

10 Commandments Study Program

This booklet has come together with the help of many people. I have heard it said that it takes a village, and that is exactly what has transpired here. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all of the people in the planning stages, writers, editors and printer. I feel a sense of accomplishment in checking the completion of this booklet off my list.

When I first started thinking about possible themes for the next Women's booklet, The 10 Commandments were almost immediately placed upon my heart, so much so that any other topic didn't seem to compare. As I started pondering this topic, I knew it would not be an easy theme and that there would be some "touchy subjects". My thoughts were that if we come to the Lord's table every month to seek forgiveness for those sins that we have committed, then it seemed that these commandments were worth taking a better look at, studying them out and maybe grasp a deeper understanding of them.

When discussing possible options for the booklet cover, we realized that we are blessed to have a council member that was able to use her gift and talent to create original artwork for the cover, our thanks go to Sherry Morrison for her contribution.

After much contemplation and prayer, the council members decided on writers for each subject and felt very blessed that of the 20 people asked to write 17 agreed. We were able to find 3 backup writers and the booklet came together within a few months.

When I have been involved in a group situation while studying these booklets, I have felt such a oneness with those in attendance. There have been tears, laughter and personal testimonies shared that I will always remember and hopefully you will be touched in the same way. Our desire is that you will feel closer to your church sisters as you read and study these worships and lessons, and ultimately might feel a oneness with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. If you are in outlying areas or studying this on

your own, then we pray that you might feel The Spirit guide and direct you as you study these things out in your mind.

Your Sister in Christ, Brandy Lascoe

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Unless otherwise noted, the scriptures referenced herein are from the Inspired Version of The Holy Scriptures, the 1908 edition of the Book of Mormon, or the Book of Doctrine and Covenants (sections 1–144, RLDS; sections from R–145 on, Remnant Church).

Articles and opinions expressed herein do not necessarily represent the official position of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Unsigned articles are attributable to the editors. All materials submitted may be edited for clarity and space.

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Worship #1

Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods Before Me

Scripture:

“Thou shalt not have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3).

Hymn: #51 *“Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty”*

As members of God’s restored church, we have been taught this truth from the very beginning and present-day revelations through His prophet. The only other gods would be the gods of our choosing or choice. These would be the choice of pride, money, covetousness or self. We have all been tempted by these thoughts or choices. We all come back to the One Supreme Being...God.

I was six years old when I was paralyzed on my right side with polio. Through administration for the sick, I was healed of the paralysis, but I was left with several disabilities. God in His wisdom and forethought allowed me to compensate very well. These disabilities were meant for me to be used for another time and place in my life. The doctors also told me I would not be able to bear my own children. God’s promise allowed me to share in the very special miracle of giving me His spiritual creation of life and me their earthly creation of healthy bodies to four sons and one adopted daughter.

In my teens I became very concerned about who I would choose for a companion and husband. I dated several young men, but I made it a mighty prayer with His promise. I made several very important requirements: he would love your church, love our children and love me always. That promise was fulfilled. We have been married 66 years, we had five children, and he is a patriarch in His holy priesthood. I would say that God’s eternal promises are true. When I was eight, my grandmother instilled in me how very important the choice of a life’s companion was. Although this was not very much of a concern at eight, the Spirit and instruction became a focus for me at fourteen.

The disabilities left from polio served me well in my later years. My dreams for my life were to become a wife, mother and a homemaker. I had worked with children through church school, Cub Scouts, Skylarks, Orioles and loved it every minute. However, the most wonderful dream was to become a teacher in a school! This dream came about through the forethought and wisdom of my heavenly Father. At the age of forty-five, I became eligible for a scholarship to the same university my two sons were attending. I was a disabled older woman with disabilities from polio. God kept his promise, and six years later, I taught second grade (seven- and eight-year-old children, which are the covenant years) in the first school in Zion. That was Center Place Restoration School in 1992. Praise the Lord!

I would add to this testimony a little-known scripture from Titus 2:3-5:

The aged women, likewise, that they be in behavior as becometh holiness, not false accusers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things; That they may teach the young women to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children. To be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God be not blasphemed.

By Sue Petentler

Lesson #1

Thou Shalt Have No Other Gods Before Me

To begin this first chapter, we start with an introduction to the Ten Commandments, which is found in the twentieth chapter of Exodus and the fifth chapter of Deuteronomy. However, Deuteronomy 5 has a few differences with the Exodus passage, with Exodus being regarded as the more authoritative rendition. Deuteronomy 5 is a sermon to Israel by Moses that includes a rehearsal of these commandments, which explains why it is not an exact reproduction of the wording. The Ten Commandments are also referred to as the Decalogue from the Greek, meaning ten words or ten commandments.¹ The numbering of the commandments varies by religion, but this booklet uses the numbering used by many Christian churches. Exploring the various numberings is beyond the scope of this booklet but can easily be found on the internet.

As background to Moses' reception of the commandments, Exodus 19 explains that Israel arrived at the wilderness of Sinai from Rephidim on the southern end of the Sinai Peninsula. They camped in front of the mountain known as Mount Sinai, which is also known by the name Mount Horeb. (The name, Sinai, is used in Exodus, and Horeb is used in Deuteronomy.) The Lord had told Moses at the time of his burning bush experience to return with Israel after their departure from Egypt, and they now had done just that. Moses then travels up and down the mountain approximately four times just in Exodus 19, and he does it alone or with Aaron. (Mount Sinai is about 7,500 feet high² and takes about four hours to climb.³ The Lord told Moses to tell the people to prepare themselves for three days, including the washing of their clothes. However, they were not to go up into the mountain. On the third day there was lightning and thunder and smoke ascending from the mountain, and Moses went back up into the mountain. Chapter 20 begins with these words:

And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

This is the first of four commandments considered to be religious and prescribe our proper response to God, while the other six are called moral commandments, which deal with man's relationship with his fellowman. These first four commandments delineate the reverence and honor we are to pay to God. In this first commandment, the phrase to "have no other gods *before* me" lists "*besides* me" as an alternative wording in several Bible versions. This changes our understanding from it being acceptable to possibly having other gods as long as they are worshipped less than God, to not having any other gods at all, which seems to be the logical intent of the verse.

While in Exodus 20 the commandments are given orally to the people, the Lord later writes the commandments on stone tablets with his finger, as reported in chapters 31 and 32. We are probably familiar with how during this time Aaron was forced to make the golden calf, and the people engaged in singing and dancing. This angered Moses when he came down the mountain to the point that he broke the tablets, burned the golden calf, ground it to powder, and made Israel drink the powder mixed with water. Another four visits to the holy mount are described between chapters 20 and 34, giving an approximate total of eight visits⁴, at least two of which lasted 40 days. In Exodus 34:1 the Lord again writes the commandments on two new tablets. However, the first verse of this account is different in the Inspired Version from other versions and reads as follows:

And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two other tables of stone, like unto the first, and I will write upon them also, the words of the law, according as they were written at the first, and I will write upon them also, the words of the law, according as they were written at the first on the tables which thou brakest; but it shall not be

according to the first, for I will take away the priesthood out of their midst; therefore my holy order, and the ordinances thereof, shall not go before them; for my presence shall not go up in their midst, lest I destroy them.

In other words, the Mosaic law, which included much more than the Ten Commandments, was given to Moses, but how much of the complete law was on the second set of tablets is unknown. The change in this law that was given to Moses was that it was now a “taskmaster” law or a law of carnal commandments. Also, the Melchisedec priesthood and ordinances associated with it were taken away from Israel, ending with the death of Moses. This is also explained in the Doctrine and Covenants 83:4.

