

# G:love 16

## Rules For The Road Exodus 20

Focused Living Ministries

Our God is not a cosmic policeman just waiting to nail you for breaking His law... even the 'small' ones! He does not demand your obedience with His blue lights, intimidate with the flash of His gold shield, threaten with His .357 or punish by giving a ticket. Rather, He is a gracious Father (Exodus 19:4) who is pursuing your heart because He highly values your relationship and deeply desires to guide you on the right road through life. His Laws are an expression of His character, nature, heart, design and desire! **How does our culture honestly view the 10 commandments?** (Religious baggage. Irrelevant. 'Suggestions'. Out of date rules from an angry God. Don't even know them all. Guilt and shame producers. Freedom destroyers. Joy killers. Narrow minded. Brownie points with God. Superstitious)



### GOD'S LAW IS GIVEN TO US AS...

1. A **ROAD MAP** to show us where He wants us to grow to become more like Christ. He has clearly pictured the kind of men He wants us to be. The Law is for our benefit, not God's, as He will be God whether we obey or not (Mark 10:17-27). What is your usual response when you are trying to get somewhere but you have no map or directions? Beware of falling into the heresy of *antinomianism*, the notion that because we are saved by grace on the basis of Christ's work at the cross that does not really matter how we live as God is bound to forgive us always. (Matt 5:17-30)
2. **ROAD SIGNS**. Whereas the map gives us the big picture, His Law also acts like various road signs along the way giving us the direction He wants us to go. The Lord knows how men hate to stop to ask for directions so He gave us 10 simple yet profound rules for the road by which we can lead our lives. When we do become lost, these signs help us to turn around (repent) in order to get back on course again (2 Tim 3:16; Gal 5:16-23). Think of them as a GPS (God's Positioning System) where the Lord helps us to constantly "*recalculate*". These signs act as a restraint for evil by keeping us out of the ditch or from going over the cliff both of which will ruin your ride (Ex 20:20)!

3. **BLUE LIGHTS IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR** showing us our need for change. How many have had a speeding ticket in the past year? 5 years? How many have driven over the speed limit this past year? The law will slow you down! As we admit our dismal failure to meet the standards of His perfect Law we realize how lost we are and how desperately we need His help. This drives us back to the Cross of grace so that we will humble ourselves to stop and ask Him for help (Gal 3:24; Rom 5:6, 8-11, 20-21; Eph 2:1-10). The Law also acts as an X-ray machine revealing (not curing) our cancerous sin motivating us to see a doctor as soon as possible (Mark 2:17)! Through His Law, we come to realize our inability to live a holy life in either motive or performance apart from the empowering of His Spirit (Matt 5:17-20, 48; Rom 3:23; 8:29). (Ray Comfort)

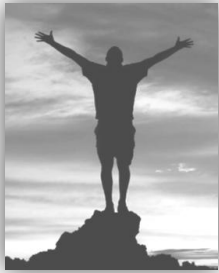
Our Father has graciously given us 10 all-encompassing rules for the road to guide us through life in order to keep our relationship with Him and others healthy, vibrant and growing. The first 4 are designed to keep our hearts focused on Him alone as a son would honor his father. The remaining 6 express His desire for our relationships with others. In response to a dude asking Him about the greatest commandment, Jesus says, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and all your soul, with all your mind and with all your strength. This is the great and foremost commandment*" [commands 1-4] "*and the second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself*" [commands 5-10]. (Matt 22:34-40; Mark 12:28-31; Luke 10:25-28)

### TAG TEAM ASSIGNMENT

Though our culture is trying to remove the Commandments from our homeland, it cannot remove them from our hearts (Rom 2:14-16). Put in your brain what God has already written on your heart! Since you cannot impart to our children what you do not possess we encourage you to **MEMORIZE** God's rules for the road! (1) No other gods. (2) No idols. (3) Never take His Name in vain. (4) Remember the Sabbath. (5) Honor father/mother. (6) No murder. (7) No adultery. (8) No stealing. (9) No lying. (10) No coveting. Be ready to share w/ your TAG Team!



## RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (1-4)



**OTHER GODS (Ex 20:2-3)** We are not to **WORSHIP** (elevate) anything that God has made above Him as our Creator God! One way to wrap your head around this is to use the concept of ‘God-made’ and ‘man-made’. Think of some of the good things God has made which we often worship (elevate, make a priority) above God Himself. (ourselves, bodies, nature, time, priorities, feelings, church, children,

wives, work, friends, bosses, rights, comfort, health, pleasure, future). We actually have made other ‘gods before Him’. Some men even worship the Bible more than they love the God of the Bible! Our Creator God will not be one of many gods in your life. He is adamant that He be the ONLY God in our lives because He is the ONLY One who will always come through for you! All other gods will let you down (Jeremiah 32:17). What God-made gods are you been worshiping as more important or higher in value than the Lord?

**IDOLS (Ex 20:4-6)** Just as we are not to have any God-made gods, we are not to have any man-made gods as higher **PRIORITY** than the Lord such as job,



car, house, reputation, free time, money, hobby, recreation, rights, privileges, possessions, position, performance, reputation, education, social status, success, nation, plans, goals, etc. God is not envious, He’s jealous! He deeply loves you and relentlessly pursues you

every day because He created you to be in relationship with Him for eternity? What consequences does God promise when these man-made gods are idolized (Ex 20:5; Psalm 115:1-8; Rom 6:16-18)?

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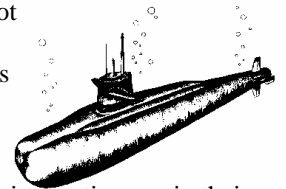
**TAKING HIS NAME IN VAIN (Exodus 20:7)** The

Lord’s name represents His awesome **CHARACTER**, authority, majesty and reputation. He does not see cursing as a slip of the tongue but rather as a slam from the heart and blasphemy. As men who depend upon His name for our past salvation, present sanctification (growth) and future glorification we are commanded to never, in any way, reduce, slander, belittle or bring shame His glorious name. We slander His name **verbally** (profanity) or **non-verbally** with our **hypocritical** deeds (gap between what we say about Him and how we act toward



Him); **complaining** (living as though He is unable to provide or guide); **careless worship** (flippant, casual, unprepared, distant hearts, lips only with no heart); **failing to keep a promise** (vow, covenant, debt, contract); or **willful disobedience** (proclaim to be a follower of His name yet living for yours). How did the men in **Malachi 1:6-14** break this commandment? How have you? Experience cleansing refreshment by confessing the various ways you have dishonored His name with your life or lips (II Timothy 3:5; Luke 6:46-49)? How would you state this command positively? What would living it out look like?

**REMEMBER THE SABBATH (Ex 20:8-11)** ‘Sabbath’ means to “sit, cease, stop”. God commands us to rest physically, mentally, emotionally and vocationally so that our hearts can recover and heal spiritually from the battle during the week. He commands us to “be still and know that I am God” (Ps 46:10). The Sabbath is a priceless gift of rest, restoration, refreshment, recharging, reflection, recalibration and reconciling relationships for the coming week! Picture yourself as a sailor during WWII crammed in a 150 foot submarine with 75 men for a week on battery power under the ocean negotiating treacherous reefs while being hounded by destroyers and their depth charges. Their desperate need was to surface in order to run their diesel engines to recharge batteries, breathe fresh air, receive instructions, gain their bearings and see light before heading back into battle. These men were at war and lived for the surface! You also are at war in this fallen world and God commands that you come up for air on His Sabbath to recharge batteries, receive instructions, get your bearings and see some light before submerging in the battle for another week. How you have used or abused His Sabbath **GIFT**? What would you change? Stop doing? Start doing? What relationship would you rekindle? Reconcile? Restore? What truth, priorities, opportunities, decisions do you need to reflect and pray about? How would you prepare your heart to worship? How could you better lead your family during this day? (Isaiah 58:13-14; Matt 5:23-24) How would you state this command positively? What would living it out look like?



**ASSIGNMENT** Plan how you will invest your next Sabbath by implementing any insights/convictions gleaned from this Forum. I.e. you might rise early on Sunday to prepare your heart to worship the King instead of rushing through morning, discuss what your family learned during the worship, take a prayer walk or restore a relationship in order to prepare for battle.

## OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD (5-10)

**HONOR YOUR FATHER & MOTHER** (Exodus 20:12) A Grimm's fairy tale tells the story of a little old man. His eyes blinked, his hands trembled and his mouth drooled when he ate. He lived with his married son, having nowhere else to live. His son's wife was a modern woman who held that in-laws should not be tolerated as they interfered with the neatness of the house and made for too many interruptions. So they put the little old man in the corner of the kitchen, set him on a stool and gave food in an earthen-ware bowl as he watched across the room with wistful eyes. One day his trembling hands dropped the bowl with a crash. So they made him eat out of a little wooden trough on the floor. One day they noticed their 5 yr old playing intently with some bits of wood. "I'm making a trough," he said proudly, "to feed you and mom when I get bigger and you get older." After the man and his wife cried together in repentance they took the little old man by the arm and gently led him to the seat of honor at their table and never again scolded when he drooled, spilled or broke things. Any culture that destroys God's design for family life destroys itself! Your church, city, culture and country will be as strong as it's family relationships. The not so subtle warning is to honor your parents lest your children someday dishonor you. Honoring our parents (even if they are not honorable) works itself out over 3 distinct seasons of life. **OBEY.** [Young Children: 0-15 yrs. Lk 2:41-52; Eph 6:1-4]. **RESPECT.** [Until on own: 16-21 yrs. John 2:1-11; Pro 1:7-9]. **TREASURE.** [Adults: 21+ yrs. John 19:26; Matt 15:1-7; I Tim 5:4, 8]. The word honor means 'heavy' (to attach weight, significance, esteem, respect, value). In what specific ways you can show respect and/or treasure your parents? If there has been distance/tension in your extended family what can you do to forgive/ease it? (Romans 12:14-21; I Peter 3:8-9; Matt 15:1-11)



**MURDER** (Exodus 20:13) All human life is created in God's image (Gen 1:26-27) and begins at conception (Ps 139:13-16; 51:5; Jer 1:4-5; Luke 1:39-44). He values it, declares it to be sacred, and has sovereign right over its beginning, duration and end. Our God is jealous for the life He creates and has commanded His men to do nothing that would in any way **DEVALUE** a life for which His Son has died! Scripture describes three ways to devalue life through murder.



1. **GANGSTA STYLE** (Gen 4:1-16; I John 3:14-18; Luke 10:25-37; Mat 25:41-46) This style devalues life by physically killing or murdering a person whom God has created as He has assigned a high value to his life. A murderer says in effect, "My plans, desires, money, lifestyle, reputation, possessions, territory, etc are more *valuable* than your life so I will destroy you to protect what I value more." This style includes homicide, infanticide, euthanasia, abortion, doctor assisted death, embryonic research and mercy killing.
2. **BLIND STYLE** Most men have not committed physical murder but many of us have committed murder by omission when we remain silent while others do the actual killing! We turn a blind eye thinking what we don't see is not our concern because the life we don't see is not of real *value* to me. Just as the driver in a getaway car is as guilty as the actual bank robber, so we are complicit when there is a murder in progress and we say/do nothing when it is our power to do something. We cannot prevent every murder but we can raise our voice for those who have no voice as God gives the opportunity. Where has the Father given you a chance to act or speak out for those who can't (Proverbs 24:11-12; 31:8-9)? Where must you repent for remaining silent?
3. **RELIGIOUS STYLE** (Matt 5:21-24; James 4:1-4) This style of murder takes place without the victim being present and is carried out in the heart when we *devalue* a person verbally (gossip, slander, bad mouthing) thus killing their character, reputation, self-esteem or respect in the sight of others. Jesus said that we murder a person by calling them 'raca' (good-for-nothing) or 'fool' (moron) and they are not present to defend themselves. This murder is usually carried out by self-righteous religious folks like those to whom Christ was speaking. The ugly truth is that, according to Jesus, there is no real difference between a .38 caliber to the head or 38 malicious words to the heart because both kill! Can you think of any words, smoldering attitudes (resentment, grudge, revenge), insinuations ("grow up, you'll never amount to much"), disguised cuts ("wish you were more like Jim"), slander ("He always....") or gossip ("Did you hear...?") with which you have murdered someone? After Jesus' hard teaching on murder He challenged all who were convicted to leave and make things right with those whom they had 'killed'. Could He be talking to you? (Matt 5:23-24)



