

Peace be with you, listening friends. We greet you in the name of God, the Lord of peace, who wants everyone to understand and submit to the way of righteousness that He has established, and have true peace with Him forever. We are happy to be able to return today to present your program *The Way of Righteousness*.

In our last lesson, we saw how **the whole mountain of Sinai was billowing with smoke** because the Lord God had descended upon it in fire, thunder and lightning in order to give His Ten Commandments to the children of Israel. God warned the Israelites not to touch the mountain where He was lest they die. God wanted to teach them just how **holy** He is!

Today we plan to look more closely at each of the Ten Commandments, and compare them with our lives to know how we stand before God, the Holy One. We are reading in the Torah, the book of Exodus, chapter twenty. After God descended on Mount Sinai in the midst of the fire and smoke, He spoke these words: *"I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."*

1.) *"You shall have no other gods before me."* This is the first commandment. The Lord God said, *"You shall have no other gods before me."* He **alone** must be our God. He will not share His glory with another. God, the Creator, is the only One we must worship. However, what we see in this country and throughout the world is quite another thing. People exalt other men to a place of which God alone is worthy. Only His name is holy and awesome. He alone deserves our total devotion and confidence. And yet, when people have a problem or face an obstacle, their first thought is not to turn to God and pray to Him who created everything and can do anything. Instead, they put their hope in other human beings like themselves, and give to them the place that belongs to God alone. Those who do that have another god before them. To have another god is sin!

2.) In the second commandment God said: *"You shall not make for yourself an idol... You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God!"* In this commandment, God tells us to keep ourselves from idols. Idols are not limited to sculptured images, which are worshiped in certain locations or in the niches of houses. An idol is **anything** that comes between us and God. For some people, soccer is their god, because soccer is more important to them than God. For others, the television comes between them and God. They don't care about looking into the Word of God to understand it; they don't have time for anything except watching television. Then there are others who, as you know, wear charms-implying that God Himself is not enough for them. For others, it is their wealth that replaces God. God doesn't have first place in their lives; money does. They will even get involved with that which is not pleasing to God to get more money. For such people their god is money. Anything which replaces God is an idol.

3.) In the third commandment, God said: *"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses His name."* Truly, God does not want us to use His holy name in vain. However, almost every day you can hear someone making a promise to his neighbor, saying, *"Insh'a Allah'* meaning *If God wills it* in Arabic, I will do this or that, or I will go to such and such a place," while, in his heart, he has no intention of doing it. The will of God is the farthest thing from his mind. He only **uses** the name of God to make his neighbor believe his lies. This is sin. Others say, *"Bilaay* meaning *By God* in Arabic, I did not do such and such!" when they know perfectly well that they did that very thing! Someone else says, "God knows that I will not do this or that," but they are only lying. Such people are misusing the name of God. The Word of God says: *"Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes', and your 'No', 'No'; anything beyond this comes from the evil one."*

4.) In the fourth commandment, God spoke to the children of Israel saying: *"Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work...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."* In this we see that God wanted the children of Israel to rest every seventh day to **honor Him**.

5.) In the fifth commandment which God gave, He said: *"Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you."* Here we can see that our parents are very special and worthy of honor, and that we should give them the **respect** that they deserve. However, this is not what we see in today's generation. We see children who talk back to their parents when their parents speak to them, turn their noses up at them and go their way. They do not honor their parents. They only irritate them. However, this is not the way of living that we learn from the fifth commandment. The will of God for children is that they love their parents, honor them and obey them in everything that pleases God and agrees with His will.

6.) In the sixth commandment, God said: *"You shall not murder."* Here God says: He who kills a man, sins against God, because God is the One who gives to every person his life and soul. To murder a man is to hate God, because God made man in His own image. The Word of God also shows us that murder is not limited to killing a person, because the Scripture says: *"Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer."* What many ignore is that God does not merely judge a person according to what he has done, but also according to what he wants to do, that is, according to his intentions! Since God looks at the heart, hatred and murder are equally sinful in His sight.