At the time these commandments were given, men were literally praying to and worshipping idols made by human hands. This will be covered more extensively in the next chapter, but examples include Baal or Baalim and Ashtaroth. The worship of Baal was attacked by Elijah in the test of calling down fire to consume the bullock dedicated to Baal, versus the one dedicated to the Lord; a contest in which the “soaked with water sacrifice” of Elijah was totally consumed with fire while that of Baal was not.⁵ This proved the existence of Elijah’s God, and showed how ludicrous the notion of Baal being an actual god was. In these Old Testament cases, the prohibition against having other gods was a literal thing.

We also know that in ancient Egypt and elsewhere the sun was worshipped.⁶ Other cultures have worshipped animals or associated animals with various deities. This form of idolatry has occurred directly through acts of reverence, and indirectly through confidence and loyalty to them.⁷

However, this literal interpretation can be extended to include the practice of substituting other people, other activities, or other treasures to such an extent that they become a “god.” The

request of Israel to have a king is such an example. In 1 Samuel 8:7, the Israelites wanted to replace God with a king, which demand displeased the Lord:

And the Lord said unto Samuel, Hearken unto the voice of the people in all that they say unto thee; for they have not rejected thee, but they have rejected me, that I should not reign over them.

Samuel explained to the people that a king would take their sons for his army, to reap his harvest, and for making weapons. He would take their daughters to be cooks and bakers. He would also take their fields and a tenth of their flocks, seed, and vineyards. However, the people insisted, and the Lord gave them a king. In rebuke Samuel told them, “***ye have this day rejected your God.***”⁸ When Israel demanded a king, it is doubtful they thought of that demand as a rejection of God, or that they were breaking the first commandment. This illustrates the slippery slope of sin in that people reject God and break the first commandment without realizing they are doing so.

As an example of how we absent-mindedly sin, the brother of Jared apparently forgot to seek the Lord for four years at a place by the sea called Moriancumer. When the brother of Jared again came into the presence of the Lord, the Lord chastised the brother of Jared for three hours for forgetting to call on Him.

This first commandment was restated by Moses, when he said, “***thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might***” (Deuteronomy 6:5). To love the Lord makes the first commandment more than a duty, and the worship of God is to become a passion. (Coming to know Him makes that possible and loving Him is a natural result.) In the time of Jesus, a scribe asked Jesus, “***Which is the first commandment of all?***” Jesus answered him by quoting Moses’ statement from Deuteronomy, to which the scribe responded,

Master thou hast said the truth; for there is one God, and there is none other but him...and to love his neighbor as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices. And when Jesus saw that he answered discreetly, he said unto him, Thou art not far from the kingdom of God (Mark 12:33-39)

In the 21st chapter of John, Peter, and several other disciples decide to go fishing. We do not know whether this is just a diversion, or whether now that the Lord was physically not with them continually, they are tempted to return to their previous lifestyle. The miracle of the multitude of fishes takes place, and they figure out it is the Lord on the bank instructing them where to fish. They come to shore and eat fish with Jesus, and when they are done, Jesus asks Peter whether he loves Jesus more than “these?” I always assumed these were the fish, but at least one commentator thinks it refers to the other disciples. Either way, it seems that Peter is being challenged to determine once and for all what his priority in life will be. For Peter, it is not enough to worship the Lord only, he has to serve him as well. An apostle is to serve the Lord “*with full purpose of heart*” (D&C 16:5b). This experience raises the requirement for having no other gods than God to an even higher level. Peter would give his life as Jesus predicts here in this chapter of John. Perhaps most of us are not charged with that level of commitment, but ideally as saints, should our dedication be any less?

Arthur Oakman, in his book, *He Who Is*, writes, “For when we were created, we were created for our heavenly Father; we do not belong to ourselves. We have no primary rights over our own life. He has rights in our existence which belong to no other person. This is the meaning of the phrase in the Ten Commandments, ‘*Thou shalt have no other gods before me.*’”

In the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, we read,

But every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of

the world, and whose substance is that of an idol, which waxeth old and shall perish in Babylon, even Babylon the great, which shall fall (D&C 1:3e)

F. Henry Edwards, in his *A Commentary on the Doctrine and Covenants*, remarks on this verse that “if we do not set God in his rightful place...we set up our own god in his place.” He goes on to mention some of the other things we might worship, such as wealth, power, or prestige, and these become idols to us. Again, quoting Oakman:

Our difficulty is that there are so many voices around us, so many inducements pandering to our fleshly lust and appetites, so many secondary things which we have not yet learned to put in their proper place.

When the Nephites fell into apostasy at the end of their golden age, the record tells us that the slide began by becoming proud; turning their attention to fine clothing, jewelry, and other things; dividing themselves into classes; and building churches for profit (4 Nephi 1:27-28). We can see how God was replaced, not with literal idols, but with self-aggrandizement and arrogant behavior.

The Parable of the Sower illustrates the effect of these other voices. Particularly the part of the seed falling among thorns where the seed springs forth but is choked out by the “*care of this world and the deceitfulness of riches, and he [the seed] becometh unfruitful*” (Mathew 13:20). One interpretation of becoming unfruitful is that our busy lives prevent the Holy Spirit from growing the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. The human mind is finite, and even the most multi-tasking of us is unable to maintain loyalty to two causes. Jesus also talked about this when said “*No man can serve two masters...Ye cannot serve God and Mammon*” (Mathew 6:24). Mammon is an Aramaic word meaning riches, and Jesus used the term in two ways, “as a life-goal opposed to God,” and also as money.⁹ Whether our purpose

in life is to serve some personal aspiration, or we are just focused on accumulating wealth, either ambition is impossible to have as the center of our life and at the same time serve the Lord as required by the first commandment.

As saints we can either look outward at the world or upward toward the Lord. The everlasting covenant answers the question which way we should look: “*when thy posterity shall embrace the truth and look upward, then shall Zion look downward*” (Genesis 9:22). Paul wrote a similar admonition when he wrote:

If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth (Colossians 3:1-2)

Questions:

1. How was Moses able to fast 40 days twice?
2. How did Jesus expand the Ten Commandments in his teaching?
3. How does one carry out daily cares and maintain closeness to God?
4. How does one apply “being temperate in all things” to the first commandment?
5. What does it mean to look upward?
6. What does it mean to “set your affection on things above?”

1. J. R. Dummelow ed., *The One Volume Bible Commentary*, MacMillan, 1961.

2. <https://www.britannica.com/place/Mount-Sinai-mountain-Egypt>

3. <https://www.kevinandamanda.com/mount-sinai/>

4. <https://www.gotquestions.org/Moses-on-Mount-Sinai.html>

5. 1 Kings 18.

6. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/sun-worship>

7. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/animal-worship>

8. 1 Samuel 10:19.

9. Zondervan Bible Dictionary.

By High Priest David Van Fleet

Worship #2

Thou Shalt Not Make Unto Thee Any Graven Image

Scripture:

Think of your brethren, like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all, and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you. But before ye seek for riches, seek ye for the kingdom of God. And after ye have obtained a hope in Christ, ye shall obtain riches, if ye seek them; and ye will seek them, for the intent to do good; to clothe the naked, and to feed the hungry, and to liberate the captive, and administer relief to the sick, and the afflicted. And now my brethren, I have spoken unto you concerning pride; and those of you which have afflicted your neighbor, and persecuted him, because ye were proud in your hearts, of the things which God hath given you, what say ye of it? Do ye not suppose that such things are abominable unto him, who created all flesh? And the one being is as precious in his sight as the other (Jacob 2:22-27).

