. *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Vol. 1* (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1989), 181.

⁶ Miller at 1.

⁷ Enns, Peter. *The NIV Application Commentary: Exodus*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 412.

of persons redeemed from bondage.⁸ As implied above, the Ten Commandments should not be understood as isolated moral maxims, instructions for personal piety, commands in order for people to win God's favor. They are given in a historical and redemptive context and should be understood in that context. They are given to people *already* redeemed, not *so that* they might be redeemed.⁹

THE FIRST FOUR COMMANDMENTS

The Ten Commandments unveil God's plan for how we are to live in community with each other. God's code of conduct has immediate and eternal implications. To operate as kingdom citizens requires kingdom guidelines. To live in obedience to God is to live out the Ten Commandments in the strength God provides. Doing life together as God's spiritual family mandates relational parameters ordained by God and for God's glory.

The First Commandment: Put God First!

You shall have no other gods before me (Ex. 20:3).

Israel had a tendency to worship the idols of other nations, which eventually resulted in their being exiled to Assyria and Babylonia. However, divided loyalties were present in the Garden of Eden (Gen. 3:6-7). Turning away from one's primary object of devotion, namely God, is to worship other gods.

Men's belief about God passed through three stages. The first stage was *polytheism*, which means the belief in many gods. The second stage was *henotheism*. At this stage a nation would accept one god at its god and would worship no other; but it was quite prepared to believe that the gods of the other nations were quite as real as its own god. At this stage a god was, as it were, supreme within his own territory, but other territories had other gods. The last and final stage is *monotheism*, and this is the belief that there is not simply one god for each nation, but that there is only one god for all the earth.¹⁰

God is a jealous God and demands undivided loyalty and devotion. He alone is worthy of our worship. God created us for Himself and does not honor our

⁸ Miller at 16-17.

⁹ Enns at 427.

¹⁰ Barclay, William. *The Ten Commandments* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1998), 5-6.

proclivity to divert our devotion. Joshua combated this tendency and boldly declared his radical devotion to the Lord,

But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your forefathers served beyond the River, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD (Josh. 24:15).

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus clarified the truth behind our perpetual dilemma,

No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money (Matt. 6:24).

For the Jews to worship another God would be to declare war on Jehovah and incur His wrath.¹¹ God demands and God deserves first place in our lives. As Goran Larsson asserts, “Every sin emerges from the fact that God is no longer first in our lives, but is concealed by something created.”¹² Put God first by surrendering to the Lordship of Christ. Enthroned Him and make your love relationship with the Lord your top priority. Yield your allegiance to His Lordship and allow His life to be lived through you.

The Second Commandment: Eliminate Idolatry!

You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand [generations] of those who love me and keep my commandments (Ex. 20:4-6).

Eliminate those things you love more than God. God’s uniqueness requires unique devotion. The desire to fashion God in our own image produces a distorted view of God and confuses our created purpose.

¹¹ Wiersbe at 181.

¹² Larsson at 144.

The story of the golden calf tells us that the First with the Second Commandment, forming the principal commandment, was the first to go under, disobeyed in the impatience of the people, in their search for a god who would get the show on the road, in their effort to set the agenda and arrange the schedule for the Lord, who moves in freedom and cannot be found in or on any image constructed by human beings.¹³

Moses was instructed to engage in conflict resolution as a result of Israel's rebellion,

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Go down, because your people, whom you brought up out of Egypt, have become corrupt. ⁸ They have been quick to turn away from what I commanded them and have made themselves an idol cast in the shape of a calf. They have bowed down to it and sacrificed to it and have said, 'These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up out of Egypt'" (Ex. 32:7-8).

In the New Testament, we are charged to keep ourselves from idols and to aggressively flee from idolatry (1 John 5:21; 1 Cor. 10:14). The American idols include money, power, prestige, material possessions, fame, and power. We are approval addicts and admiration stations. We long to be noticed and to be affirmed to the level of becoming our own idol.

The Third Commandment: Reverence God's Name!

You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name (Ex. 20:7).

When someone thinks of the concept of misusing the Lord's name or taking the Lord's name in vain, cursing becomes the immediate subject matter. Is this commandment limited to the verbal swearing of leveraging the Lord's name? The third commandment would condemn the profane use of God's name. William Barclay affirmed,

The commandment is a prohibition of taking the name of God in vain in a promise or a pledge, that is, of making such a promise or pledge in the name of God with no intention of keeping it, or of making a promise in the name of God and then afterwards breaking it because it was inconvenient or uncomfortable to keep it.¹⁴

¹³ Miller at 56.

¹⁴ Barclay at 13.

The Israelites were not to use God's name for any insincere purpose or to even consider taking an oath with no intent of keeping it.

Standing in an abrasive tension with this capacity for casual disregard for the name, however, is the fact that this is the only commandment that contains a very direct and particular sanction, assuring God's own judgment upon whoever breaks the commandment.¹⁵

The name of God, the tetragrammaton YHWH, is God's name. As a safeguard, the Jewish practice throughout history of not pronouncing YHWH was to keep from breaking this commandment.

