

Session 3

Influence With Wisdom

Deuteronomy 5:1-22

Memory Verse

And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, “Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them.”

– DEUTERONOMY 5:1, CSB



Influence With Wisdom

THEOLOGICAL THEME: God gave the Ten Commandments so that His people will know how to live in relation to Him and to others. We must know and obey His Word as we teach the next generation to appreciate the gift of God's wisdom for daily living.

During the pandemic there was an increase in the amount of things people ordered for delivery. Many who were working remotely ordered office furniture to use at home. They then faced the task of assembling that furniture. Depending on what kind of pieces you order or where you order from, there is usually a set of instructions that come with the item, ranging from very simple to completely complicated.

It would be an interesting to know how many people who have attempted to assemble furniture with a spouse or close friend ended up in a fight or argument. This is often due to the different approaches people choose to take when faced with instructions. There are those who get everything out of the box, organize the pieces, read over the instructions, and then follow each step in order. Other people look at the picture on the box, dump out the pieces, and start where it makes sense to them without ever looking at the instructions. You may be one who strives for nothing less than perfection, one who holds a few leftover pieces in your hand and hopes for the best, or somewhere in the middle. Each of us has a unique inclination for handling instructions.

When it comes to following the Lord, He wants you to succeed, and He has supplied exactly what you need to accomplish the tasks you are given. Today we are going to study what following instructions has to do with the way we live our lives and what God wants us to do with His Word.

 Share any funny assembly story you have experienced or heard.

 How do you typically respond when faced with a list of instructions? Why?

Session Summary

The Ten Commandments were given as a guide for daily living. They give us wisdom for relating to God and to others. We should know and obey His Word and lead the next generation to do the same.

1. The Word Teaches (Deuteronomy 5:1-6)

In this passage, Moses—the leader of the children of Israel and author of Deuteronomy—called the people together in an assembly. He had been sharing with them the laws and statutes they needed to follow as they made their way toward the promised land. The people had been in bondage in Egypt and were now out on their own, heading toward the place God had promised them. There was a massive amount of people and some law and order needed to be reiterated to keep them organized and moving together in a healthy, God-honoring way.

Moses called the people to attention and reminded them of some important things. He stressed that the people needed to know and keep God's commands. Just hearing what God said was not enough. Just knowing what was expected of them was not enough. Moses took it a step further, telling them to learn the statutes and rules and then to be careful to obey them. Too many people settle for being around Scripture on a surface level and think they have gotten what they need. They then wonder why they are living in defeat and not experiencing the abundant life that God has for His people.

? How have you experienced the reality that just hearing or knowing God’s Word is not enough but that we must also obey and apply it? What difference do these two approaches make?

We are not so different from the people of Israel. We can easily fall into the trap of only seeking to fill our heads with more knowledge of God. Knowledge is good if we also apply it to our daily lives in order to be transformed. Moses emphasized the need to take what he was saying seriously by reminding the people that they were in a covenant relationship with God. Though God originally cut the covenant with their ancestor Abraham, He also reinforced that covenant with them along the way. They did not have the excuse that God’s law was for a different generation because the covenant with God was for the living people of God.

? Making a covenant with God was referred to as “cutting covenant” because covenants were always sealed with the cutting of a sacrifice. How might this practice emphasize the seriousness of the agreement made in a covenant? How does this point you toward the work of Jesus on the cross?

Moses reminded the people of the experience at Mount Horeb (see Exodus 20) and used the term “face to face” (v. 4) to describe the way God had interacted with His people. When you hear the phrase face to face, you might think about being close or talking directly with another person. This wording implies an intimate, free communication. The people communicated with the Lord through Moses because they could not handle being that close to a holy God. This stressed the authority that Moses carried and gave more credence to what he told them. Because of the work of Jesus on behalf of all who trust Him, we don’t have to have approach God through another person. We can talk face to face with God, and we can hear Him talk to us through His Word. The question is whether we will receive His Word with the authority it deserves. Do we study it and obey the things we read in Scripture, or do we just give it a passing glance every now and then?

God's Word is our set of instructions to live a godly life and always needs to be applied. Regardless of the approach you take to assemble furniture, God's instructions are life-changing and life-giving and deserve your full attention, just as Moses challenged the children of Israel.

? Application: What do you need to change about the way you approach God's Word? What are some wrong ways you might have approached His Word in the past?

2. Love God and Others (Deuteronomy 5:7-21)

Having emphasized why the people needed to listen and apply the instructions of the Lord, Moses got specific. Just as we need to hear some instructions multiple times, Moses reminded them of the Ten Commandments God had given His people in Exodus. This list gives ten commands that apply to all the relationships in our lives today. Because He loves us and wants us to live godly lives, God knew we needed guidance. It is important to recognize that the Ten Commandments were not given to make us legalists, but to teach us to rightly order our loves.

The first four commandments instruct us in how to love God while the last six are all about how to love other people. That covers both our vertical and horizontal relationships. When the Lord gave the commandments to Moses, He began by declaring who He is to set the foundation for the rest of the list. God had brought the people out of bondage in Egypt and was guiding them to the promised land. He is the only true and living God and He has the right to tell us how to live.

? How does recognizing what God has done for you motivate you to obey His instructions?