7.) In the seventh commandment, God said: *"You shall not commit adultery."* Marriage is a precious gift from the Lord. God knows what is best for us, which is why, after He gives a man a wife to marry, He wants him to **limit** himself to his wife and refuse to

have a single lustful desire for any other women. God's Word says that *"husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies."* and that *"anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."* When people disobey God's law and do what is forbidden to them, they often receive in their bodies the consequences of their acts. That is why many deadly diseases fall on those who have sexual relations outside the limits of marriage decreed by God. You should know another thing: Adultery is not limited to what we do with our bodies, but it also includes what is in our minds. Concerning this, the Scripture says: *"Anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."*

8.) In the eighth commandment God said: *"You shall not steal."* This command is clear. However, you should also know that, before the eyes of God who must judge us, stealing is not limited to **taking** money or some object that doesn't belong to you. Even if you simply want to take the things of another, but do not take them, you are a thief in your heart! God looks at the heart. Stealing has many sides to it. For example, if your employer commits to you a job, and he pays you to do that job, and he believes that you are working when in reality you are just wasting time, then you are stealing! Yes, you have stolen from your employer's profits. And what is the punishment for stealing and for every other sin? It is to die and enter the fire of hell which is never extinguished!

9.) The ninth commandment says: *"You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."* This also is perfectly clear. The Lord God is the God of truth and has nothing to do with lies! Man thinks it is permissible to tell little lies to avoid problems and keep peace. But with the God of Truth there are no "little lies!" God says: Everyone who lies takes on the character of **Satan**, *"for he is a liar and the father of lies."* Satan lied to our ancestors, Adam and Eve, and he continues to deceive people with his lies! Whoever tells a lie is like Satan.

10.) In the tenth commandment God says: *"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."* This commandment shows us clearly that God knows just how crooked and wicked the heart of man is. Covetousness and greed are found in the **hearts** of the children of Adam. Our wicked hearts cause us to lust after another man's wife or to set our eyes on something that someone else has which we do not have. This is sin, because God's Word says: *"We brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that."*

These are the Ten Commandments which God entrusted to Moses and to the children of Israel.

How should we conclude our lesson today? Perhaps with a question. Here is the question which each of us must answer: "Have I obeyed **all** of the Ten Commandments?" You may already know that when the holy Redeemer came into the world, He summarized the Ten Commandments in two phrases. He said:

- 1.) *"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind! and,*
- 2.) *Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."*

Now, if you want to examine yourself to know whether you have kept the Ten Commandments which God gave to Moses, you can ask yourself two questions:

First: What is my relationship with **God** like? **Do I love God with all my heart?**

Second: What are my relationships with **people** like? **Do I love my neighbor as I love myself?**

What is your relationship with **God** like? Let your heart answer honestly. Do you love God with your whole mind? Do you love him with all your heart? Do God and His Word have first place in your life?

How about your relationship with **people**? Do you love your neighbor as you love yourself? Do you put others before yourself in everything? Do you care for your fellowman as you care for yourself? Do you do for others everything that you want them to do for you?

If you cannot answer "yes" to all these questions, know that, before God, you are a **transgressor**. By your own efforts, you cannot hope for anything except the damnation of God's righteous judgment! The Scripture says: *"The cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars-their place will be in the fiery lake of burning sulphur."*

God is holy and cannot tolerate that which is unholy. God is perfect and cannot accept any works which are imperfect. That is why the Scripture says: *"Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it!"* Trying to keep the Ten Commandments will not cause anyone to be *"declared righteous in [the sight of God]! For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God!"*. Yes, dear friends, the Word of God is clear: *"All have sinned!"* and *"All who rely on observing the law are under a curse."*

Perhaps someone asks, "Well then, **why did God give these Ten Commandments to us** if none of us can keep them?" This is a very important question and, in the will of the Lord, in our next program we will hear how God answers it....

May God bless you and reveal to you the important truth contained in this statement from His Word:

"Whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it."

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