How should those who have been adopted into God's family use God's name? The psalmist identifies an appropriate use,

Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen (Psalm 72:19).

In His model prayer, Jesus affirms God's name by offering the following opening sentence to addressing God in prayer,

This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name' (Matt. 6:9 NIV).

God's name is holy and is to be revered and esteemed. We reverence God's name in prayer, in conversation with others, and in our daily conduct.

The Fourth Commandment: Recharge and Refocus!

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 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. 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 (Ex. 20:8-11).

¹⁵ Miller at 63.

The Sabbath tradition was already a part of Israel's life (Ex. 16:23, 25), but now it became a part of Israel's law. Their covenant relationship with God included the Sabbath design as demonstrated by God in creation.

By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work. And God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done (Gen. 2:2-3).

In the New Testament, the Sabbath became a burden instead of a blessing when the scribes and Pharisees added thirty-nine forbidden acts to this commandment. Jesus and his disciples had an interesting confrontation with the Pharisees,

One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?"...Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. So the Son of Man is Lord even on the Sabbath" (Mark 2:23-28).

How do you recharge and refocus? Life has a way of depleting you emotionally and draining you physically. Mark Buchanan suggests that you restore your soul by restoring the Sabbath.

Sabbath is both a day and an attitude to nurture such stillness. It is both time on a calendar and a disposition of the heart. It is a day we enter, but just as much a way we see. Sabbath imparts the rest of God—actual physical, mental, spiritual rest, but also the rest of God—the things of God's nature and presence we miss in our busyness.¹⁶

Nine of the Ten Commandments are repeated in the New Testament. The commandment to keep the Sabbath is not repeated. As a result of our Savior's resurrection, the first day of the week is to be set aside for worship. The Apostle John identifies Sunday as the Lord's Day:

On the Lord's Day I was in the Spirit, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, which said: "Write on a scroll what you see and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea" (Rev. 1:10-11).

¹⁶ Buchanan, Mark. *The Rest of God* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2006), 3.

What do you do weekly to engage in personal and public worship? In our fast paced culture, how do you insert a Sabbath into your schedule? When do you allow God to put you back together?

THE REMAINING SIX COMMANDMENTS

All the commandments include a negative except for the fourth and fifth. As we have noted earlier, the first four commandments are vertical in nature whereas the remaining six commandments are horizontal in nature. The first four commandments are “Godward,” and the remaining six are “manward.”

The Fifth Commandment: Respect Your Parents!

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you (Ex. 20:12).

As one of my mentors likes to say, “Where there is order, there is fruitfulness.” We know that God values order and that God is not a God of disorder (1 Cor. 14:33). In God’s covenant community, obedience and submission to parents is vital. The family unit is built on mutual trust and mutual submission. To disobey your parents is to bring chaos to the family and society.

Notice the promise inclusive in the fifth commandment:

The promise of longevity that accompanies the command refers to duration as a nation in covenant relationship with God rather than a lengthened lifespan for each obedient individual.¹⁷

Of course, to dishonor or to disobey your parents could shorten your life. It is evident that God is affirming the health of a family rightly related to Him and rightly related to each other. Respecting your parents brings honor to God and produces a healthy atmosphere where peace reigns. The commandment continues through adulthood. As we age, we are to continue to respect our parents by providing for them and helping them to finish strong. Meeting their needs and serving them throughout their lifetime is a mark of spiritual maturity and an indicator of respect.

Jesus delivers a hard saying in the context of our love for our parents in comparison to our love for Him:

¹⁷ Walvoord at 140.

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters--yes, even his own life--he cannot be my disciple (Luke 14:26).

Jesus is not saying that we should violate the fifth commandment and disrespect our parents. He is elevating the priority of our love and devotion for Him. When we compare our love for Him to our love for our parents, wife, children, and siblings, our love for them should look like hate in comparison to our love for Him. That is a convicting word. Does your love for Jesus stand clearly above your love for anyone else? That's the cost of discipleship!

The Sixth Commandment: Value Life!

You shall not murder (Ex. 20:13).

The sixth commandment was designed to help preserve society. Perhaps you wrestle with defining the boundaries between murder and permissible killing. Clarence Darrow once said, "I haven't killed anybody, but I've read a whole lot of obituaries with glee." In the sixth commandment, God is saying no to abortion, no to suicide, and no to euthanasia. God expects us to punish criminals and to preserve and to protect our Country's freedom.

In the Old Testament, the *lex talionis*, referred to the law of retaliation. It required that the punishment exactly match the crime. Its purpose was to control excess and to prevent people from taking personal revenge (Ex. 21:22-25; Lev. 24:19-20; Deut. 19:21). In the New Testament, the teachers of the law and the Pharisees used the *lex talionis* as a minimum and encouraged additional retaliation. Jesus inverted the *lex talionis* as a maximum. For example, in the case of adultery, the maximum would be to divorce your spouse. Jesus did not mandate divorce, but elevated the preference of extending forgiveness and the portrait of reconciliation.

