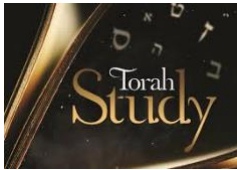


20170805 Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11 "10 Commandments: What's Love Got to Do With It?"



"10 Commandments: What's Love Got to Do With It?"

Series: "Lessons for Living: A Christian Walk through the Torah"

by Faber McMullen, Pastor of Union Grove Baptist Church

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Va'etchanan | ואתחנן | "I pleaded "

- Torah: [Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11](#)



As I begin this morning I remember the 70's pop song "What's love got to do with it?" You will see this Torah portion includes what we refer to in English as "The 10 Commandments". In Hebrew these are called not "Commandments" but *Devarim*; meaning "Words" or "Things". You see, these are God's words; and they are His "Things" that He offers mankind. As we dig deep we can see that "love's got a whole lot to do with

it." The love of God is at the heart of these commandments. Don't mistake these things of God as just a list of "do's" and "don'ts". So go ahead and ask, "Pastor, I don't get it. What's love got to do with it?"

God loved mankind so much that first He gave us a "word" about How to engage with Him. Those are the first four commandments. The last six are God's "word" about how to relate to those around us. So, these "things", these "words", give us a divine roadmap by which to live our personal lives in right relationship with Him, and they give a structure upon which to build a holy society, a sustainable society. This portion gives us a glimpse into the heart of God. Think about that for a minute.

Because of today's secularized society, many children in this room have never had the pleasure and privilege to hear first-hand God's "things", His "Words", so please open your Bibles to Deuteronomy 5 and follow with me beginning with verse 6.

COMMANDMENT 1 : I AM THE LORD YOUR GOD - "Just One God"

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

This "word" begins with God presenting Himself as "I am", the divine authority of the universe. It is His statement of who He is. It does not matter if the atheist or the agnostic acknowledge that He is. He doesn't need them. He created them. He is the author of unchanging law and in that authority He lays down his divine plan for a relationship with Himself and with others. This is not a set of rules limited to a certain time, place, and culture. These rules are outside of time and place. They are rules that govern time and space. Human history has shown that when mankind adopts its own standards for right and wrong, love for one's fellow man is erased. Right and wrong become subjective opinions of the holder. With no objective standard of right and wrong, Hitler, Stalin, Mao, and Pol Pot are justified in killing millions of men, women, and children. Why? They are justified because they are governed not by the laws of a timeless creator, but rather by the insanity and wickedness that lies in their own hearts. The human race has proven time and again that it cannot survive if everyone does what's "right in his or her own eyes".¹ The result is always societal chaos.

COMMANDMENT 2: HAVE NO GODS BUT ME - NO IDOLS ALLOWED



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: **9** Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the

fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth *generation* of them that hate me, **10** And shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.

Idolatry in Biblical times was about worshipping the gods of the foreign nations, but how do idols look today? Idols are those things that get in the way of us spending time with God and with each other. Things that push aside Bible study, prayer, worship, and personal fellowship with other believers can be idols.

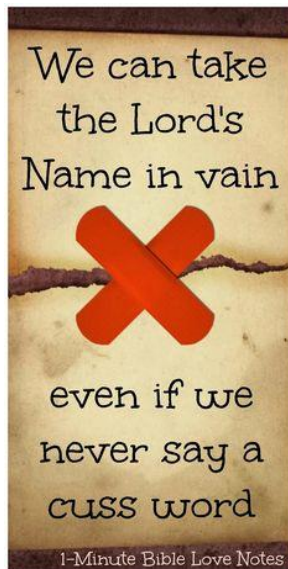
Idols can be people and/or things. Some parents put their children before everything and everyone else. Some singles are wholly consumed with finding Mr or Ms "Right". Some married people are consumed with trying to figure out how to get rid of that person on the other side of the room. Distractions rob our time. Modern distractions can include cell

¹ Judges 21:25

phones, time on Facebook, putting in more hours of work, or accumulation of more money and things. Idols can even be one's ethnicity, political ideals, and of course fleshly addictions. "Working up at the church" can even displace "serving Jesus" if it is done with the wrong motivations and without the direction of the Holy Spirit. Idols always center on the big three: me, myself, and I. Have no gods but the one true God.