As you study the commandments, you should notice that worship matters. Who you worship and how you worship are a big deal. We live in a world that worships everything but God and encourages us to do the same. The Lord leaves nothing to chance and told us to keep Him first and worship Him only. We are to respect the name of God and follow His example of holiness and rest. God knows where we will be challenged in living a godly life and set these parameters to keep us on the right path. In the busyness of life and the craziness of our culture, it can be easy to overlook what God has said. You may struggle to keep God first, rest regularly, control your speech, or worship Him alone. Moses knew the people were struggling and wanted to remind them of God's commands so that they would commit themselves again to obeying what they had been told.



What are some less obvious ways we may struggle to keep God's commands? Why is it important to not overlook these areas?

After focusing on relating to God, we must also consider how God tells us to relate to others. The last six commandments covered guidelines for how to love others well, starting with the command to honor your parents. This is foundational in several ways. Dishonoring one's parents is rebellion and rebellion will always have consequences. But these relationships affect more than just the immediate family. If the younger generation is not respectful and honoring of those who preceded them, society in general will suffer and be weakened. A promise was attached to this command—those who honor their parents would prosper in the land God was giving them.

These last few commands cover various aspects of our lives including the way we think, act, and speak. Some of these areas are obvious like murder, adultery, lying, or stealing while others are less visible like wrong desires and covetousness. As you look through this section of the list, you will notice many things that the world looks the other way on or even celebrates. We must be careful in this regard, even when it comes to what we spend our free time watching and dwelling on, including movies, TV, music, and podcasts. It's a slippery slope for believers when we choose to be entertained by that which God condemns or when we covet what others have because we constantly compare our lives to theirs. While we may divide the list of Ten Commandments into those that focus on God and those that focus on others, the list is inseparably connected. When we love God as we should, it is easier for us to also love others as we should.

? Application: What examples can you think of that are seen as “acceptable” ways of disregarding God’s commands? What (maybe less obvious) examples of this exist in your own life?

3. Our Responsibility (Deuteronomy 5:22,32-33)

It is common to repeat certain things we want to emphasize or want to be sure a listener will remember. You may even have a way of speaking that shows how serious you are about what you are saying. Similarly, after Moses repeated the commandments, he stressed that these commands had not come from him but from the Lord and were to be taken very seriously and with great respect. He recounted how the commandments were first received as they were spoken out of the fire, the cloud, and the thick darkness with a loud voice. Each of these elements pointed back to the presence of God with His people during the exodus from Egypt. These ways that the Lord manifested His presence with the people caused a godly fear in them. Many today could use a healthy fear of the Lord instead of a cavalier attitude toward God and His Word. Moses’s words that the voice spoke out of the darkness remind us that though the world is dark and it sometimes feels like we cannot find our way, God is with us and will guide us through whatever we face if we will turn to Him and listen. Relying on ourselves or other people can never satisfy us like trusting and obeying God will.

? Why was it important for the people to remember where the Ten Commandments had come from? Why is it important today to remember where the Bible and all the truth within it comes from?

Moses said the commandments were written on tablets of stone and then given to him. This refers to the fact that the Lord Himself carved the words onto the stone. Using stone speaks of permanence. There would be no fading of ink. A flood would not ruin the document. No one can add or change the words. The Ten Commandments were written by God on tablets of stone and were to be preserved and obeyed for every generation to follow. Likewise, if we care about those who come behind us, we will care about teaching them what the Word of God says and leading them to obey it.

Every time the Word is spoken, read, or taught, the person receiving it has a choice to make about what to do in response. Moses was clear that what he taught was to be used in guiding the people to right living. The Lord calls His people to holy, righteous living and gives us the instructions we need for it. He did not give us instructions so we would become legalistic about checking off a list of rules. The Ten Commandments are guidelines that give us freedom to rightly order our lives so that we can live in victory. When we have a correct perspective on God's Word, it will be evident in the way we live and attractive to the world around us. With the chaos of our culture surrounding us on every side, the freedom that comes from following God's perfect plan is a welcome relief. When we obey His Word and become more like Christ, we have hope to offer those around us who are desperate for answers and have been let down by the wisdom of the world.



Why is it important for you to consider the Ten Commandments not as legalistic but as a gift of guidelines for righteous living? How is the perfect life of Jesus connected to our inability to keep God's commandments perfectly?

The Ten Commandments were meant to be handed down through the generations. We are called to do the same with God's Word today. It is crucial that we respond to what we learn from Scripture with wisdom and by applying it to our lives. It is not enough to just hear the Word. We need to be intentional about obeying God's Word and then committed to teaching it to the next generation in our homes and

throughout our lives. Consider how the church would be different if we recognized that our homes are the original small groups. It is time to take that responsibility as seriously as God intended and create an intentional plan to teach and develop the generations God has put in our care.

? Application: How will you be intentional about studying and teaching God's Word in your home and throughout your life?

Conclusion

? How do the Ten Commandments guide you to rightly prioritize your life? What specifically would change in your life if you followed these commands?

? How do the Ten Commandments challenge your worship? What action can you take toward this today?

? How will you be intentional about your responsibility to teach God's Word to your children and the next generation?



FOR NEXT WEEK

Influence With Action

Main Passages

- Deuteronomy 1:1-8, Matthew 4:1-11

Session Outline

1. God Equips (Deuteronomy 1:1-5)
2. The Key to Victory (Matthew 4:1-11)
3. Responsible to Equip (Deuteronomy 1:6-8)

Memorize

And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them."

- Deuteronomy 5:1, CSB