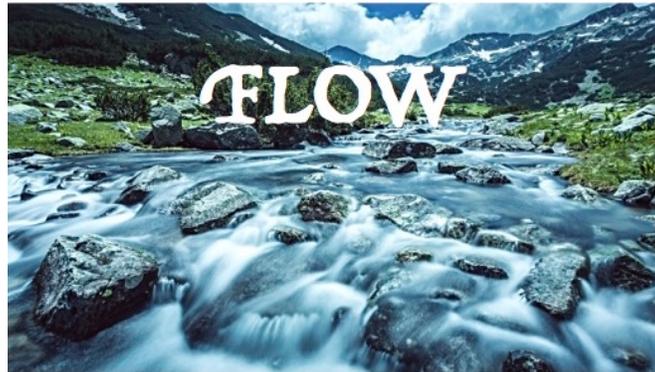


#2 March 2, 2017



"These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess, so that you, your children and their children after them may fear the Lord your God as long as you live by keeping all his decrees and commands that I give you, and so that you may enjoy long life. Hear, Israel, and be careful to obey so that it may go well with you and that you may increase greatly in a land flowing with milk and honey, just as the Lord, the God of your ancestors, promised you."

Deuteronomy 6:1-3

Commandments



by Steve Wells

I once had someone ask me, "Why do we need rules? Rules always seem to get in the way." When I was a kid and I really needed to go "#1" in the pool, my Mom and Dad would quickly say, "Pool rules say you can't do that!" Well, not understanding or comprehending that rule, I would do it anyway. I now know that those pool rules were put there for the health & safety of others and myself. It wasn't until I got older that I began to understand that the "RULES" in my life were meant to protect me. They were oftentimes learned and understood through my failures. The more I understood the rules and why they were there,

the more I saw them as a helpful guide and not so much as a nuisance or hindrance. Rules are found everywhere and are a part of everything we do. They're found in schools, homes, churches, sports, the work place... pretty much everywhere we go!

My very first coaching experience was coaching my eldest son's kindergarten soccer team at the YMCA. That was an experience - IN CHAOS! As I taught my son the rules of the game, there was one rule in particular that he didn't care for - challenging someone for the ball! During one of the games, my wife and I noticed that our son wasn't "IN" the game anymore. Instead he was pretending to fly around the gym while the rest of his team played swarm ball, because the other team & his own teammates would take the ball from him. Yet, he was so kind-hearted that he never wanted to challenge for the ball, because "that wasn't nice." We asked him why he wasn't participating in the game anymore and he said, "They take the ball from me, and then won't share the ball with me!" Since then, he's learned that "challenging" for the ball is one of many rules to follow in the game of soccer, which he now does very well.

The Israelites were brought out of Egypt because God heard their cries in the midst of their challenges and suffering. Yet, they would turn from His commands again and again. They would lose sight of God in the midst of their time in the desert and turn from Him. That's why God gave us the Ten Commandments. There's something that draws us innately to those things that tempt us and draw us away from God especially when we're not patient and we lose sight of Him. He knows this about us, about humanity. Therefore, 1) God gave us these commandments to serve as boundaries and to give direction to his people and 2) God gave us his Son, Jesus, as our Savior and THE KEY to the kingdom of Heaven. In Deuteronomy 6:1, Moses tells the Israelites, "These are the commands, decrees and laws the Lord your God directed me to teach you to observe in the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess." In Mark 12:5, Jesus emphasizes the command given in Leviticus 19:18, "Love your neighbor as yourself," as the second greatest commandment. Then, in Matthew 22:40, Jesus stresses, "All the Law and the prophets hang on these two commandments." Read them, know them, live by them and you will know how to follow God and love like Jesus. The Word of God centers around these Ten Commandments.

Questions:

Is it possible to live life on our own?

If so, why would we need these commandments?

What are the two main themes of the Ten Commandments?

How does loving God help you love your neighbor?

Prayer:

“Father, God, I come before you with the knowledge and understanding that I’m not perfect as Jesus is perfect. Therefore, may you give me the strength to daily strive to live out your commandments; that you would give me the strength and the desire to Love you with all my heart, soul, mind and strength. As an overflow of loving You, give me the strength and the desire to love my neighbor as myself. May your word be a lamp unto my feet and a guide through this journey of life. In Jesus’ name, Amen!”

Below are more tools and resources to enhance, and further deepen your understanding:

Video Illustration:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imJOJjSm_hI

Intro to the Ten Commandments.

Book of Confessions 7.201-7.212:

Q. 102. What is the sum of the four Commandments which contain our duty to God?

A. The sum of the four Commandments containing our duty to God is, to love the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our soul, and with all our strength, and with all our mind.

Q. 122. What is the sum of the six Commandments which contain our duty to man?

A. The sum of the six Commandments which contain our duty to man is, to love our neighbor as ourselves,¹ and to do to others what we would have them to do to us.

Main Scripture Passages:

Deuteronomy 6:1-9

Leviticus 19:17-18

Matthew 22:34-40

Mark 12:28-34