

## Life Lessons Learned from Desert Wondering: God Wants the Best from Us

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Last year, my patrol vehicle had to be retired. The transmission was going out – common for a Ford. So, the park didn't want to spend money, so they reached out to another County department and got a used vehicle that hadn't been driven in about two years. The rubber seals around the doors had to be replaced because of dry rot. The tires were shot and there were other issues. When I first saw the vehicle, it had a fresh inspection sticker on it. Now, our vehicles are checked by County garage at the park. After the first week, I complained about the brakes. Well, the brakes were shot as well. Since they just inspected the vehicle, I figured out they didn't want the best for me. In other words, they could care less about me since that vehicle shouldn't have passed inspection because of the brakes. I'm sure most of us have witnessed the decay of customer service in our nation. Most people don't want the best for you. They only care about themselves. If I have made you depressed, I'm sorry. It's the world we live in and we have to do the best we can in a dying world. However, there is good news. There is someone out there who wants the best for you.

We've been looking at Israel and how God was trying to help them in every way. Last week, we talked about God's blessings. Today, we'll see that God really does want the best for us which should give us some hope today. We'll then take a break from this series till after Easter. So, let's turn to Deuteronomy 5: 4-6 where we read this through Moses, “

<sup>4</sup> The LORD spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, <sup>5</sup> while I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD. For you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain. He said:

<sup>6</sup> “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.<sup>7</sup> “You shall have no other gods before<sup>[a]</sup> me.

<sup>8</sup> “You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. <sup>9</sup> You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>10</sup> but showing steadfast love to thousands<sup>[b]</sup> of those who love me and keep my commandments.

<sup>11</sup> “You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. (ESV – Biblegateway)”

God wanted to bless Israel, but they needed guidelines to follow just like we do today. Just imagine if we had no rules for driving or no rules to guide our government. It would be total craziness. The problem is we look upon the Lord’s commands the same way as we do human rules. We do them because we have to and at times, we do it with a grudge. Just look at the Ten Commandments. We were taught them when we were little and how do we view the Ten Commandments? Something we need to know as a Christian. Then, we view the commands of Jesus in the New Testament the same way. You see, the Lord only wants the best for us and His commands are actually love commands from Him. Part of the commands of Jesus to us is the Beatitudes in Matthew chapter 5. We read them and we see them as just a requirement from Jesus to us. The problem is that is not how we should view them. If we view the Ten Commandments and all the other commands from the Lord as just requirements, we’ll have a hard time following them.

So, there is a certain way we are to view God’s commands in our life. Scripture gives us the answer. Psalm 1: 2 states this, “but his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on his law he meditates day and night (ESV)”. Psalm 19: 7-11 states this, “The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise simple; the precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes; the fear of the Lord is clean, enduring forever; the rules of the Lord are true, and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold; sweeter also than honey and drippings of the honeycomb. Moreover, by them is your servant warned; in keeping them there is great reward. (ESV)” Lastly, turn to Psalm 40: 6-8 where we read, “In



sacrifice and offering you have not delighted, but you have given me an open ear. Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required. Then I said, 'Behold, I have come; in the scroll of the book it is written to me: I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart. (ESV)'" Let's remember that David wrote all but one of these Psalms. The one Psalm is from an unknown author so it still could have been David. Anyway, we have to remember King David is filled with the Holy Spirit. He received the Holy Spirit when God sent His Spirit out of King Soul and He went into David (1 Samuel 16). David delights in the laws of God. God's laws are perfect and righteous and are more desired than gold. Plus, God's laws are sweeter than honey to David. Then David makes the important observation in Psalm 49 that God's law is written in his own heart. That is because of God's Spirit living within David's heart and mind. David realizes how blessed he is to have God's laws written in his heart and on the scroll he is reading. So, the question we have to ask ourselves is how do we view the Ten Commandments? Just as another set of laws from God or do we delight in them. You see, we're usually taught to know them, but it is often forgotten that we are to also delight in them. They are a blessing from God to us. David knew if he followed them, they bring life and blessings from God. They keep you out of trouble. Let's remember, David would learn firsthand about what happens when one disobeys the laws of God like David did with the Bathsheba event. Sin destroys everything while God's laws bring fruit to life. David mediated on the laws of God out of love for them. When's the last time we did that?

