

# Bite Size Bible Study

## Ten Lessons #207

By Pastor Lee

As you can easily see I have opted for the title Ten Lessons as opposed to the general term Ten Commandments. It has been reported by some scholars that the early Jews did not regard these as laws or legal commands, but as teachings from God. Even so they were to be respected and followed because God had given them.

In our culture we call them the Laws of God. This position makes them a demand from God and implies a punishment for not following them. I find this concept troubling, and I believe that the ancient Jewish culture had a much better take on the words from God.

In this paper (as in my own life) I like to see them as instructions from our Father, to live a life growing in maturity. Admittedly, this means that as we begin our growth, we will likely make mistakes and hopefully learn from those mistakes.

I have been told that when I was a little boy, I was told not to touch the oven because it was hot. One day I did touch it and got burned. The verbal command was ineffective, but the lesson learned from disobeying the command was a permanent reminder of the lesson.

I believe that these lessons from God are much like my lesson. He doesn't expect that we will not make mistakes but does expect us to learn from them and see the wisdom in His instructions.

So, let's look at one place where His lessons are located in our Bibles – Deuteronomy 5:6-21 *NIV (in Blue)*, I will insert, in some places, the Benner Mechanical Translation (*in Black*) which uses words closer to the original than the NIV.

Now, I would like to comment on each of these instructions from God.

*<sup>6</sup> "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery."*

**6** *I am **YHWH** (God's Name) your Elohiym (god or master), which I brought you out from the land of Mits'rayim (Egypt), from the house of servants.*

The Israelites were brought out of Egypt, which is often used as a symbol of a sinful state. There they were slaves and were caused to work, day-in and day-out, with no time for anything else. God intends to lead each human out of the sinful state in which they live.

*<sup>7</sup> "You shall have no other gods before me."*

**7** *Other Elohiym will not exist for you upon my face. (The word "face" can mean "presence.")*

*Other Elohiym*, meaning other gods or other masters. In other words, there is to be nothing (being or anything existing) that should be considered equal to Him. To do so limits our understanding of Him.

*<sup>8</sup> "You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. <sup>9</sup> You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>10</sup> but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments."*

**8** *You will not do for yourselves a sculpture, any resemblance which is in the skies above and which is on the land below and which is in the waters below the land. **9** You will not bend yourself down to them, and you will not serve them, given that I am **YHWH** your Elohiym, a zealous mighty one, registering twistedness of the fathers upon the sons and upon the third generation, and upon the fourth generation to the ones hating (a strong aversion) me, **10** and do kindness to the thousands to the ones loving me and safeguarding my directives.*

Some people interpret this teaching to prohibit the making of statues, making paintings, or even taking photographs of anything. But notice – it says not to make them and then bow down to them and serve them as in idol worship. Why? Because these things are things that YHWH has made, they are not Him. He desires us to love and worship Him, not His creation. We are to care for His creation but not to worship it.

*<sup>11</sup> "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."*

**11** *You will not lift up the title of **YHWH** your Elohiym for falseness, given that **YHWH** will not acquit one who will lift up his title to falseness.*

Using YHWH's name to gain credence with someone for a falsehood is not acceptable. His character and honor are not to be connected with false or deceitful behavior. Anyone doing so, will need to turn away from such behavior and appreciate His Holiness and not use it falsely.

*<sup>12</sup> "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. <sup>13</sup> Six days you shall labor and do all your work, <sup>14</sup> but the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor any*

foreigner residing in your towns, so that your male and female servants may rest, as you do.

*15 Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.*

**12** Safeguard the day of ceasing, to set him apart just as **YHWH** your Elohiym directed you. **13** Six days you will serve and you will do your business, **14** and the seventh day is a ceasing for **YHWH** your Elohiym, you will not do business, you and your sons and your daughters and your servants and your bondwomen and your ox and your donkey and all your beasts and your immigrants that are in your gates, so that your servant will rest, and your bondwomen, like you, **15** and you will remember that you existed as a servant in the land of Mits'rayim, and **YHWH** your Elohiym brought you out from there with a forceful hand and with an extended arm, therefore **YHWH** your Elohiym directed you to do the day of ceasing.

YHWH did not create us to be machines that work 24/7. We are to work six days and then the seventh we are to have time to enjoy the fruits of the six days of labor. As we cease work on the seventh day, enjoying the fruits of our labors, we are to glorify YHWH, the one who has created us and given us these instructions.

*16 "Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you.*

**16** Honor your father and your mother just as **YHWH** your Elohiym directed you, so that your days will certainly be prolonged, and so that he will go well for you upon the ground which **YHWH** your Elohiym is giving to you.

Honoring our parents is what is due them, as they were participants along with YHWH in our creation. This honoring should be for those who were their parents as well because if they had not participated in the creation of our parents, we would not have been created either. This by extension takes us back through our lineage to Adam and Eve, and ultimately to YHWH who created all of humankind as well as the world we live in.

*17 You shall not murder,*

To willfully take the life of another human being is to deprive them of the opportunity of maturing as a child of YHWH. It also may prevent them from producing progeny. It is said, "to murder a person is to murder all of humanity".

*18 and you shall not commit adultery,*

Although we often think of adultery as in the sexual sense, the word has a broader meaning. In its broadest sense it means to use something or someone in a manner that it was not intended to be used. To use our head as a battering ram is misusing it and there are consequences.

*19 and you shall not steal,*

YHWH gives us what He knows we need. To take something that He has given to someone else means that 1) we do not trust Him to give us our needs, 2) we are removing something that He intended for someone else, and 3) we deprive them of the needs He desired for them.

*20 "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.*

**20** and you will not afflict a witness of falseness on your companion,

Spreading an untruth about someone is not recognizing their worth to YHWH and brings into question the character of God. It destroys the character of the person and their own feeling of self-worth. When the truth finally is known the tables are turned onto the untruthful person.

*21 "You shall not covet your neighbor's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbor's house or land, his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."*

**21** and you will not crave the woman of your companion, and you will not yearn for the house of your companion, his field and his servant and his bondwoman, his ox and his donkey and all that belongs to your companion.

This goes along with not stealing, because craving or coveting and desiring for oneself is the precursor to stealing that desired item. If our neighbor (companion) has something that we feel that we need, taking it from him is not the answer. The answer is to petition YHWH for the item and let Him decide if it is the time and place for us to have it.

Conclusion:

YHWH has given us these lessons to begin and continue our maturation. There will be other lessons as we continue towards the perfection He desires for each of us. Some of those new lessons will be extensions of these basic lessons, but all of them are given for our well-being.