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus moved beyond the letter of the law in order to explain the spirit of the law:

You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca, ' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell (Matt 5:21-22).

Motives matters to God. God looks at the heart (1 Sam. 16:7). Remember that life is a gift from God, and only He has the authority to take it. Value life! Protect life! Choose life!

The Seventh Commandment: Finish Together!

You shall not commit adultery (Ex. 20:14).

The seventh commandment is directed toward protecting the sanctity of the home. Adultery was considered a capital crime (Lev. 20:10; Deut. 22:22). Failing to obey Yahweh is described as adultery in Hosea 1-3. The marital vow is a holy commitment that should not be violated by sexual unfaithfulness under any circumstances.

Not surprisingly, the possibility of seeing either adultery or murder as basic violations of intersocial behavior is evident in the Bible as well, at least implicitly in the different orderings of the prohibitions following the command to honor father and mother.¹⁸

To function properly as a covenant community, Israel had to protect the sanctity of the marriage and family. The strength of the nation would depend upon being rightly related to God and ensuring fidelity in the marriage relationship between husband and wife.

Jesus informs the seventh commandment by highlighting the internal value:

You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matt 5:27-28).

Spiritual adultery is a violation of God's Word. Affair-proof your marriage. Here is a MAP to help you finish together with your spouse: Monitor media input, Avoid slippery slopes, and Pactice bouncing eyes.

Let your eyes look straight ahead, fix your gaze directly before you. Make level paths for your feet and take only ways that are firm. Do not swerve to the right or the left; keep your foot from evil (Prov. 4:25-27).

The Eighth Commandment: Delete Deception!

You shall not steal (Ex. 20:15).

¹⁸ Miller at 271.

This command was given to encourage the respect of others' property. Peter Enns writes, "Clearly the Israelites have some notion of ownership and rightful property for such a command to make sense."¹⁹ According to Ephesians 4:28, there are three ways to get wealth: work for it, have it given to you, or steal it, and stealing is wrong.

The eighth commandment became very real to Tonya and me when I was coaching our son's baseball team in a double-header on Saturday, June 12, 2010. After the final game, I was about to meet with our team to close in prayer and briefly asked Tonya to go ahead and get our Ford Expedition cooled off for us. Within moments she walked back from the parking lot with a ghostly look on her face and announced, "Our Expedition is gone!"

Our vehicle had been stolen.²⁰ That's right! I was in the dugout for two games and Tonya was sitting on the bleachers while our vehicle was parked just eleven spaces over from us. Somebody received a blessing that day! God's timing is impeccable. The next day, I stood before several thousand in our church to preach the message I prepared two days prior on, "Forgiving Difficult People."²¹

The Ninth Commandment: Tell the Truth!

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor (Ex. 20:16).

Keeping this law helps maintain stability in a society. It refers not to lying in general but to bearing false testimony in court. God is training them to be his people in Canaan, to be order amid chaos, to be a holy people and a kingdom of priests so that by looking at them, the nations will come to know the true God.²²

Don't lie. Just tell the truth and nothing but the truth. Since witnesses at court hold the destiny of a fellow human being in their hands, and a community governed by law is built upon the integrity of its courts, false testimony is judged by the same criterion as the crime to be adjudicated before the court.²³

¹⁹ Enns at 423.

²⁰ Our 2006 Black and Tan Ford Expedition Eddie Bauer was never recovered, but replaced by our insurance company with another SUV.

²¹ View message *Forgiving Difficult People* online at www.championforest.org (Sunday Morning Service, June 13, 2010)

²² Enns at 424.

²³ Larsson at 153.

In his letter to the church at Philippi, Paul reminded the believers of valuing others:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others (Phil. 2:3-4).

Honor God by telling the truth. Preserve unity in the church and unity in your family by telling the truth. Seek to build your neighbor up. Don't feed a lie. Keep truth alive by speaking with integrity and purity.

The Tenth Commandment: Control the Desire to Acquire!

You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor (Ex. 20:17).

You have probably seen the bumper sticker that reads, "He who dies with the most toys wins!" Well, that is not God's measurement of success. You cannot pursue worldliness and godliness at the same time. You are either becoming worldly or godly. Warren Wiersbe writes, "To covet is to feed inward desires for anything that God says is sinful."²⁴

Paul identifies the connection between the law and covetousness,

What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death. So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good (Romans 7:7-12).

The Israelites were not to long for, desire earnestly, or lust after what legitimately belonged to others.

²⁴ Wiersbe at 183.

POINTS FOR HOME

1. God initiated the covenant relationship we enjoy with Him.

“God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2 Cor 5:21 (NIV)

2. Jesus summed up the law and the prophets.

“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.” Matt 7:12 (NIV)

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’³¹ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.” Mark 12:30-31 (NIV)

3. The Holy Spirit empowers us to live a life pleasing to God.

“Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.³ Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance;⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope.⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.” Romans 5:1-5 (NIV)