Hymn: #479 “All Things Are Thine”

Many years ago, I had a particular children’s music book I loved. An acquaintance asked to borrow it, and I gladly shared it with them. After several weeks, I realized they had not returned the book, and I grumbled to myself a little bit hoping it would come back soon. Several more weeks (perhaps even months) went by and no book. Our budget was tight, so I could not just go out and get another book to replace it. I continued grumbling to myself, and it became a source of irritation that bothered me often.

One day I was studying for a Bible class I was taking. Suddenly my mind was taken over with these thoughts: “You know that book you have been grumbling about? You are wasting time and energy doing all this grumbling. I (God) am in control. You need to spend your time in study, prayer, and loving all those around you, not worrying about that music book.”

Fortunately, I did just that. I never gave it another thought. I immediately noticed a feeling of freedom. The very next week, I received a package in the mail. Upon opening the package, I found the music book.

Right then and there, I was thankful for the lesson I had been taught. In fact, I was more excited about what I had learned than receiving the music book back! Our Lord is in control of everything, big and small.

If we can put our trust in Him, we have no need to spend our time worrying and grumbling. It is very easy to make unworthy objects have way more significance than they should. It seems like a stretch to say that the music book was a graven image. But when we add up all the little things in our lives that take our time and energy, we seem to have very little time to spend doing the things we know the Lord would want us to be doing.

My parents did a very good job of instilling the concept of stewardship and taking care of the things we have into my brother and me. Sometimes I think I use this as an excuse to care too much about my possessions. But it really is not difficult to realize sharing with someone is far different than leaving it laying outside in the rain.

It seems so easy to find an excuse to spend time worrying. But for me, it seems finding excuses is just a way to take care of me and my selfish needs. The Lord has a much better option. And I guarantee you will be happier, and you will feel a freedom that you can get no other way.

And, after all these years, I still remember this small experience and lesson very well. But interestingly, I cannot recall which music book or even the person who borrowed it. I consider this a blessing as well. I am thankful the Lord allowed me to truly lay the matter in His hands.

by Kay Van Fleet

Lesson #2

Thou Shall Not Make Unto Thee Any Graven Image

Scriptures: Exodus 20:4; Exodus 32; 1 Corinthians 6: 9-10; Mosiah 7; D.C. 3a-e

The scriptures are replete with examples of idolatry and the effects that idol worship has at an individual and corporate level. The very first commandment and subject of the previous lesson was the commandment to not have any other gods before the one and true God. The second commandment is along the same vein.

“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth...”
(Exodus 20:4).

A graven image is an object of worship carved usually from wood, stone, or metal. In other words, a graven image is an idol. In the times of Moses, idol worship, or idolatry, was a significant issue as is recorded in the 32nd chapter of Exodus. The Israelites, having been freed from bondage and assembled at the foot of Mt. Saini, reverted to worshipping a golden calf. Idolatry was so ingrained in the lives of the people that after only a few days waiting for Moses to return from the mount, they converted their gold and silver into a graven image of a calf. Ancient Egypt was known for its worship of various gods including one which was represented by a golden calf. Of course, today there are religions that still exist where idols and false gods are worshiped but those religions do not have a significant impact on the everyday lives of the saints. Saints today likely would not think to create a graven image of a calf or some other object to worship; however, we know that God is a jealous God. Idols and graven images are forbidden because they take glory away from God and turn our focus from him to the works of our own hands and always result in a people who are carnal and full of sin. Ultimately, people who worship these things find themselves destroyed.

When reading the second of the ten commandments one may ask themselves, what about pictures of Jesus or other art that depicts God’s

creation. After all, it says, no images of anything in heaven, earth, or the sea. Wouldn't that mean we shouldn't have any art depicting anything that God created? The answer to this question is found in 3rd Nephi.

“Thy graven images I will also cut off, and thy standing images out of the midst of thee; and thou shalt no more worship the works of thy hands...” (3 Nephi 9: 103).

It is not the image of God's creation that God does not approve of. It is the worship of ourselves and the works of man that he warns against. False gods and the idols that represent them are the creation of men which take credit for all things. When we worship idols, we worship men instead of God.

In the 7th chapter of Mosiah, we read about King Noah. He followed after the lusts of his own heart and built spacious buildings with all manner of gold and silver and towers that hovered over the land. Thrones for him, and his priests were made of gold and he and his priest lived riotous lives with their hearts placed upon their riches. The people became idolatrous because of the vain and flattering words of the King and his priests. They worshiped the things made by the hands of King Noah and his workman more than they worshiped God, and ultimately both the king and the people were destroyed or taken captive at the hands of their enemies in a subsequent chapter of Mosiah.

As we understand the spirit of the law, we see the context of this commandment for what it is, an indictment of all things that take glory and focus from God who is the creator of all things. Idol worship in our day still exists but in different forms. The natural man is an enemy to God and human nature tends not to change throughout the ages. While we may not have idols of false gods in our homes as the ancient Egyptians, we each have idols that distract from God's glory. The act of worship is defined as having adoration, devotion, and reverence for a person or a thing. Are there things we worship more than God? If so, those things must be removed from our lives.

Questions:

1. What is a graven image or idol?
2. Why would the Lord forbid idols and graven images?
3. Do we worship idols and graven images today?
4. What does it mean to worship the works of your hands?
5. What forms of idolatry can we cut from our daily lives?

By Bishop Andrew Romer

Worship #3

Thou Shalt Not Take The Name Of The Lord Thy God In Vain

Scripture:

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (Exodus 20-7).

Hymn: #26 *“All Praise Be to Our Father”*

Do you find yourself cringing when the language around you is so nonchalant that the Lord’s name is not being used in a respectful or reverent manner? Has the frequency of casual use of the name of God dulled our senses to its use? John Calvin, an early Christian theologian and reformer summarized, “The frequency of casual use of the name of God has dulled the public conscience but that the commandment, with its penalty, still stands” (Calvin, 246-248). The Lord’s name is holy and should only be used to bless, praise or glorify that name.

We must also be aware that children often mimic what they hear, and if they are surrounded by curse words and inappropriate uses of God’s name, it will become part of their vocabulary. Like so many other habits, good or bad, our children reflect what the adults in their lives are doing and saying.

We started watching an interesting Netflix show that had four seasons from September 2016 to January 2020, but we only found it at the end of 2021. *The Good Place* is a series about people and where they spend eternity and what they did in their earthly life to get to be in the “good place.” In this setting, points are given for every truly good deed, and negative points are taken for every fake or bad action, word, thought or motive. You must have a certain number of points to get to the “good place” and the two main characters were there by accident. At various times their actions on earth are replayed. Words are included in the negative points. Not just because they are words, but because they reflect true thoughts and motives. Curse words or profanity are not allowed out of

anyone's mouth and are voiced as a substitute word that is not offensive. Have you ever thought about a "point system" for our actions and words on earth? I've heard it said, "If the consequences for our sins were immediate, there would be less bad sin."

In the Lord's Prayer Jesus addresses, "Our Father who art in heaven, **Hallowed be thy name.**" And in the communion prayers we take the emblems as a witness that we are "*willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them that they may always have his Spirit to be with them.*" Doctrine and Covenants 17:22d and 23b. It is our responsibility to carry the Lord's name with us, respect and revere his name and not misuse it.

Once we take the Lord's name on, we are committed to maintain that covenant relationship, repenting each day and monthly at communion for those thoughts and actions and words that were unbecoming a person that has chosen to be like Jesus and hopes to be in the "good place." Perhaps if we lived our life as if Christ was already living among us, we could be more conscious of our speech and our actions.

God obviously does not take this commandment lightly or it would not be included in the Ten Commandments along with murder, adultery, and stealing. And if we think misusing God's name is a "minor infraction" the second part of this commandment states very clearly that even though a person may hold himself guiltless, God will not.

