

Lessons In Courage And Purity from Exodus 20

By Leroy Eims

Exodus 20th chapter consists of God's Ten Commandments for the life of His children.

I. Relationship of God with man:

Verse 1-2: And God spoke all these words saying: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage."

Anything God had told the Israelites was based on the fact that He had demonstrated His love, grace, goodness, mercy towards them in their tough situations of life when they were experiencing the bondage and slavery; and He wants the people of Israel to recognize His love for them, and His relationship towards them in a personal way.

Mercy is something which God holding back from us that we rightfully deserve because of our sin; and grace is something which God gives and pours that which we don't have and deserve. When we put these two together we see a beautiful relationship, a personal relationship of the Almighty God as our Father.

1. Lordship of God

Verse 3 - "You shall have no other gods before me." God forbids idolatry- anything more we love than God is forbidden, because He is the only God in the universe and there are none other gods who exist. But there are things we put in the place of God and He forbids that.

2. Service to God

Verse 5 - "you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God is a jealous God." There is no moral value in anything that you do out of sense of duty. God expects us to serve Him out of love for Him and with whole heart and not as a duty and this service which is rendered unto Him would be blessed and multiplied by God. We need to recognize that God is our father and when we serve Him in love, it delights Him.

3. Respect to God

Verse 7 - "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain." This commandment tells us that no one can speak lightly of God. God is Holy. God is not a next door neighbor with whom we can have a casual relationship. God is Holy, righteous, omniscient and omnipotent and sovereign. But He has accommodated himself somehow, to a vital personal link with us- heart to heart so that we do not forget His power, majesty and might for having allowed us to have a personal relationship with Him.

4. Consecration of time to God

Verse 8 - "Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy." This is the Lord's first attempt in scripture to take something from time. Time is valuable. We need to consecrate time to Him. New Testament talks about redeeming the time. God helps us to regulate our time

so that we can do the most and produce the most. So He says to consecrate time on the Sabbath day and meditate on Him so that we produce more through the rest of the week.

5. Honor the parents

Verse 12 - "Honor your father and mother that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord, your God is giving you." This commandment means – to love parents even though they might be unlovely; and not postpone demonstrating love to parents until it is too late. There are two guidelines in honoring one's parents. i) Parents are usually right. ii) Parents really expect you to take them into your life. The way we can do it share with them what all has been happening in your own life, the very little things in life through writing a letter or talking to them over phone; if we show them the honor of taking them in our life this way, it really means honoring them.

6. Sacredness of life

Verse 13 - "Thou shall not murder." Life is sacred. The person that snuffs out life snuffs out something that has a chain which is linked back to Adam.

7. Purity of life

Verse 14 - "Thou shall not commit adultery." This is God's commandment in regard with purity of life. Galatians 5:16 says, "Walk in the spirit and thou shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh." When we move ahead in spirit and the things of the Lord, there is somehow a lift getting developed in us which drags us away from the lust of the flesh. When we are on the knees for someone in order to lead one to the Christ or when we pray for someone who is sick, are we bothered about the lust of the flesh at that time?

8. Honesty

Verse 15 - "You shall not steal." This commandment talks about honesty even in little things of life in our day to day activities where we deal with money.

9. False witness

Verse 16 - "You shall not bear a false witness against your neighbor."

Many a times we speak about the shortcomings and deficiencies of others and elate ourselves up as a godly person. We often think low of others when they really are not and we need to be aware of this when we work in teams.

Navigators function in teams. We navigators train men individually so that they might function as team. In the gospels there is a concept on agreeing: "Two shall agree on earth." Spirit of unity and oneness are necessary for a team. The same identical word for unity is symphony. Symphony is not all of us going in the same way but it is all of us using the gifts God has given us but some how with a blending of spirit when all these things put together, brings out a good work. We see in the book of Acts, the apostles being described of having one spirit and one soul. We as the different members of the body should function together in accomplishing God's work with unity of spirit.

10. Covetousness

Verse 17 - "Thou shall not covet any of your neighbor's things." What covetousness essentially means is 'charging God with mismanagement.' God owns the whole business and has the authority to allot to the people in the way He desires. When we desire the things of others and say 'they have something more and I have less'; in a passive way we are charging God with mismanagement.