**ADULTERY (Exodus 20:14)** Comedian WC Fields was infamously irreligious and immoral, having a lifestyle of frequent affairs. Just before a performance his manager entered his room unannounced and was shocked to see him thumbing through a Bible. "I can't believe you're reading the Bible! I thought you didn't believe in God," exclaimed his friend. WC replied, "Just lookin' for loopholes!" For centuries men have been looking for loopholes in this 7<sup>th</sup> Command. No other command generates more attempts to rationalize God's clear truth in order to appease our lust. Jesus says that we literally and lustily break this commandment break in our hearts through imagination, fantasizing and voyeurism (**Matt 5:27-30**) as well as the literal act of sex outside of God's **DESIRE** and **DESIGN** which is marriage between a man and woman. Loopholes will detour your relationship with Christ, destroy your marriage, and distract your heart. Through the culture satan has convinced us that our desires trump God's design. Only when we are filled with the grace of His



Gospel will we understand that our desires will be fulfilled when surrendered to His design. **ABC it!**

- A**dmit (confess) your heart of lust... actual or mental.
- B**e convinced that only His design for sex will fulfill your desires.
- C**lean house by immediately removing all sources of temptation.

What one insight from any of these passages help you to gain victory in this command? Genesis 39:1-12; II Corinthians 10:3-6; Psalm 101:1-4

**STEALING (Exodus 20:15)** The core question is "do I **TRUST** God to provide for me so that I don't have to take what is someone else's?" Most men will not steal outright but very subtly with much rationalization. We pilfer 'little' stuff from the office which is not ours, borrow tools 'permanently' (Andes, I want my shovel back!), falsify reports (fail to mention income to lower taxes), delaying payment, take an idea and passing it off as our own without giving others the credit, plagiarizing another's writing, pirating videos, stealing time by being late or not working with our best efforts (just enough to get by). God hates stealing because He loves to show us He cares for us and will provide. How serious does God take this command (Joshua 7; Acts 5:1-11)? In Luke 19:1-10 what does this businessman do in response to years of stealing after spending an afternoon with Jesus? If you have stolen will you trust God and step up to make things right with restoration/restitution?



**LYING (Exodus 20:16)** Two college kids played hooky one beautiful spring day missing their American history midterm exam. Being totally unprepared they lied to their professor telling him that they missed due to a flat tire. The professor graciously but suspiciously agreed to let them take the term test the next day. So the following day the professor put them in two separate rooms with the test. The test was simple having only 2 questions. Question #1 (worth 1 point) "Discuss the economic impact of the stock market crash on the history of the USA during the 1930s." Question #2: (99 points) "Describe which tire on the car was flat." Both flunked the exam!



Lying takes many forms. Perjury, half truths, white lies, outright deception, falsehood, withholding info, rumors, shading the facts to put you in a good light and exaggerating. Like stealing, the core of lying is not trusting God to meet our needs for significance, importance and recognition. Our prayer should be, "Oh Lord, let my words be honest, pure, sweet and tender for tomorrow I may have to eat them." God loves truth because it reflects the **GLORY** of Jesus Who showed Himself to be the embodiment of truth (John 1:14; 14:6). How does Ephesians 4:25, 29; Proverbs 6:16-19; 10:9; 20:7 and Acts 5:1-11 teach us to be men of integrity?

**COVETING (Exodus 20:17)** To 'covet' means to grab, strongly desire, or pursue to the exclusion of what is most important because we lose God's perspective. The core is **COMPARING** with others rather than being **CONTENT** with God as the grass always looks greener over the septic tank! A coveting heart will say "His looks better than mine; I'd be happy if only...; I wish I..." as we look for the next best thing instead of appreciating, enjoying and being grateful for what God has already given us. How did a comparing, coveting spirit hurt Asaph in Psalm 73:1-28? What phrase will help you see things from God's perspective? What truths in Philippians 4:11-13, 19; I Timothy 6:6-8 and II Corinthians 9:8 kept Paul from disobeying this Command?



**ASSIGNMENT** The Law is designed to drive us back to the heart of the Father! Galatians 2:16-21 teaches that the Law which we could not keep in order to earn our salvation, Christ kept perfectly. He went through hell by dying in our place to liberate us from performing the Law in order to get to heaven. As a son in His family we are now free from God's punishment and penalty (wrath) to serve Him with passion not to earn His love but in response to His grace! With which command are you most hurting His heart for which you would like to repent?