We are God's beloved covenanted children. It is truly an honor and privilege to be part of his family. And in that family should be respect, reverence, love, appreciation, and esteem that are reflected in our actions and words.

By Beckie Hogan

Calvin, John, (Beveridge, Henry), *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, Hendrickson Publishers, 2008, ISBN 1-59856-168-5, pp. 246-248.

Lesson #3

Thou Shalt Not Take The Name Of The Lord Thy God In Vain

“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain” (Exodus 20:7).

From those days of Moses so long ago, the counsel of God has always been designed to give mankind clear and concise direction regarding our actions and reactions to Him and the influence of the Holy Spirit upon our lives. Sometimes those words of counsel came as calming and inspiring moments of interaction with God and that Spirit. And then there are moments when God’s direction to His human creations come with force and leave little room for mankind’s propensity to debate and evaluate God’s meaning – His words come with the force of sledgehammers upon steel spikes. Unrelenting and ever purposefully powerful.

Within the prayers we offer so often over the bread and wine at our communion services are the following words:

“that they are willing to take upon them the name of thy Son, and always remember him and keep his commandments which he has given them, that they may always have his Spirit to be with them” (D&C 17:22d).

It is supposed that when we take upon ourselves the name of God, we would then begin to make regular mention of His name. In our everyday lives we would find it a comfortable manner to bring the name of our God into our conversations, our interactions with others, that we would find opportunities to tell of His greatness in our lives and how He has touched and guided us every step of our lives thus far.

But when we take another’s name upon ourselves, there is an even greater intent and obligation. The two most recognized ways in which we might assume someone else’s name is either through marriage or adoption. In marriage, the bride often

accepts the groom's last name as her own. This is a custom that has evolved through the ages and is still prevalent in our culture and society today although not adhered to as strictly as it has been in the ages past. And with adoption, it is almost a sure thing that the child being adopted now is given the name of the family into which he or she has become part of. In both scenarios, it is understood that the value of accepting the name of the spouse, or the family, now has become of prime importance in the life of the one yielding to custom, tradition, or law. Now the individual who has accepted the change is expected to live up to the heritage and customs of the newly formed relationship with self and family.

In God's attempt to pull the unknowing Israelites into a closer relationship with Him, He found it necessary to begin that educational process with the very basic of guidelines which would then, hopefully, allow them to grow into obedient children rather than remain an argumentative and undisciplined group of strangers to His designed way of living and worshiping. The calling of Moses to lead them out of Egypt and into the "promised land," a land flowing with milk and honey, had to be one of the most daunting responsibilities ever given to any one prophet of God. Time after time, those reluctant and undisciplined groups of families argued and fought against the guidance and leadership of Moses and those seventy elders chosen to lead them. There finally came a time when Moses had to ask of God for some words to bring to them that might persuade them to understand how God desired them to live and prosper in His presence. Thus, the inception of the Ten Commandments and their intended influence over all the children of God.

Our topic for this day is one of the Ten Commandments written by Moses on those stone tablets that were so carefully protected by the Jews in the Ark of the Covenant for so many years. It is unclear, historically, what happened to that Ark and the items stored within it, but perhaps for several hundred years, that Ark contained the tablets upon which Moses inscribed the words which God uttered unto him for the benefit of all

mankind. Our focus today will be on commandment number three as given at the beginning of this lesson.

Using the reference in Doctrine and Covenants 17 mentioned earlier, there comes a time in our lives when we decide to accept a close relationship with God, His Son, and the Holy Ghost, the three components of what we have come to call as the Trinity, or the Godhead. There are several hundred references in the combined Scriptures of the Inspired Version, the Book of Mormon, and the Doctrine and Covenants that speak of and refer to **“my name,”** speaking of the name of either God and/or Jesus. A quick review of what those scriptures reveal gives us a better understanding of what is potentially able to be accomplished when we walk and live daily with the presence of God and Jesus in our lives. And this was one of those attributes that God wished to instill in the minds and hearts of the Israelites at the foot of Mount Sinai.

Using what we already understand to be God’s desire for us as His covenanted children and our relationship with Him, perhaps we have a broader foundation, historically as well as spiritually, upon which to stand than did those unknowing children so long ago. But having better access to knowledge and understanding does not always equate to being able to make better judgments. Mankind is still as stubborn and self-opinionated as ever before. Those traits of all mankind have not changed much at all over the eons of time. So, often the right decision is difficult to make because of our selfish desires or influences that are too powerful for us to deny their hold over us.

It is supposed that when we take upon ourselves the name of God or Jesus, or we choose any other “god” to worship and adore, we would then begin to make regular use and mention of that particular “god’s” name. Micah, one of the Old Testament prophets who lived approximately 500-600 years before the birth of Jesus, helps us understand that concept: **“For all people will walk every one in the name of his god, and we will walk in the name of the Lord our God for ever and ever”** (Micah 4:5). Be

sure to notice how the capitalization of the words “god” and “Lord” and “God” are different. Only the “Lord” and “God” which are personalized are those that Micah is speaking of as being divine. The first reference of “god” in this scripture refers to the secular or worldly god that so many have and will choose to follow, the “gods” of Babylon and destruction.

But God has counseled us not to ***“take the name of the Lord thy God in vain”*** or else suffer dire consequences. And that “or else” is so important to our understanding of how God looks upon us in our covenant walk with Him. Let’s begin to look at how we might be taking His name in vain.

We have already spoken of the intent of assuming someone else’s name for at least two purposes. But in accepting those names, we also agree that there are obligations and standards that we are willing to take upon ourselves to meet the expectation of the family name we have now embraced. And when we fail to live up to those criteria or expectations, we perhaps bring harm and disgrace to the good name of the family into which we have been welcomed. Being one of God’s children, or any other family has its expectations, its values, and its consequences.

Some scholars believe that this verse applies strictly to perjury (lying under oath) or false swearing. That would include the breaking of a promise or contract that has been sealed with an oath in the name of God. Given His position as the Almighty God, He will simply not allow His name to be associated with any act of falsehood or treachery. His name must not be treated lightly or without deep thought. This would include the careless and profane use of His divine name and titles He has become known by. In His earthly ministry, Jesus extended the scope of this commandment to prohibit the use of profane oaths entirely: ***“But I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God’s throne; nor by the earth, for it is his footstool;...”*** (Matthew 5:37). A man’s mere word should be his bond, tying him to God.

For so many of those who have at least a small understanding of God in their lives, this opening verse of scripture we have quoted most often refers to how we speak of the name of God and Jesus and perhaps any other form of heavenly beings. Most often we acknowledge that swearing, or cursing, and using any form of ‘expletive deleted’ that defines any part of the Godhead in a derogative manner, meets the intent of this verse of scripture. To demean, to abase, to ridicule, to minimize to any extent, would qualify as taking the name of the Lord in vain. But perhaps there is an even broader context to this counsel that needs our attention. How else might we take the Lord’s name in vain? How else might we be offending our God by taking actions that cause separation between He and us?

First, we must be careful of living a life of hypocrisy. When we become an adopted son or daughter of God, we have legally and morally promised to Him that we will live up to all the obligations associated with that relationship. We have pledged our lives to Him, for Him, and because of Him. But when we take that name unto ourselves without the full willingness to live up to those expectations, when we do not do all we can to remove iniquity from our lives, then our worship is in vain, our oblations and spiritual gifts are in vain, even our practiced religion is in vain. Jesus spoke to the Scribes and Pharisees with these words: ***“Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For ye are like unto whited sepulchers which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but are within full of the bones of the dead, and of all uncleanness”*** (Matthew 23:24). They held the positions of power and authority, but were more interested in their own status rather than being open to serve their brothers and sisters in a Godly manner.

