

Day One – Recap of Ten Commandments: Lesson 6

At the risk of sounding irreverent I must admit that the fifth commandment has always seemed a little out of place to me. If you've only got ten commandments to give, I can see how things like adultery and murder and idolatry make the cut, but "honoring your mother and father"? Is that seriously the most important thing to remember? Everyone would pretty much agree that it's good to be a obedient child, but I don't think many people consider it an important part of actually being "good."

This should, naturally, cause us to probe a little deeper (especially when we consider that a special blessing is tied to this commandment). What is it about honoring one's father and mother which is important to God and brings about a long and prosperous life?

As usual, I prefer to take both/and approach to understanding the fifth commandment. The verse is certainly not saying any less than you should honor your father and mother, but I believe it is saying much more. When the Bible addresses obedience to one's parents, it is often tied to the larger question of rebellion against vs. respect for authority. It is well established that one who cannot accept earthly authorities will also be unable to accept an absolute authority in heaven.

So what does this have to do with having long days in the land? Well...giving respect to authority is one of those blessed places in Scripture where obeying God's command just happens to bring about blessing. God does reward His children for their obedience, but obeying authority seems to carry with it its own set of blessings. God made a world where it's usually a good idea to give honor where honor is due.

And, as covered extensively in Ephesians, giving honor is a two-way street. We should not only honor those in authority over us but all men and women, regardless of their position.

Honoring does not necessarily imply obedience, a point which only stands to make the commandment more difficult to comprehend. A parent's authority is great but not absolute, and it is entirely possible to ascribe honor to their position without actually agreeing. Extending this reasoning to the civil sphere intrigues me, where it is actually the presence of disobedience which makes one a good citizen. I haven't made up my mind, but I do think it's entirely possible to honor one's government without necessarily obeying it, at least in a society where civil disobedience is favorably regarded.

(Yes, you must continue to pay your taxes...)

Day Two – Read Genesis 1:27, 9:16

What makes man different than animals and other life?

What does "in his image" mean?

Why is murder wrong?

Read Psalm 8:3-9

What position of importance in His creation does God place man? How do you know this?

What is David's reaction to this? (See verses 3-4.) Why do you think David is in awe or surprised about this?

From your understanding of Genesis 1:27 why has God put man in charge of the “works of His hands,” even though the rest of the universe is so much bigger than man?

What is David's response to God? (See verse 9.) Why does David respond this way?

Day Three – Read James 4:1-10

What does James say causes quarrels and fights? What are your “passions”? (See verse 2.) Why are they at war?

When James says that we ask and don't receive, who are we asking? Why doesn't God give us what we ask for?

Why does James call us adulterous people?

What is the connection between verses 4 and 5?

What is the solution to the passions that war within us? (See verses 7-10.)

What do verses 7-10 mean?

Day Four – Read Genesis 37

What heart attitudes do you see in Joseph's brothers? Where do you see this in the passage?

What did Joseph's brothers do about the heart attitudes they had toward him? (Did they follow the wise counsel that we read about in James 4?) Where do you see this in the passage?

What did the anger and hatred of Joseph's brothers lead to?

How far did Joseph's brothers progress in their murderous thoughts? What prevented the act of murder?

How did one sin lead to another? (See verse 31-32.)

How dangerous are angry, envious or hateful thoughts? Why? How quickly should a person attack the sin in his heart?

Read Genesis 4:7.

What do the phrases “crouching a the door” and “Its desire is for you” tell you about the nature of sin? Why can't we ignore sinful heart desires and attitudes? What does this verse tell us to do? How can we do that?

What sinful heart desires are at war within you?

Day Five – Read Jonah 4

Why was Jonah angry?

How angry was Jonah? (See verse 3.)

Was Jonah's anger a "righteous anger"?

Were Jonah's desires the same as God's desires?

What do you think could have been the wrong heart desires behind Jonah's anger?

How does Jonah describe God? Can Jonah be described that way?

How did God teach Jonah a lesson?

What is the lesson that God wanted to teach Jonah?

What should our heart attitude be toward sinners? Why?

Day Six – Read Matthew 5:38-48

What does "An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" mean?

What does Jesus say about revenge?

Jesus goes beyond telling us not to take revenge. What does He tell us to do instead?

Who are your enemies?

What does the "so that" in verse 45 mean? What is the conclusion Jesus is making?

What is the heart attitude of sinners toward others? How are Christians to be different from non-

Christians?

What does verse 48 mean? What does “perfect” mean?

Read Romans 12:17-21

Look for three times the word “but” is used in this passage. What is being compared in each of these sentences?

What conclusion is drawn in each sentence? What is this passage teaching about our response to those who wrong us?

What does “so far as it depends on you” mean?

What does verse 21 mean?

Read 1 Peter 3:8-9

What is this passage teaching about our response when we are wronged?

Why shouldn't we repay evil for evil?

When are you tempted to pay someone back evil for evil? How can these passages help you?