

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS
INTRO PLUS 1&2
9/20/20

Review ten commandments:

4 about our relationship with God, 6 about our relationship with our neighbors

1 "You must not have any other god but me.

2 "You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. **5** You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. **6** But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those^[b] who love me and obey my commands.

3 "You must not misuse the name of the LORD your God.

The LORD will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.

4 "Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it

holy. **9** You have six days each week for your ordinary work, **10** but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the LORD your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. **11** For in six days the LORD made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.

5 "Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

6 "You must not murder.

7 "You must not commit adultery.

8 "You must not steal.

9 "You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.

¹⁰ "You must not covet your neighbor's house. You must not covet your neighbor's wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that belongs to your neighbor."

I have a book by Ron Mehl entitled The Tender Commandments.

In these reflections, he shows how The 10 commandments reveal the heart of God. We need to understand what and why God is saying this. It was important enough that when the first set of tablets was destroyed, a second was carved. This is not just elementary Sunday School. God, in these words is showing us just how much he loves us.

Some people imagine it to be just the opposite. They don't find love in these statements – instead they hear the rattle of chains and a padlock. This plays right into Satan's hand – the one he's had from the beginning – and it's still working. Why should he change. He tells us; God is a prude, a kill joy, and doesn't want anyone to ever have any fun....

But that's not the truth, to discover the truth, we must look to the context of the commandments...

exodus 19:3 Then Moses went up to God; the LORD called to him from the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the Israelites:

4 You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.

5 Now therefore, if you obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession out of all the peoples. Indeed, the whole earth is mine,

6 but you shall be for me a priestly kingdom and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the Israelites."

He was reminding them how he carried them from Egypt. How he had provided for every need out of his love for them. Think about it. Would he release them from bondage in Egypt only to cast them in chains of his own I don't think so.

God gave us his word out of a heart of love. He wants to remove the confusion from our lives. He wants to keep us from the traps and

snare of the destroyer. And he wants us to find our destiny as his own sons and daughters

God knew what kind of times we would be living in. He knew how difficult it would be to tell wrong from right. He knew and knows exactly what we need to live in this high-tech low morality culture.

We need God's help. God understands better than anyone how life works. He knows what the results will be of living without putting him first.

The ten commandments will keep us from destruction and will help us fulfill God's vision for us.

1 YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME.

The greatest challenge in my life is probably the same one you face each day – that of putting God first. If you think it comes easy just because I'm a pastor you are wrong. I struggle every day. I work hard to put this relationship first. There are many things of the world that call to take my time. But I must do the best I can to put God first.

If you look in the book of Revelation; the church of Ephesus is commended to keeping the faith – being doctrinally pure, and they had endured suffering in Jesus' name, yet they are still condemned for losing their first love. - for putting the works of the church before the one who is and was and is to come.....

revelation 2:1...."I know your works, your toil and your patient endurance. I know that you cannot tolerate evildoers; you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them to be false.

3 I also know that you are enduring patiently and bearing up for the sake of my name, and that you have not grown weary.

4 But I have this against you, that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

This all sounds well and good you say.....but all those rules? they still sound harsh and demanding;

Think of this.....you're touring a national park. You stop to view the scenery. There is a belt high rail and a 3200 ft drop. As you park, before you can get out, your four year old jumps out of the car and starts running – do you whisper? Do you have a discussion with him or her??????? Or do you shout STOP

I believe these are imperatives because our father's heart lurches each time we move toward a precarious position. He sees us running toward the cliff and wants desperately to stop us.

2 YOU SHALL NOT MAKE FOR YOURSELF AN IDOL, WHETHER IN THE FORM OF ANYTHING THAT IS IN HEAVEN ABOVE, OR THAT IS ON THE EARTH BENEATH, OR THAT IS IN THE WATER UNDER THE EARTH.

How would your wife or husband feel if they discovered that in your wallet you kept a picture of another person you were having a relationship with? Do you think they'd just say that's interesting or would they demand to know who this person was? Wouldn't you say "how dare you, break it off"? Can you imagine?? There would most likely be an ensuing fight. Do you think your spouse would ever again believe you when you said; I love you with my whole heart?

God is telling us the same thing; I love you with my whole heart. Don't carry the image of others around. Don't put anything between you and me. Don't carry other images close to your heart. Don't surrender my place to another.

The apostle John wrote – Little children keep yourselves from idols. What do you think he was talking about? He wasn't talking to heathens or pagans or those who worshipped foreign gods. He was writing to Christians – he wasn't talking about a hunk of metal or stone.

He was talking about those things in our world which challenge our love relationship with the Son of God. What are the pictures, the snapshots we might be tempted to frame on our desk alongside the picture of

him. What are those pictures in our wallet that could gradually steal us away from a whole hearted walk with Christ.

Maybe it's material things – Jesus said you cannot serve God and money – Matthew 6:24

Colossians 3:5 says that even greediness is idolatry. But what about power, false pleasure of fame or status.

When it becomes the purpose of my life to chase one of those images I have already slipped into idolatry. I have given the best of my time, talents, treasures and energies to it. My life is invested in it. That's what a god is. When you worship a god, you surrender your life to it.

We are surrounded by more images than ever in our life. They come across tv, newspaper, magazines & social media. Ads too numerous to mention.

Is there anything wrong with wanting to enjoy sports, or fashion, wanting a new car, or to succeed in business? No but it may become an idol when it begins to control our thought and our desires.

This affects us over the long haul. Psalm 135 :15-18 says The idols of the nations are silver and gold, the work of human hands. They have mouths, but they do not speak; they have eyes, but they do not see; they have ears, but they do not hear, and there is no breath in their mouths. Those who make them and all who trust them shall become like them.

Jeremiah 2:5 – they follow worthless idols and become worthless themselves (God saying.)

The truth is We become like that which we worship.....

God knows the things we pursue will leave us empty and unfulfilled.

Media says image is everything but the only image that is really important is the image of Christ stamped across your heart. God is the ultimate source of value. As we pursue Him our very lives become wrapped up in his value and we begin to look like him.

(1 John 3:2 NRSV) Beloved, we are God's children now; what we will be has not yet been revealed. What we do know is this: when he is revealed, we will be like him, for we will see him as he is.

God says;

4 You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

5 You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and the fourth generation of those who reject me, 5 but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments.

He says don't place anything before your relationship with me because I don't want you to wake up one day with a broken hearts as you watch your loved ones tripping over the same rocks you tripped over and struggling with the same cynical attitudes that afflicted you, because your life **will** dramatically affect and influence them all.

God is jealous for you because he loves you. He has given you free will. He'll let you keep chasing empty idols for the rest of your life, But as Ron Mehl says; you'll have to walk right by his open arms to do it.