Next, we foolishly make a covenant without fully intending to complete it or applying that covenant to our lives. We make promises to God, binding our souls with those bonds which are good and when we underperform those bonds, we take His name in vain. When we do this, we bring about no

good purpose for any of the actions we took in God's presence for we are now living a broken covenant by which we have begun to fulfill the counsel given to us in Matthew 5:37: ***“Again, it hath been written by them of old time, Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord, thine oaths.”*** In other words, do not make a liar of yourself, but do all you have covenanted with the Lord that you would do. Solomon, writing in the book of Ecclesiastes 5:4 gives us this quote:

“When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it; for he hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed.”

Further, do not be rash with making your covenant with God. If we are “caught up on the spirit” of an activity and make a promise or initiate a covenant with God without having had full opportunity to understand the fullness of that commitment, without having the full intent to honor such a commitment, we then have accepted an obligation by which we are unprepared to meet its fulfillment. The Apostle Luke shares these thoughts with us: ***“For which of you intending to build a tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the cost, whether he have the money to finish his work? Lest, unhappily, after he has laid the foundation and is not able to finish the work, all who behold, begin to mock him”*** (Luke 14:29, 30). This type of response can be through peer pressure or being caught up in the energy of a particular moment. It can also be related to the path of life we choose for convenience's sake but become hardened to the expectations of the responsibility and begin to see our position as a means to an end itself. But in any case, the resultant expectation weighs heavily upon the individual and most likely no good purpose of that commitment will ever come to pass. Again, the name of God is taken in vain.

Our next understanding is to not falsely swear upon the name of Divinity. This is achieved when we publicly express to the world around us that we are living by the morality and life taught by God and His Son when, secretly, we are living lives that

are far from those examples. Luke again provides us with some detail regarding those who profess to love God: ***“If ye love me, keep my commandments”*** (Luke 14:15). In the times we “swear” that the influence for our life decisions comes from our relationship with God, yet when our secret lives are in total opposition to anything divine, we again are taking God’s name in vain. And Matthew’s words again ring true for us, that we are “making liars of ourselves” before God.

Lastly, we use the name of God lightly and carelessly, without regard to its full significance. When we do this, we make the result of our lives profane to God by the example of our lives. When we jokingly, or with amusement, refer to God and His Son, we reduce them in status before our world, perhaps making them the object of humor and/or scorn. There are even moments of our days when we begin to lift up the pride within us that desires to let the world know that all is right in our worlds, that we are so blessed in life that nothing can threaten our peace and God therefore becomes superficial. At those times, the admonition from Isaiah 47:8 needs to be given to us: ***“Therefore hear now this, thou that art given to pleasures, that dwellest carelessly, that sayeth in thine heart, I am, and none else besides me; I shall not sit as a widow, neither shall I know the loss of children.”*** Thus, God and His Son again are profaned by our self-centered acts of carelessness or lack of honor and respect. Their names have become vain before us.

What is the result of this “vainness” that we have participated in? The last portion of our opening scripture gives us a brief glimpse of what that might be. God ***“will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.”***

In understanding this brief statement, we need to more fully recognize that God is very jealous of anything that can deal with His honor or integrity. You and I may not consider the things we do as lowering Divinity in the eyes of all mankind, but God certainly does. He has a name that is known for righteousness and honor; He has a reputation that is above

reproach and without sin. You and I might think that there is no harm in what we are doing, and that God will understand and not hold us accountable for those innocent and inane actions. We might even believe that God will overlook our shortcomings and turn His eye from our failures.

But this brief scripture tells us that just the opposite is true. It affirms that God will hold us responsible for those actions of vainness when we take His name into our lives and then fail to fulfill the obligations that come with that marriage or adoption. When we are unable to maintain that holy commitment to the Master and are more heavily influenced by the world's all-to-powerful hold than by our supposedly holy covenants made with Divinity, then we place ourselves in greater understanding of the justice of God rather than the fullness of His mercy. And this is especially true when we deny ourselves the opportunity to come back into the presence of God and Jesus through repentance, an act of contrition, remorse, and perhaps restitution undertaken to remove that separation we ourselves have carelessly created.

Alma attempts to give us a visual picture of the differences of God's justice and mercy:

How could there be a law, save there was a punishment? Now there was a punishment affixed, and a just law given, which brought remorse of conscience unto man...And also, if there was no law given against sin, men would not be afraid to sin. And if there was no law given if men sinned, what could justice do, or mercy either: for they could have no claim on the creature. But there is a law given and a punishment affixed and repentance granted; which repentance, mercy claimeth: otherwise, justice claimeth the creature and executeth the law and the law inflicteth the punishment (Alma 19:99-104)

If it is the goal of every member of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints to someday be invited to live

and exist in the Kingdom of God on earth, a place that shall be called Zion, or known as the Celestial Kingdom, then understanding the difference between justice and mercy, two components of our relationship with God, is vitally important. When we chose to live by justice, we have chosen to be judged by law and our obedience, or lack thereof, to the laws of God. Our actions, good or bad, bring about consequences and we choose to accept those as part of life, continually moving from decision to decision without regard to the fate of our tomorrows.

But when choosing to live by the mercy of God, we understand that always being found in His presence is the most desirable goal we could ever imagine. And we will do all we can to maintain that presence. Repentance now finds its way into our lives, and we find ourselves looking at life through eyes desiring to become more holy, more Christ-like than simply living a life meeting the basics of law. Now we want the richness that can be found in understanding the “spirit” of every law given by God.

Doctrine and Covenants 76 provides perhaps the lasting testimony for all those who have that all-consuming desire to exist eternally with their Creator and their God when it speaks specifically about those who will find themselves in the Celestial glory of God. Beginning with verse 5, here are a few selected statements: *“...who overcome by faith...sealed by that Holy Spirit of promise...church of the Firstborn...given all things...who have received of his fullness, and of his glory...shall dwell in the presence of God and his Christ for ever and ever...whose names are written in heaven...just men made perfect...whose bodies are celestial...”*

When we do not take God’s name in vain, He will not allow our lives to be lived in vain. May the glory and the honor of serving and loving our God be the cornerstone of every daily prayer we make to our heavenly King, our Father, our Lord, and our Friend.

By Apostle Ralph Damon

Worship #4

Remember The Sabbath Day To Keep It Holy

Scripture: D&C R-167: 4, 5

Hymn: #45 *“To Thy Temple We Repair”*

Every week we have the opportunity to celebrate with our Creator the day of rest, which He took after creating us. He made everything out of nothing in six days, and it was all good. Imagine the joy He had over all of us, and on the seventh day, He rested in that joy. Then, in His great love for mankind, the Lord invited us to share with Him in his blessed day of rest. However, this is more than a suggestion or a request. It is a commandment given by our loving Creator, that we must share with Him in His rest every week. Over a lifetime of Sabbaths, I have discovered some beautiful things I would like to present to you now.

First and foremost, in order to keep the Lord's special day holy, we must go to his sanctuary if we are at all able. There will be others who come to worship and adore our God and his only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. ***“Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness”*** (Psalm 96:9). Yes, we will find holiness there because he has promised that ***“Where two or three are gathered in my name, there will I be in the midst of them!”*** (Mathew 18: 20). For those who are unable to attend a service, there is ministry available on live streamed services.

Now I ask you, have you felt the beauty of holiness that his presence brings to our gatherings? My husband and I decided long ago to go straight home from church on Sundays, no stopping at the grocery, no eating at restaurants. “Why?” you might ask. Have you ever left a reunion camp and had the shock of coming out of holiness into the world? What a difference from the peace and fellowship of the camp! On the few times I found it absolutely necessary to stop at a store on the way home from church, my soul was overwhelmed, even abhorred at the carnival-like atmosphere I found there. That is because I had just come out of holiness, and I felt the shock of the

difference. I also felt a deep sadness for those who did not know that this is the Lord's special day.

