



READ: Selections from Deuteronomy 5:1-22, 28-29 (NirV)

Moses sent for all the Israelites. Here is what he said to them. Israel, listen to me. Here are the rules and laws I'm announcing to you today. Learn them well. Be sure to obey them.

The LORD said, "I am the LORD your God. I brought you out of Egypt. That is the land where you were slaves.

"Do not put any other gods in place of me."

"Do not make statues of gods that look like anything in the sky or on the earth or in the waters. Do not bow down to them or worship them. I am the LORD your God. I want you to worship only me.

"Do not misuse the name of the LORD your God..."

"Keep the Sabbath day holy. Do this just as the LORD your God has commanded you. Do all your work in six days. But the seventh day is a sabbath to honor the LORD your God. Do not do any work on that day.

"Honor your father and mother, just as the LORD your God has commanded you..."

"Do not murder.

"Do not commit adultery.

"Do not steal.

"Do not be a false witness against your neighbor.

"Do not want to have your neighbor's wife. Do not desire anything your neighbor owns..."

These are the commandments the LORD announced in a loud voice to your whole community. He gave them to you there on the mountain. He spoke out of the fire, cloud and deep darkness. He didn't add anything else. Then he wrote the commandments on two stone tablets. And he gave them to me.

The Lord...said to me, "I have heard what these people said to you. Everything they said was good. But I wish they would always have respect for me in their hearts. I wish they would always obey all my commands. Then things would go well with them and their children forever.

ENTER THE STORY:

God used ten plagues to save his people, the Israelites, from slavery in Egypt. Now he gives them just ten rules that they must keep in order to have a healthy, happy relationship with him.

Ten rules? That doesn't seem so hard, right?

What about you? Do you think it is EASY to obey everything your mom or dad tells you to do?

God loves his people very much, and he wants the very best for them. These ten rules were like ten walls – built around his people to protect them, and to keep them safe and happy. These boundaries would show the people of Israel what they could and couldn't do and how they could best show God to the rest of the world, but *EVEN MORE* than that, this relationship was supposed to be like a marriage between God and his people.

God was the groom and the people of Israel were his bride. God loved his people and he wanted them to love him more than anything else, because he knew that was what was best for them.

No matter how hard they tried, they could not do it. They could not and would not obey God's laws.

The good news is, God *KNEW* the Israelites would not obey, and he also *KNEW* that you and I wouldn't be able to obey either. We are just as bad at obeying God's Laws. We need HELP too!

• And of course God helps us because he loves us! He sends his Son, Jesus, who obeyed *ALL of the law!!* He did what we
• could not do, and he fixed the bad things that happened in the garden, because he IS the Serpent Crusher!
• Now, those of us who love him can share his love with the world, so that other people can KNOW God too. And Jesus, the
• perfect law-keeper, summed up the law like this: love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and love your
• neighbor as yourself.
• The first time God gave them the ten rules, God used his own finger to engrave, or carve them onto stone tablets, but
• through Jesus, we are "...engraved on the palms of his hands," (*Isaiah 49:16*) and through the power of the Holy Spirit,
• the law is engraved on our hearts! Through him, we have the power to obey and when we don't, we have the ability to
• confess our sins to him and be forgiven.
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■ **PRAY:** *Jesus, thank you for doing what we could not do and perfectly obeying all of the law. We want to be more like
• you, so please continue to work in us as we listen to your Spirit and do our best to follow you. Amen.*
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