

## **Devotions: Being Blessed and the 10 Commandments**

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God is like other parents. He wants to do good things for His children. God's love towards his children isn't earned; you can't work hard and get God to love you—He loves you anyway. You can try to be the best you can be and fail at it—He loves you anyway. He desires that we love Him because He is God or Abba Father. (Abba Father is only used 3 times in the Bible. It is a Hebrew term which doesn't translate well into English. The closest translations mean expressing “warm affection and confidence”).

In His love for us, God set down rules that we need to follow. What parent doesn't give their children rules that need to be followed? Those rules for God's children are the 10 commandments. Interestingly, when we follow those 10 commandments, we are blessed by Abba Father. God has a plan for our lives. We can live outside the rules and will most certainly suffer consequences. We can live inside the rules and be blessed. God doesn't promise that we won't have troubles or trials but he will bless us.

We can live our lives within the boundaries of God or under that “umbrella of blessings” and invite those blessings from Abba Father. We have a will and God allows us to follow that will. He doesn't make us do anything. He wants us to love Him and worship Him, and obey His commandments because we want to.



Compare living by honoring God to how you lived as an adolescent. We knew when we were “good” our parents would be different toward us. If we weren't good, there was friction or disapproval and you could just feel it in the air. Remember how your mom would call you by your name. If she used your first name, you probably weren't in trouble. But if she used your first name and middle name, you knew something was up. If she used your whole given name, your heart might sink to your toes because you knew you had

done something. Most of you knew exactly what to do to stay in or get back in the good graces of your parents.

God whose love is perfect, loves His kids but in perfection. We can't understand this kind of perfect love. As the perfect parent, He wants to bless His children. Blessings follow obedience. When we obey God, we're saying that we trust Him and agree that He has the best plan for our lives. When we disobey Him, we are saying that we disagree with His plan and that we don't need Him. We want to take control of our own lives. When we live in obedience we open up those parental possibilities of being blessed.

The "rules" to follow for God's blessings are simple. The 10 Commandments were given years ago. When you get those 10 RULES in your mind and learn to live them, you are going to be blessed by Abba Father.

In Exodus 20, we can read the Ten Commandments (paraphrased):



1. You shall have no other gods before Me.
2. You shall not make for yourself a carved image...
3. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain.
4. Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
5. Honor your father and your mother...
6. You shall not murder.
7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. You shall not steal.
9. You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
10. You shall not covet...

Lots of people I talk to think that it's too hard to follow the 10 Commandments. But I want you to really think about how hard this is to do.

There are some of these things that many of you will not do today—or any other day for that matter.

Are any of you going to commit murder today? Are any of you planning on committing adultery today? Since it's not Sunday today, you don't really have to worry about keeping it holy today although every day should pay honor to the Father. Are any of you planning on lying about your neighbor today? Are any of you of planning on stealing today?

Personally, I think the first commandments are the hardest ones to keep. Take the first one. You might think that's an easy one to follow. *You shall have no other gods before Me.* When you first think about it, you might think there's no way you're going to break that one. BUT...what do you pay honor too? What takes up space in your brain? What is it that you devote your time too? Sports, food, electronic games, television and this list could go on and on.

That first commandment falls into line with the 2<sup>nd</sup> one: *You shall not make for yourself a carved image.* When you think that there are only 10 commandments and God has made a special effort to emphasize not having any god above him or making other gods, you might want to take special note that He means business about that!

I heard a man speaking on the 10 commandments and he said that the first commandment was for God. If we followed that one, we wouldn't need the other 9. God was just giving us more detail on what the rules were because we're human and need to have it explained! Think about that! If we choose to live without any other gods before us, would we covet; would we commit adultery, would we murder, we would honor our father and mothers. That's amazing!

In the New Testament, Jesus teaches that the greatest commandment is “to love your neighbor as yourself”. I believe that this love commandment goes with 1 and 2: if we have no other gods before God we're in right relationship with the Father and we will love our neighbor.

As with everything that God does, He has a plan for our lives. He wants to bless us. When we love Him because He first loved us; when we learn to live within the boundaries of His rules, blessings are assured.