What else have I learned about the Sabbath? A visit with friends or family can be a continuation of the holiness we bring home from church with us. God is love, and any expression of our love for one another invites the Holy Spirit to stay with us. Preparing food the day before, or just preparing a simple meal that does not require a lot of thought or effort, helps us maintain that attitude of worship. Even our bodies (including our brains) cannot rest when overloaded with lots of rich food and become sluggish with the extra load of digestive work to do.

Some other activities for the Lord's Day after church may include: reading your church bulletin, reviewing the notes you took of the ministry given in the family worship, the classes, the offertory, the sermon, etc. Children can also take part in this activity by filling out the form designed for this, which can be found in the foyer of your congregation. The best time for following up is while it is still fresh in your mind. If you wait several days, it may seem clouded and less important to you. You could also read the next week's Sunday school lesson. Then when you are rushed to get ready for the Lord's Day next week, you can just do a quick review. Ok, so now you have had a meal and a review, maybe you will catch a quick nap in your recliner chair. If it is not time to go to Sunday evening service yet, you might find something worthwhile on TV. A word of caution here: the TV has a lot of tempting things to offer that are not worthwhile, and the slipping away of the Holy Spirit can be almost unnoticeable, as television, movies, etc. overtake the thoughts.

When we were first married and living in Germany (a long time ago), we would go for walks on Sunday afternoons, enjoying the time off work, and taking in the beauty of that strange land. It made us glad to see other families out walking, and we greeted them with smiles. Sunday afternoons afford a special time for family or individual activities. Let your imagination go: whatever can bring joy and fellowship within the confines of the Spirit of holiness.

After years of attending Sunday evening services, I know that it is physically very difficult to get myself back to church after “resting” all afternoon. But the times I overcame this difficulty, I was blessed immensely with yet another encounter with the Holy Spirit, and almost always said, “I’m so glad I came.”

What about the “ox in the ditch”? The Israelites made an exception on the Sabbath to save the life of an animal. Our Lord Jesus in his earthly ministry made exceptions on the Sabbath to save the life or health of the ill or infirm. There may be work that cannot wait until Monday and can be performed with “singleness of heart.” But most tasks can wait one more day.

Our heavenly Father knows the weaknesses of his children, and he gives commandments and guidelines to help us make the most of our probationary time here on the earth. I am forever grateful that I have found His word and can continue to seek and draw near to Him in study, in prayer, and by the ministry of his holy priesthood and fellowship with his people.

By Diana Galbraith

Lesson #4

Remember The Sabbath Day To Keep It Holy

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work; But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work” (Exodus 20:8-10).

This scripture comes from what is known as the Ten Commandments. Hopefully, as you go through this article, you will develop new insights into this commandment that will draw you closer to the Lord and better prepare you to live with Him eternally.

Let us take a moment and look at the term “sabbath day.” For some people, this part of the commandment has created confusion. What day of the week should we use as our day to worship the Lord, our sabbath day? First, we need to remember that we named the days of the week, not God. In Deuteronomy 5:12-14 it states, ***“Keep the sabbath day to sanctify it, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee. Six days thou shalt labor, and do all thy work; But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God ...”*** No specific day of the week is given, simply, that we are to work for six days and then, on the seventh day, we are to rest from our labors and keep the sabbath day to sanctify it. For the Israelite people, their sabbath day has been and is on Saturday. It appears that the Lord made this covenant or commandment with the Israelite people to help them learn obedience and later to be a memorial, or remembrance, of their deliverance from their bondage in Egypt. The Lord made this covenant of the sabbath being on Saturday with Israel alone, not with all people (Exodus 31:13). After Jesus’ life, it became the practice of the early Christians to worship on Sunday, a day they referred to as the Lord’s Day. Worshipping on Sunday helps us remember the resurrection of Jesus which took place on Sunday.

We read in Doctrine and Covenants 119:7:

“And the Spirit saith further: Inasmuch as there has been much discussion in the past concerning the Sabbath of the Lord, the church is admonished that until further revelation is received, or the quorums of the church are assembled to decide concerning the law in the church articles and covenants, the Saints are to observe the first day of the week commonly called the Lord’s day, as a day of rest: as a day of worship, as given in the covenants and commandments ...”

The Lord revealed in modern revelation that we are to observe Sunday, the first day of the week, as our sabbath. Now that we have confirmed that our sabbath, our corporate worship of the Lord, is on Sunday, let us continue our studying of the commandment.

God has expressed the idea of remembering, or keeping or observing, the sabbath day to multiple peoples over the course of time. In the Book of Mormon, Alma directed his people in Mosiah 9: 56, 58:

“And he commanded them that they should observe the Sabbath day, and keep it holy, and also every day they should give thanks to the Lord their God. And there was one day in every week that was set apart that they should gather themselves together to teach the people, and to worship the Lord their God, and also as often as it was in their power, to assemble themselves together.”

We find in the New Testament the example of Jesus worshipping God at the synagogue. In Doctrine and Covenants 68:4d we read, ***“And the inhabitants of Zion shall observe the sabbath day to keep it holy.”*** The Lord has spoken through the ages of observing the sabbath day to keep it holy. He did not mention this once or to just one people. Keeping the sabbath day holy is obviously important to God, and therefore it should also be of

importance to us. We should not be careless in observing this commandment.

Why is keeping the sabbath day holy important? The simple and easiest answer would be to say, “because God said so.” However, that is a poor answer. The Lord had a reason behind this commandment. As stated earlier, for the Israelites this commandment was given to help them learn obedience. Learning to obey God is always beneficial and applies to us as well. The Lord spoke to Joseph Smith, Jr. these words:

“And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day; for verily this is a day appointed unto thee to rest from thy labors, and to pay thy devotions unto the Most High” (Doctrine and Covenants 59:2f).

Keeping the sabbath day holy is not just for God, it is also for us. When we keep the sabbath day holy, we help keep ourselves from the effects and influences of the world. How often has the Lord told us to “come out of Babylon?” Here is one significant way to do that.

Since keeping the sabbath day holy is so important, how do we go about doing that? Let us look at some of the things the Lord has told us to do and not do on the Lord’s Day. The Lord’s Day is to be a day of rest from our labors (Leviticus 23:3, D&C 59:2f, D&C 119:7c). God tells us that we are to labor/work for six days and on the seventh day we are to rest. He has stated that we are to rest from our labors and that we are to refrain from unnecessary work, but not to neglect needed work. The defining of what is necessary and unnecessary work will be left for the reader to decide, but remember the counsel that the Lord gave in Doctrine and Covenants 119:7d, to not judge harshly or make a man an offender for a word. It is also important to keep in mind when we are thinking about necessary and unnecessary work whether or not our unnecessary work becomes necessary work because of our poor

stewardship? The Lord told us to rest from our labors on Sunday, not rest from His labors. What might be God's work? I believe Christ told us this when He commented that His sheep are those who feed the hungry, clothed the naked, visited the sick and those imprisoned. Would not Sunday be a good time to call/write/email those who are shut-ins, sick or isolated? Would Sunday be the day to take food to those who are elderly or sick? Would Sunday be the day to help with a service project?

