

Deuteronomy

The One and Only

Study 3 – Words of Life

Introduction

Along with the Lord's Prayer and the Beatitudes, the words which we know as the Ten Commandments are probably among the best known words in the Bible, certainly for those who were raised in Church circles. Indeed, even among those who do not actually know what the commandments teach, there will at the very least be some awareness that such a collection as the Ten Commandments exist.

That the Ten Commandments mattered to Jesus and thus to the early Christians can be seen from the fact that both the Gospels and the New Testament letters affirm them and apply them to the life of believers in the light of their fulfilment in and through Jesus, as can be seen e.g. in Matthew 5:17; 22:34-40; Romans 3:27-31; James 2:8-12. However, what is also clear from the New Testament however is that by the time of Jesus and the Apostles there were a large number of people, both Jews and Judaizing Christians who totally misunderstood God's purpose in giving His Law and who thus saw it as a means to earn right standing with God rather than as a guide for life for those who had already been put right with God through faith. Letters like Galatians were written precisely to counter this dangerous error and in the process to restore the Ten Commandments to their proper place within the church.

As we turn our attention to the study of the Ten Commandments it is thus important for us to remember all of God's dealings with people are based on grace and that at no point does the Lord endorse a legalistic approach to relationship with Him.

Read Deuteronomy 5:1-33



Investigate

1. In what way does Deuteronomy 5 show that the Ten Commandments spell out a right response to God's saving work?

2. What distinguished the Ten Commandments from the other laws given by God through Moses? (Hint: look at verses 22-31)

3. Look at each commandment in turn: What does each commandment (a) forbid and (b) commend?

4. What were the Israelites meant to do in response to the Commandments?

5. How do we know from Deuteronomy 5 that the Commandments were about a true relationship with the LORD and not a matter of mere legalistic obedience?
6. What were the Ten Commandments to bring to the people of Israel?



Think

1. Read Jeremiah 31:31-34; Ezekiel 36:24-27; Romans 8:1-4. How do you think the Ten Commandments apply to Christians under the New Covenant?
2. Look again at each of the Commandments. How do you think each one applies to us today as Christians? (Come to the study prepared to share your thoughts on one)

Apply



In what way has Deuteronomy 5 informed or challenged your thinking?



In what way has Deuteronomy 5 spoken to your heart?



What needs to change in your daily life as a result of this study?