COMMANDMENT 3: DON'T USE GOD'S NAME IN VAIN/DISREPECTFULLY

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.



Most folks think breaking this is asking God to damn this or damn that. That is certainly an obvious part of this, but it really means so much more. God is saying "Don't use me or my name lightly or frivolously". God would have us reserve his name with respect. When we shout out "Oh God" or "Oh My God" we may not be evil in our intentions, but we are using His name disrespectfully perhaps without even realizing it.

We can also take God's name in vain when we try to make others trust us more by somehow letting them know that we're Christians or that we "go to such and such a church". With wrong motives the subliminal message is "Trust me because I go to church and I'm a Christian". That is using God's name in vain. You are using HIS NAME for YOUR BENEFIT. That is sin. I am careful in business and in my law practice to be very cautious when I first meet a prospective client to not tell them

that "I am a Christian" or that "I am a pastor".

People that do that are often angling for something. They want a deal. They want someone to have confidence in them because of their relationship with God. They want someone to buy something from them or to benefit them in some other way. That's what "con" men do. The people we do business with should know we are Christ-Followers by how we treat them and not by how we classify ourselves. .

Lastly, this commandment doesn't mean we shouldn't make an oath to God. Twice in Deuteronomy we are reminded that "The Lord your God shall you fear, Him shall you serve, and **in His name you shall swear.**" (Deut 6:13 and 10:20) Just as we are warned against making an unnecessary oath, we are specifically reminded that it is sometimes necessary to take an oath.

COMMANDMENT 4: KEEPING THE SABBATH HOLY (set apart-different)

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

13 Six days thou shalt labour, and do all thy work: **14** But the seventh day *is* the sabbath of the LORD thy God: *in it* thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy

daughter, nor thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thine ox, nor thine ass, nor any of thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates; that thy manservant and thy maidservant may rest as well as thou. **15** And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and *that* the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

Keeping the Sabbath holy includes "setting time apart for God and being dedicated in doing that". The other thing it is saying is that human beings have value even when they are not working. Much of the ancient world did not understand this. God has designed us to work, but also with a need for rest. Just like an engine that runs and is never maintained, an unrested believer will simply burn out. The overall concept here is that God is saying "Keep a day where I am set apart" and "rest in me". On the subject of what day this should be done, I recently had a long drawn out conversation with a member of a denomination that has a litmus test of "holiness" based on having church services on Saturday.

This is a waste of time and distorts what God says. The fact of the matter is that scripture clearly tells us two things on the matter. First, the Bible tells us that "And upon the first *day* of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul preached unto them, ready to depart on the morrow; and continued his speech until midnight." Acts 20:7 I do not think that this precludes (does away with) God's desire for us to have Sabbath rest. You may observe Sabbath on any day of the week, but take a Sabbath. It is important to God and helps us to love Him properly and to love our neighbor properly. You are commanded to have a sustained period of quiet, study, reflection, withdrawal, meditation, and most rabbinical sages have always included restful love-making with the spouse God has given you. Now that I am pastor, I generally observe a Sabbath in the traditional time period of Friday night through Saturday afternoon. It helps me to rejuvenate myself to serve my congregation on Sunday morning. For me Sundays don't provide all of the rest and reflection that I need. I do my best to enjoy the gift of a Sabbath rest.

COMMANDMENT 5: HONOR YOUR PARENTS

16 Honour 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.

This is the only commandment that gives a reason for observing it; "that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee." It may be regarded as a reward, but it is really a reason. A society which honors its parents, is a society that will survive. It is interesting that the commandment doesn't tell us to "love" or "obey" our parents; it tells us to "honor" our parents. So how does that look.