Paul would add onto this in Romans 13: 8-10, "Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet,' and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law. (ESV)" Paul is using some of the Ten Commandments here to let us know that they were given to us in love from God and we should love following them. Maybe instead of calling them the Ten Commandments, we should call them Love Commandments because that is what they are. Plus, Paul states the Great Command that Jesus gave in Mathew

22 about loving your neighbor and Jesus was adding onto the Great Command in Deuteronomy 6: 5, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (ESV)" This Great Command is given by God after the Ten Commandments are given. In other words, we need to love the Lord with everything we have before we can fully understand how much we should love the laws of God. Remember, Jesus tells us in John 14: 15, "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of Truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. (ESV)" We'll be able to see all the commands of God through love with the help of the Holy Spirit just like King David did and we'll see how God wanted the best for us through His commands. Let's look at the Ten Commandments for a few minutes through the eyes of love. If we go back to Deuteronomy 5: 7 – 11, we see how God puts down the commands of not having any false gods, not worshipping false gods, and not to misuse His name. All these verses are about our relationship with our God. If we love God with everything we have, these laws are our top priority. We want nothing to hurt or destroy our relationship with our Lord. This means we do not allow our culture to tell us how to live. If we love the Lord with everything we have, we will compare God's law with what our culture tells us on how we should live. If it goes against the laws of God, we don't follow the culture in any way because we don't want to hurt our Lord.

Let's look at verse 12 – 16, "<sup>12</sup> "Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God 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, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. <sup>15</sup> You shall remember that you were a slave<sup>[a]</sup> in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day. (ESV – Biblegateway)" Here we have God giving



some laws on our relationship with Him. We should want to spend one day per week where we spend quality time with our Lord because He wants to spend time with us. We look at this as just a command, but if you look through the eyes of love, this is about wanting to spend time with God on a daily bases. If we don't, it may show we are more concerned about our relationship with this world than with our Lord. That's not love.

Let's look at the rest of the Ten Commandments, <sup>16</sup> "Honor your father and your mother, as the LORD your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

<sup>17</sup> "You shall not murder.<sup>[a]</sup>

<sup>18</sup> "And you shall not commit adultery.

<sup>19</sup> "And you shall not steal.

<sup>20</sup> "And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

<sup>21</sup> "And you shall not covet your neighbor's wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor's house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor's." (ESV- Biblegateway)" Now these commandments can be grouped as laws that effect our relationships with the people around us. God just gave laws before this that focused on our relationship with Him. Now, He gives us laws on what we shouldn't do against other people. In other words, we are to love our neighbor. Jesus put this command right under loving God with everything we have because loving your neighbor helps to bring unity if the neighbor ok's that love. We should love doing these commands because it shows we love people and we need help from the Holy Spirit to do this. Always remember that. So, the next time you read the Ten Commandments or any law from our Lord in the Old and New Testament, always remember these laws were given to us because the Lord only wants the best for us. Plus, we should love all His commands because we love Him with everything we have. I leave you with this Scripture from King David.

## Psalm 119: 97 – 112

- <sup>97</sup> Oh how I love your law!  
It is my meditation all the day.
- <sup>98</sup> Your commandment makes me wiser than my enemies,  
for it is ever with me.
- <sup>99</sup> I have more understanding than all my teachers,  
for your testimonies are my meditation.
- <sup>100</sup> I understand more than the aged,<sup>(a)</sup>  
for I keep your precepts.
- <sup>101</sup> I hold back my feet from every evil way,  
in order to keep your word.
- <sup>102</sup> I do not turn aside from your rules,  
for you have taught me.
- <sup>103</sup> How sweet are your words to my taste,  
sweeter than honey to my mouth!
- <sup>104</sup> Through your precepts I get understanding;  
therefore I hate every false way.

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- <sup>105</sup> Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path.
- <sup>106</sup> I have sworn an oath and confirmed it,  
to keep your righteous rules.
- <sup>107</sup> I am severely afflicted;  
give me life, O LORD, according to your word!
- <sup>108</sup> Accept my freewill offerings of praise, O LORD,  
and teach me your rules.
- <sup>109</sup> I hold my life in my hand continually,  
but I do not forget your law.
- <sup>110</sup> The wicked have laid a snare for me,  
but I do not stray from your precepts.
- <sup>111</sup> Your testimonies are my heritage forever,  
for they are the joy of my heart.
- <sup>112</sup> I incline my heart to perform your statutes  
forever, to the end.<sup>(b)</sup>

*Holy Bible. Crossway: Wheaton, 2001*