In 1st letter to Timothy 6:9, Paul wants Timothy to recognize two classes of people and how to deal with each class. First class is the class that will be rich and the second one is the class that is rich. Both the classes have different set of problems. Verse 9 says, "But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition." The person that has the violent pursuit of wealth becomes foolish; this attitude hurts them and leads them to destruction. "For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows"- Verse 10.

Demus who was the member of the team of Apostle Paul had forsaken Paul. He had given up that which is really the first and the best and coveted after something else of the world and turned away from the faith.

In the first letter to Timothy 6:17 Paul tells Timothy not to be afraid of the rich and says, "command those who are rich in this present age not to be haughty, nor to trust in uncertain riches but in the living God, who gives us richly all things to enjoy." In Verse 19 of the same chapter, Paul tells Timothy that everybody should live in the light of eternity. If one lives in the light of eternity and not on the immediate present, covetousness will not be a big deal.

II. Lessons of worship

The next lesson God teaches the people of Israel is the Lesson of worship which runs from Exodus chapter 25-40. In these chapters God gives the pattern of the tabernacle to Moses. Except for the chapters 32 and 33, all the remaining chapters from 25-40 are concerned with the teaching of worship. And these chapters consist of three main lessons faith, duty and worship.

In Exodus 25:8 God says, "And let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them." And God describes how the sanctuary has to be built in order; the Ark of the Covenant, mercy seat, cherubim, Table, candlesticks, lamp stands and curtains and so on - over and over again God cautioned them about making and setting these things specifically according to the pattern He had given.

Worship of God is a very special thing with God and worship is not so much an act as it is a way of life. Bible scholars can tell the significance of every thing of the Tabernacle. The entire pattern portrays the system of worshipping God which is the most important thing.

1. Worship

Exodus chapter 40, we see God speaking to Moses telling him to set up the Tabernacle on the first day of the first year; to bring the Ark of the Covenant into it and set up the Table and everything He ordered them. Ten Commandments of God are based on mercy and everything God does is based on mercy and grace and we see this mercy through out Old Testament over and over again. Setting the table with bread speaks about every day ordinary things of life which are important to God.

We as men and women of God should understand our roles and perform the work which God has set for us with whole heartedness and do the things as unto the Lord. Otherwise, it would be very hard for us to cope up with pressures of life when we work. Women in Navigators should have much clear understanding of the Navigator vision and they have to know how they can fit into it because they have so much work to do in the house like kitchen work, making beds, cleaning, washing and so on, when compared to a normal house wife and if she does not know why she has to do all those things, she would get messed up with the things and get frustrated. So, if we have a clear understanding that the work is the great commission of the Lord, then we can rejoice in every work we do and it becomes a service and worship to God which pleases Him.

2. Word of God

Exodus chapter 40: 4 talks about the candle sticks and the lamps; they represent the word of God. Psalm 119:105 says, “Thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” In 2nd letter to Timothy 3:16, Paul says, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction and righteousness that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for good work.”

The word of God is given primarily for our feet and not the head; in order to guard our walk, guide our steps of life and not to increase the knowledge. The word of God us a comprehensive equipment of the man of God and fit him fully for all the branches of his work. The man, who believes that God’s word is comprehensive equipment, spends more time in scriptures; and his daily intake of the scriptures will be true in what he believes.

Peter in his 1st epistle 2:2 says that we are to desire the pure milk of the word as new born babes so that we may grow thereby. James in his epistle 1:25 says that the word of God is the perfect law of liberty. God invented life and gave it to us and He gave us a manual along with it to help us figure out how to get on with life in a secure way according to the instruction given in the manual; not to restrict or bind us. And our response towards His instruction should be fair with obedience and not with pride. Therefore the law of God is the perfect law of liberty, not to bind, but to release, so that our life will have the most meaningful life. Every life needs a standard to be measured just as we have measuring standards for the length and mass. So is the Bible for one’s life: the standard for every human being born on this earth.