How else do we keep the sabbath day holy? We have been told to offer our oblations, our sacraments, and our devotions to the Most High God (D&C 59:2f-g) on the Lord's Day. God is asking for one day, the Lord's Day, to give Him our attention, our focus, our gifts, our purpose to Him. This is His day, not ours. We have six days in which to attend to our needs and wants, but for one day God asks for us to turn from ourselves and turn to Him. It is more than just going to church to pray, sing songs, be taught, and hear the preached word. It is what is in our hearts and minds. Are we focused on Him for the whole day and not just during church? Is our heart full of praise, thanksgiving, joy, and adoration, or is it full of worldly distractions? Is what we do, think and say focused on God or focused on us? Keeping the sabbath day holy is placing the King of Kings where He belongs, first in our attention, all day, on His day.

As with all commandments, the Lord blesses us when we obey. In Isaiah, He gives us a specific blessing when we keep the sabbath day holy. ***“If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day; and call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shalt honor him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, ...”*** (Isaiah 58:13-14). In Isaiah 56:6-7, we also read, ***“... everyone that keepeth the sabbath from polluting it, and taketh hold of my covenant; even them will I bring to my holy mountain, and make them joyful in my house of prayer...”***

God's blessing for keeping the sabbath day is to be brought to His holy mountain (the kingdom) and to be joyful in His house. What more incentive do we need in order to do our best at keeping the sabbath day holy? May the Lord bless us as we strive even more to keep the Lord's Day holy.

Questions:

1. Is it hard to keep the sabbath day holy? Why or why not?
2. What has changed in our society over the last several years to make keeping the sabbath day holy harder or easier, if anything?
3. What are some things we can do individually and as families to keep the sabbath day holy?
4. What are some things you are going to change in order to more fully keep the sabbath day holy?

By Marci Damon

Worship #5

Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother

Scripture:

“Honor thy father and thy mother, as the Lord thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee” (Deuteronomy 5:16).

Hymn: #515 *“O Give Us Homes Built Firm”*

The first four of the Ten Commandments teach us how to worship God who brought the children of Israel out of Egypt and led them to the Promised Land. The fifth commandment is the first of the remaining commandments addressing how we humans are supposed to treat one another. It is significant that this first duty is to our parents; each of us must honor them.

This commandment establishes that the family is central to God’s plan for mankind, within which honor is to be given to one’s father and mother. Interestingly, the word is not “love.” “Why not?” we might ask, since most children do love their parents and most parents love their children. Perhaps because “love” as commonly understood is an emotion and an attitude, and thus not enough for a stable home — parents must demand honor and respect, and children must give it to them or the home will be in chaos much of the time. Parents who are determined to be primarily their children’s friends and refuse to discipline and teach them are neglecting their duty. And although a son or daughter perhaps cannot “love” abusive or neglectful parents, they can still honor them for bringing them into the world.

This is the first commandment *with a promise*, as Paul reminds the Christians at Ephesus. The promise is long life in the land — life and land are both gifts from God to his people. We all want to grow up, and so listening to our mother or father say “look both ways before you cross the street,” “don’t hit your sister,” “watch out for snakes,” and so on, is the first and best way to literally

survive childhood. The central importance as a child grows to adulthood is learning to honor God as our parents teach us by precept and example. The first church is indeed the home.

The reason this commandment, in addition to the other nine, is still relevant today is because Jesus indicated so to later believers (Matthew 5:19-21). Jesus did not abolish the law, but rather came to fulfill it. We are to do our part in abiding by these commandments.

I was richly blessed to be raised by parents who loved the Lord and dedicated their lives to serving Him. I had a wonderful example in them and in both sets of grandparents. I honored them by respecting them and obeying them in my childhood. It was not difficult to obey them as a young child because their instructions were given with love and kindness. But as I grew older, sometimes my desire for independence and autonomy led me to ignore my parents' advice and seek another way. The ways of the world seemed more attractive and "fun." I soon found out that the cost was not worth it. Consequences for poor choices were *not* fun! Disappointing my mom and dad also brought sadness and regret. How much more must God weep over our waywardness? It was all part of maturing and finding my own way, of course. Their love and example were a strong foundation that I would then choose for myself. I am so thankful that I had their strong support throughout my life! By following their standards in raising my children as a parent myself, I have had so much joy in the experience of being a mom. I see the despair and brokenness in the world and in people's lives, and I honor my mother and father for all of their sacrifices and following Christ's teachings, so that I could learn of Him and know the promise of eternal life.

By Patti Jobe

Lesson #5

Honor Thy Father and Thy Mother

“Honor thy father and thy mother; that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee”
(Exodus 20:12).

In his commentary on the book of Exodus [*The Rational Bible: Exodus*], Dennis Prager, a Jewish Hebrew and Torah scholar, asserts that our parents, like God the Father, are creators. Thus, honoring our parents serves as a bridge from our obligations to God to our obligations to other humans. Prager explains, "We are to always recognize the importance of our parents, no matter how good or bad they are, they have a connection to us and we recognize their importance to us. That involves always showing them respect, just as we show God respect and recognize the importance of God in our life."

To honor means to revere; to respect; to treat with deference and submission; to manifest the highest veneration for, in words *and* actions; to entertain the most exalted thoughts of; to adore [Webster's 1828 Dictionary].

Consider a few of the many ways in which we may honor them in word, attitude, and deed. We honor them by the words we use when we talk to them and about them. We honor them by our attitude, how we react to them and how we act around them. We are to fear (Leviticus 19:3) and revere them (Hebrews 12:9). Finally, we honor them by our deeds and actions, obeying their rules and keeping their commandments and statutes. Solomon said to do otherwise is mocking them and despising them (Proverbs 30:17). The love of a parent for their child is an extremely strong force, perhaps no greater emotion in this world. By esteeming your parents, you testify of the honor and respect you have for them. Think of the toll taken upon the parents when the apple of their eye is disrespectful, disobedient, or worse. To live in obedience alleviates much of our parents' grief and sorrow which, in itself, is one of the greatest gifts we can give them!

To honor your father and mother includes obedience to their lawful commands; so Apostle Paul expounded:

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; That it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Ephesians 6:1-3).

Or in other words, "Children, obey your parents; come when they call you; go where they send you; do what they bid you; refrain from what they forbid you; and this, as children, cheerfully, and from a principle of love. If you do these things your chances of finding true joy and fulfillment in life are much greater!" Submission to parents' reprimands, instructions, and corrections – not only to the good and gentle, but also to the stern – as if to God. Organizing themselves with the advice, direction, and consent, of their parents; not alienating themselves from their creators or their teachings, but with their approval and respect.

The Hebrew word for *honor* is *Kavod*. It is the same word used for *glory* and also *to be important* or *to be weighty*. In one respect that is bearing a burden of a weighty issue. In other words, honoring our parents goes beyond childhood; it takes us into their old age where we bear their burdens when they become too infirmed to carry their burdens. Endeavoring, in everything, to be the comfort of their parents, and to make their old age easier for them, maintaining them when they stand in need of support, which our Savior makes to be particularly intended in this commandment (Matthew 15:1-6). The wording in the J.B. Phillips Translation doesn't change the meaning, but its modern English may make it a little clearer for us:

Then some of the scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem came and asked Jesus, ‘Why do your disciples break our ancient tradition and eat their food without washing their hands properly?’ ‘Tell me, ’replied Jesus, ‘why do you break God’s commandment through your tradition? For God said, “Honour your father and your mother”, and “He

who curses his father or mother, let him be put to death”. But you say that if a man tells his parents, “Whatever use I might have been to you is now given to God”, then he owes no further duty to his parents. And so your tradition empties the commandment of God of all its meaning. You hypocrites!

