

## Week 4: Expectations

### God did it: The Commandments

I have a contract with my wife. In marriage, I have vows. They say I am to honor, protect, cherish, and love her. Ironically in divorce I have a contract with my Ex-spouse I must obey the visitation times, payments, and respect distance between us. I suppose my bank and police force have similar expectations on my conduct as a citizen or customer. We can call them laws. From an Ex-spouse, it could be commands (just kidding sort of).

1. Give us a few expectations you think your spouse, friends, or kids should follow towards you?
  2. What do I think of traffic laws?
  3. What do I think of a prenuptial agreement?
  4. Should parents have rules?
  5. Should government have rules?
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Until exodus 20, we have a vague relationship between God and the people. God asked Adam not to eat of the tree but it was not a “shall not” but a “do not.” I believe there was a difference. We ask our kids not to eat the cookie before dinner. We’re asking nicely. We demand they go to school. It looks terrible from the kid’s point of view. Both are words given with good intentions behind them. God asked Adam “not to” with good intentions.

**Genesis 2:16-17** *“The Lord God gave the man this order: You are free to eat from any of the trees of the garden 17 except the tree of knowledge of good and evil. From that tree, you shall not eat; when you eat from it you shall die.”*

Another interesting point is that God had made covenants. These covenants were not a contract, command, or law. They were a union between two people like a vow. In these covenants, we see God saying he will and these things will happen. The only thing we were required to do is go forth and multiply. There is no punishment, no jail time, or death sentence. This was Gods deal with us. The interesting part is that it is binding to God. He made it that way. There is no I will “if”. Laws and commands were a different matter.

**2 Samuel 7:8-9** *“Now therefore, thus shall you say to My servant David, ‘Thus says the Lord of hosts: “I took you from the sheepfold, from following the sheep, to be ruler over My people, over Israel. 9 And I have been with you wherever you have gone, and have cut off all your enemies from before you, and have made you a great name, like the name of the great men who are on the earth.”*

If you go forward from Adam we have plenty of things happening that were not of good intentions. Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Caine killed Abel. Sons of God slept with human girls. People began to live disheveled lives. The flood. The Tower of Babel. Abrahams failures and his

descendant's troubles. All these events bring us crashing towards exodus 20. Did you realize that to this point God never commanded anything from anyone? There were no laws and look what was happening. God stepped up the game beginning with ten simple rules, laws, or commandments.

1. Give us a list of people who make commands and a list of people who give suggestions.
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I know many of us enter a contract in a marriage or workplace. We sign a deal with a bank called a mortgage. Are they commands? Are they suggestions? Usually we must follow them or were divorced, fired, or for-closed. Commands mean business. A military general command's it because if we don't follow his orders people will die. I suppose we follow to keep order. The plan to win a war might have instructions or what we call commands. Usually from a commanding officer like a police chief or King. Possibly a God?

We're going to comb through Exodus 19, 20, 23:1-9. I have been to this place in Egypt. It's not so much a brag as a perspective. This place where Moses met God is a dustbowl with almost no vegetation. I guess in may have been different 4000 years ago but today it isn't pretty. Why I mention that is because of expectations. Why give commands if what we own and where we live is wasteland? We could be asking "were fighting for this"?

**Next week's reading** Read these sections for next week and think about why God, Jesus, and Paul mentions covenants, commands, rules, and laws.

1. God expected his people to live a certain way regardless of the circumstances. Why? It's because if we call ourselves God's people and we want Gods help and direction then it's his way. I do think God listens and I do think God understands our feelings. Yet, ten simple rules should be easy to keep, right?

In Exodus 19:8 right before God gave the commandments to the people, they said

**Ex 19:8** *"The people all responded together, "We will do everything the LORD has said." So, Moses brought their answer back to the LORD."*

**Exodus 34 :27-28** *"The Lord said to Moses: Write these words; in accordance with these words I have made a covenant with you and with Israel. He was there with the Lord forty days and forty nights; he neither ate bread nor drank water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the ten commandments."*

As I read this it became clear. The Ten Commandments are not just commands or laws. The word covenant is used. The people had promised to follow Gods ways. So, God made a convent with the people. I see it as the people asked for it. Is this law, a command, or an agreement between God and his people? It's splitting hairs. One person calls them commands. Another call them laws or rules. We clearly have laws, rules, and unwritten traditions we abide by in society. Break them and the relationship between people goes south. That is where hatred,

misunderstandings, and separation comes from. It's the same between God and us: it's a relationship.