To a small child it does include obeying a good and godly parent. To an adolescent it means addressing them with respect and also obeying. Paul cautions even "good" parents

to not frustrate (provoke to wrath) their children. There are reciprocal duties going on. And a parent who frustrates his or her child will lose their obedience and their respect. Adult children (20+ years) have no Biblical duty to obey their parents. An adult child shouldn't purposely disobey a parent, but the child's obedience and accountability shifts to God. (Scripture is full of God holding adults 20 and older to an adult standard - remember those were denied access to the Promised Land) This commandment tells us that our relationship with our parents is to be different. God intends for us to have good, wholesome, emotionally healthy, spiritually encouraging parents, but He does not desire for parents to be peers of children. Children form their opinions about God from their parents.

Honoring parents, good and bad, should include some general rules: Parents get special treatment. You talk to them differently. You don't call them by their first name. You don't curse in their presence. You maintain contact with them even when you leave home. You do not purposely say or do things to lower their reputation in the eyes of others. What does that mean? Avoid running them down and pointing out their faults to the whole world.

Some parents are so cruel that you find it morally impossible to honor them. Some parents have been totally destructive in the rearing of their children. Some parents have abused their children emotionally or even more unbelievably sexually, taking their innocence and teaching them betrayal. Here are a few ways you can "honor" such a horrible person:

- 1) You may wish to forget that person ever existed. Don't do it.
- 2) Pray for the person.
- 3) Appreciate the fact you were not aborted. God used their DNA to form you. He did not desire for them to sin and to abuse you like they did. He was there weeping as you were weeping wondering how such a thing could happen to you.
- 4) If for no other reason ascribe worth to them because Jesus died for them.
- 5) Lastly, forgive them and God so that the emotional cancer in your heart can be healed. The resentment will eat you alive. It will destroy not only your childhood, but the rest of your life.
- 6) Keep your boundaries from such a person so the abuse doesn't continue.

However bad your mother or father might have been, the reality is that you honor the position giving it a certain weight. We do it for our sake. Realize they did it wrong. They were sinful in how they brought you up. They will have to deal with a God that keeps track of rights and wrongs.

COMMANDMENT 6: NO MURDER

17 Thou shalt not kill.

The Hebrew word means murder or slay. Does not mean "kill". הרצ לא "No Murder"

COMMANDMENT 7: NO ADULTERY "No foolin' around"/"no hanky panky"

18 Neither shalt thou commit adultery.

Don't have sexual relations or deep emotional intimacy with a married person. I personally believe that this includes having intimate relations outside of the confines of marriage. Our culture and society show the required level of commitment in the bonds of marriage. In God's plan we give ourselves in marriage before we give our bodies to each other.

COMMANDMENT 8: NO STEALING - "Don't take what ain't yours"

19 Neither shalt thou steal. - Don't take or touch something that doesn't belong to you. "Don't take what ain't yours!"

COMMANDMENT 9: NO LYING - "No tellin' tales or gossipin'"

20 Neither shalt thou bear false witness against thy neighbour.

COMMANDMENT 10: DON'T COVET "Don't be hankerin' for your buddy's stuff."

21 Neither shalt thou desire thy neighbour's wife, neither shalt thou covet thy neighbour's house, his field, or his manservant, or his maidservant, his ox, or his ass, or any *thing* that *is* thy neighbour's. ²

Don't resent others for what they have and wish they didn't have it and you did. I didn't say this. God did. Coveting what others have will destroy your relationship with God and with your neighbor. So, don't do it.

So..... what's love got to do with it? Love's got EVERYTHING to do with it. God gave us the gift of these "WORDS" to love Him and love each other. And, while we're talking about love, let us remember that "even while we were yet sinners (breakers of all of these laws) Christ died for us." Romans 5:8 Because the good news is that "God so loved the world that He gave His only son so that whoever believes in Him will not perish but will live forever." John 3:16

Why not choose today to put your faith and confidence in Him.

Let us Pray.

² *The Holy Bible: King James Version.* (2009). (Electronic Edition of the 1900 Authorized Version., Dt 5:6–21). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

Union Grove is one of the oldest Baptist communities of faith in the State of Texas dating back to 1844. Pastor McMullen may be reached by email at uniongrove362@gmail.com or by snail mail at: 15301 FM 362, Navasota, Texas 77868 Tel: 936-825-1227