

WATER·FIRE·STONE

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF MOSES

Session 11 – Indispensable Truth, Part Three | Exodus 20:15-21

In this last session of our three-part series, *Indispensable Truth*, we continue to explore why God’s law is still our moral compass.

Everything about the law points us forward to Jesus who would come and live a sinless life in full obedience to the law.

The law—as far as the individual is concerned—was never meant to make one righteous. It was given to show us that we could never be righteous in our own ability or works. The law shuts our mouth but opens our eyes.

It condemns, but does not convert;
It challenges, but does not change;
It points the finger, but it does not give mercy;
It leaves us without excuse, but it drives us to Jesus.

Icebreaker

After three weeks of studying the Ten Commandments, how many can you recite from memory?

Goals for this Session

- Discover both sides of a command; each one condemns a vice and commands a virtue.
- Consider how an honest life, marked by integrity, leaves a deep imprint in this world.
- Pray honest prayers that seek forgiveness and transformation.

1 We tend to think of the commandments as a list of don'ts. But every commandment is both positive and negative. Each commandment forbids something (a negative) and also requires something (a positive). Keep this in mind as we look at the last three commandments.

- a. Read Exodus 20:15 | **You shall not steal.** Everyone knows that stealing is wrong...or do we? By saying *you shall not steal*, God indicates that we have a right to our own stuff. But how do we acquire it and who is it ultimately for? Use Deuteronomy 8:17-18 and Psalm 24:1 for help with your answer.

Why steal?

Common Excuses:

- I need it for my family.
- Because I can.
- It's a perk of the job.
- No one will miss it.
- They owe me.
- Insurance will cover it.

losspreventionmedia.com

- b. How is it possible to steal from God? Read Malachi 3:8-11 and discuss.

- c. This commandment isn't just about stealing—it's also about stewardship. A faithful steward manages property according to the master's intentions (Luke 16:10). Everything we have is the Lord's—time, talents, possessions—and we are called to live generously.

This commandment is written in the negative as a **do not**. Give some thought to what you read in Luke 6:38 and 2 Corinthians 9:6-11. Then rewrite it in the form of a positive:

Do . . .

2 Read Exodus 20:16 | **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.** This applies to all lying, and especially the ways we hurt one another by being dishonest. In a recent survey, Americans said they value truth but expect dishonesty. When asked how often they think they are being lied to, 68% said *at least some or most of the time*.

- a. Consider a few examples. Give some reasons (what we might hope to gain or avoid) for being less than honest. Put a check by the ones you've been tempted to justify on occasion.

Exaggeration; stretching the truth.

False information (resumé; applications; references, etc.).

Flattery or inflated promises; telling someone what you think they want to hear.

- b. Briefly explain why an honest life, marked by integrity, is so important on every level. Read Proverbs 10:9 and Proverbs 12:22 for help with your answer.
- c. We might say that lying isn't a problem for us. Actually, it may be more of a problem than we care to admit. Gossip is talking about a person in a way that damages their reputation based on hearsay and speculation. What does the Bible say about gossiping? Use the verses below for help with your answer.

Proverbs 18:8

Proverbs 18:13

Proverbs 25:18

- d. If you've ever been the object of gossip or lies, you know how painful and unloving it is. This commandment is written in the negative, as a **do not**. Give some thought to what you read in Ephesians 4:25, 29 and Colossians 4:6.

Then rewrite this commandment in the form of a positive:

Do . . .

“

God doesn't say that if you have ever told a lie you can't worship Him. If that were the case, none of us could worship Him.

At the same time, if you are practicing deceit, if you are continuing to tell lies, it will hinder your fellowship with God. It's offensive to Him.

Greg Laurie

Memory Verse

You shall not steal.
 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
 You shall not covet.
 Exodus 20:15-17a NKJV

Which part of this verse resonates most with you today? How or in what way?

3 Read Exodus 20:17 | **You shall not covet.** What is coveting? The word (epithumia) literally means *intense craving*. Coveting is when you crave something so much that you won't be content without it.

This command aims directly at the heart. It exposes our internal desires that lead to other sins . Coveting goes beyond simply wanting something—it schemes and strategizes how to go about getting it, whatever the cost.

- a. The short list of examples (your neighbor's house, wife, etc.) is not really a short list at all. It effectively covers the entire spectrum of life.

Relationships; possessions; physical appearance or abilities; a certain lifestyle; reputation; security; success.

These are natural desires and there is nothing inherently wrong with them. But we may put too much value on them. When we compare what we have (or lack) with what someone else has (or what culture worships) we can get swallowed up by it.

God may need to remove it temporarily (or permanently) for our own good. Can you recall a time when a good thing became a god-thing in your life? Share how you grew and changed through that experience. In what ways are you most thankful for it now?

“
Coveting is a powerful and underestimated sin. It can cripple you spiritually and ultimately destroy you.
Greg Laurie

- b. A gateway sin. | Coveting was behind the very first sin. The serpent slithered up to Eve and suggested there was something more—something *better*—than what she had. And it was right there for the taking (Genesis 3:5-6). Can you imagine being in the garden of Eden and craving *more*? That's how coveting works. It is the opposite of being content.

This commandment is written in the negative, as a **do not**. Give some thought to what you read in Proverbs 4:23, Philippians 4:11-13, and Hebrews 13:5. Then rewrite this command in the form of a positive:

Do . . .

Coveting stirs up all kinds of temptation to sin.

Envy (I want what they have.)

Jealousy (I don't want them to have what I have.)

Resentment (Why should they have what I want?)

Pride (I deserve what I want)

4 As we have seen, there's something different about the tenth commandment. Suppose someone does a reasonable job of following the first nine as a set of behavior guidelines.

So they go to God and say look at my excellent behavior. But then God brings them to the tenth commandment, which is a spiritual MRI. God says, ok...now *let's look at your heart!*

This is the effect that the tenth commandment had on the Apostle Paul. He almost deceived himself into thinking that he kept the commandments until he came to this one. No matter how devout he was on the outside, his heart still craved sinful things.

THE LAW SHOWED ME MY SIN. I WOULD NEVER HAVE KNOWN THAT COVETING WAS WRONG IF THE LAW HAD NOT SAID, "YOU MUST NOT COVET" (ROMANS 7:7 NLT).

- a. Read Exodus 20:18-21 | The Israelites needed a mediator to approach God on their behalf and we do too. The commandments are a moral mirror that shows us our heart and shatters any notion that we are good people on our own. The Law drives us into the arms of Jesus (Galatians 3:24).

As He approaches God on our behalf, what does Jesus do that Moses never could?

Colossians 2:13-14

Hebrews 7:25

John 17:17

John 14:16-18

1 John 1:8-9

Revelation 22:12

Action Steps ►► As you think through this part of Moses' story, what is the most important takeaway point for you personally? How will you put what you've learned into action?

Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people. —Ephesians 6:18 NIV

Adoration – Giving praise and honor to God for who He is and what He does.

Confession – Honestly deal with sin; acknowledge to God the ways (and whys) you fall short.

Thanksgiving – Verbalize your gratitude; express your praise and a thankful heart.

Supplication – Pray specifically for the needs of others, ourselves, our church, our nation.



Close your discussion time by praying together. Use the A·C·T·S pattern as a group focus and keep it simple. No need to be lengthy or profound, just authentic.

Notes

Lined area for writing notes, consisting of 35 horizontal blue lines.

WATER•FIRE•STONE

©2019–2020 Harvest Christian Fellowship. All rights reserved.