2. Read through Matthew 5-7. Two things happened. One is that the people found out, in Exodus 19:8, that saying it and doing it are two different things. God also added Ten Commandments that upped the game. 2000 years later we find Jesus yet again on a mountain. They call this event the Sermon on the mountain or mount for short. Jesus took the ten simple rules that many had ignored or worshiped and went ten times deeper with them.

I say ignored because the religious rulers of the day had rules but they also had regulations that twisted the rules. It became a *do as I say and not as I do* scenario. Sounds like our present church and government combo doesn't do it. Jesus took adultery and added lusting over anyone as a sin. He took murder and added being angry over anyone as a sin. If you thought keeping the Ten Commandments were tough, try the sermon on the mount. That is impossible.

**Exodus 19:5** "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."

**Matthew 5:21-22** *"You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.' But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister, you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult a brother or sister, you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell of fire."*

3. There are people who say their sin is not that bad. All good people go to heaven, right? Certainly people who murder go to hell right? Is the pedophile going to hell before the murderer? Who has the worst sin? The trouble is rating sin.

**Psalms 5:4-6** *"For you are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not dwell with you. The boastful shall not stand before your eyes; you hate all evildoers. You destroy those who speak lies; the Lord abhors the bloodthirsty and deceitful man."*

**Romans 3:23** *"since all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." What part of "all" don't we understand?*

I told you the sermon on the mount is tough. They call our present day the Era of no truth. People seem to like that. They say it as if it's a good thing. Yet, I read in the blogs a theme of confusion. If everything is right and everything is not true: Houston we have a problem. Clearly some things are not right. Yet, it's not clear these days what is wrong.

**Matthew 7:5** *"You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye."*

4. Read through 1 Corinthians 2. I know this is a lot but it is a crash course and the Bible is fairly large. I think taking a breather from laws and commands is due. Yet, I just wanted you to know that beyond God and Jesus is his Spirit. Some say it is a metaphor while others call the Spirit a person. So, what does this Spirit have to do with laws, commands, and covenants? If you notice the writer Paul points out that God speaks through the Spirit. We are connected to the wisdom of God. I connect wisdom to understanding God's mind through his reason for laws, commands, and covenants. If you dip further into the reading

of 1 Corinthians, you will see Paul going through various laws. Paul sees a connection too. This all means that the God of the old and the God of the New testaments are the same God. Next week we will dive into the view of the Old God.

**Numbers 11:17** *"I will come down and speak with you there. I will also take some of the spirit that is on you and will confer it on them, that they may share the burden of the people with you. You will then not have to bear it by yourself."*

**1 Corinthians 2: 4-5** *"My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on human wisdom, but on God's power."*

## ***The Jesus connection***

Ah, the Jesus connection. In church and the Christian religion, we hear a lot about Jesus. I say religion because every church seems to be an off shoot of Christian theology. There is Mormon, Muslim, and Jewish theology. Theology means *the study of God*. The Bible is a really big book. So, big that many people say they only believe small parts of it. I think that is because they did not read the rest. It's a big complicated book. The laws, commands, and covenants are complicated too. The data on God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit are complicated too.

Theology tries to simplify the themes or characteristics of God. I suppose that should be left to rocket scientists. Instead, it has been left to religious theologians. The problem is that different theologians in different religions have different interpretations of the Bible and God. Your new to religion most likely. This is good news and not so great news. It's wonderful that you want to know God. However, religion is a confusing mess. Yet, I have a way through, it's the Jesus connection.

**John 14:9-11** *"Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own authority, but the Father who dwells in me does his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else believe on account of the works themselves."*

**John 14:15-17** *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."*

Two things. One is that Jesus claims that the Father is in him and he is in the Father. Theology says God is three persons in one. There is God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit. God is one. God is also three. Confused yet? What it means is like our body. We have a head that controls all things. Yet the head is not the arm. One body, but many parts. One God but three parts. Equal but different."

The second thing is commandments. The covenant between the patriarchs of old still exists. Yet, the commandments do too. There are the Ten Commandments and the Sermon on the mount. There is also the way Jesus displayed those commands in his life. In

Government and the Police, we see them uphold the laws. Our problem is that they don't keep them very well. With Jesus, he keeps them. Jesus says the God of Old is in him. He says the Spirit of Old knows God. Jesus then says that the same Spirit is now within us who believe. Can you see the connection? The covenant to be with us, help us, and guide us forward is still here today. That is the Jesus connection.