We see the importance of the matter as both Jesus and the Apostle Paul reaffirm this commandment and the promise that comes with it. Children are encouraged that their obedience will bring blessings and long life, while disobedient children who dishonor their parents are admonished that their behavior will bring punishment and shame (Leviticus 20:9; Deuteronomy 21:18; 27:16; Proverbs 10:1; 15:5; 20:20; 30:17; Matthew 15:4). Furthermore, it is given as one of the signs of the end times that widespread disobedience to parents will characterize our society. In 2 Timothy 3:2-3, Paul warns,

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good.

In Exodus 19, in the preface to the ten commandments, the Lord said His bringing them out of Egypt would come as a consequence of their obedience.

Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people; for all the earth is mine; And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation’... And all the people answered together, and said, “All that the Lord hath spoken we will do” (Exodus 19:5-6,8)

Earlier in Exodus chapter 6, He covenants with them: His delivering them into Canaan as another result of their submission. Canaan was that good land that they must have been thinking about and longing for now that they were in the wilderness. Upon arrival,

the Israelites must also remember that they were only there on their good behavior, and that if they did not conduct themselves well, their days should be shortened in that land. But here the Lord promises a long life in that good land particularly to the obedient children. In his commentary, Matthew Henry wrote “Those that are diligent in keeping this commandment, and do their duty to their parents, are most likely to have the comfort of that which their parents gather for them and leave to them; those that support their parents shall find that God, the common Father, will support them.” Apostle Paul expounds on this promise,

“Children, obey your parents in the Lord; for this is right. Honor thy father and mother; which is the first commandment with promise; that it may be well with thee, and thou mayest live long on the earth” (Ephesians 6:1-3).

Those who keep this commandment of God may rest assured that it shall be well with them, and that they shall live as long on the earth as The Almighty sees good for them, and that what they may seem to be short of on earth shall be more than made up in eternal life, the heavenly Canaan which God will give them. Again, from *Matthew Henry’s Complete Commentary*: “The great duty of children is to obey their parents, parents being the instruments of their being, God and nature having given them an authority to command, in subserviency to God; and, if children will be obedient to their pious parents, they will be in a fair way to be pious as they are. That obedience which God demands from their children, in their behalf, includes an inward reverence, as well as the outward expressions and acts. Obey in the Lord. Some take this as a limitation and understand it thus: “as far as is consistent with your duty to God.” We must not disobey our heavenly Father in obedience to earthly parents; for our obligation to God is prior and superior to all others. I take it rather as a reason: “Children, obey your parents; for the Lord has commanded it: obey them therefore for the Lord’s sake, and with an eye to him.” Or it may be a particular specification of the general duty: “Obey your parents, especially in those things which relate to the Lord. Your parents teach you good manners, and therein you must obey them. They teach you what is

for your health, and in this you must obey them: but the chief things in which you are to do it are the things pertaining to the Lord." Religious parents charge their children to keep the ways of the Lord (Genesis 18:18). They command them to be found in the way of their duty towards God, and to take heed of those sins most incident to their age; in these things especially, they must see that they be obedient. There is a general reason given: For this is right, there is a natural equity in it, God has enjoined it, and it highly becomes Christians. It is the order of nature that parents command and children obey. Though this may seem a hard saying, yet it is duty, and it must be done by such as would please God and approve themselves to him. For the proof of this the apostle quotes the law of the fifth commandment, which Christ was so far from designing to abrogate and repeal that he came to confirm it, as appears by his vindicating it, Matt 15:4, etc. Honour thy father and mother (v. 2), which honour implies reverence, obedience, and relief and maintenance, if these be needed. The apostle adds, which is the first commandment with promise, that it may be well with thee, etc., (v. 3). Observe, Whereas the promise in the commandment has reference to the land of Canaan, the apostle hereby shows that this and other promises which we have in the Old Testament relating to the land of Canaan are to be understood more generally. That you may not think that the Jews only, to whom God gave the land of Canaan, were bound by the fifth commandment, he here gives it a further sense, that it may be well with thee, etc. Outward prosperity and long life are blessings promised to those who keep this commandment. This is the way to have it well with us, and obedient children are often rewarded with outward prosperity. Not indeed that it is always so; there are instances of such children who meet with much affliction in this life: but ordinarily obedience is thus rewarded, and, where it is not, it is made up with something better. Observe, 1. The gospel has its temporal promises, as well as spiritual ones. 2. Although the authority of God be sufficient to engage us in our duty, yet we are allowed to have respect to the promised reward: and, 3. Though it contains some temporal advantage, even this may be considered as a motive and encouragement to our obedience."

If you have children of your own, consider another one of the positive effects your obedience to this commandment will have on you. How will their impersonation of your actions be a benefit to you in your last days? Indeed, there are many reasons why honoring our parents will result in a long life. For me, their instruction kept me away from many of the dangers of life. I have my parents to thank for that, and I have them to thank for my life. But I have something else for which to thank them. By introducing me to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and setting the example by living out His teachings, they helped me to understand the importance of establishing that personal relationship with Jesus that leads to eternal life. They planted a love for God in me that I pray eventually leads to my full surrender. In so doing, I shall surely be blessed with as long a life as He sees fit to give me, but more importantly, an eternity in God's most Holy presence.

QUESTIONS:

1. What is the type and shadow aspect of this commandment?
2. What are some of the practical aspects of this commandment?
3. How passionate about this 5th commandment was Jesus in his rebuke of the Pharisees?
4. What are some of the effects on our own community, as well as society as a whole, as we see Paul's warnings come to pass in these latter days?

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES:

Luke 2:40-52

Rom 1:28-32

Colossians 3:20

I Nep 5:156, 163-167

D&C 111: 4d

I Tim 5:4

By High Priest Eddie Gates

Worship #6 Thou Shalt Not Kill

Scripture: Exodus 20:13, Deuteronomy 5:17, Mosiah 7:120

“O Jesus I have promised to serve thee to end; be thou forever near me, My Master and my Friend; I shall not fear the battle if thou art by my side, nor wander from the pathway if thou wilt be my Guide.”

Hymn: #423, “O Jesus, I have promised”

“Thou shalt not kill” (Exodus 20:13). This is a commandment I could easily follow. I was raised in the church, but I do not remember any discussion on this particular commandment. It is what it says.

As I searched the scriptures for more information on this subject, I found several verses in Matthew 5:23 and III Nephi 5:68-69.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time that, thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment of God” (III Nephi 5, 69).

I have never been in a position where my life has been threatened, and I thank the Lord for that. People are put in different places and circumstances that I do not know or understand, but I hope they pray for wisdom and courage. James 4:2 says,

“Ye lust and have not; ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain, ye fight and war; yet ye have not, because ye ask not.”

The account of Nephi slaying Laban comes to my mind in I Nephi 1:110-115:

“And it came to pass that I was constrained by the spirit, that I should kill Laban; but I said in my heart, never at

any time have I shed the blood of man and I shrunk and would that I might not slay him. And it came to pass that the spirit said unto me again, slay him, for the Lord hath delivered him unto thy hands. Behold the Lord slayeth the wicked to bring forth his righteous purposes. It is better that one man should perish, than that a nation should dwindle and perish in unbelief.”

I feel the sixth commandment deals with the Lord’s concern for our relationships with our fellow human beings. Peace continues to escape us in a world where killing is often used for political or personal gain.

“And again, every person who belongeth to this church of Christ shall observe to keep all of the commandments and covenants of the church. And it shall come to pass, that if any persons among you shall kill, they shall be delivered up and dealt with according to the laws of the land” (D&C sec 42:21a-b).

“And now behold, I speak unto the church, Thou shalt not kill; and he that kills shall not have forgiveness in this world; nor in the world to come. And again I say, Thou shalt not kill, but he that killeth shall die” (D&C sec 42:6-7a).

By Robin Bayless

Lesson #6

Thou Shalt Not Kill

The Ten Commandment tablets were kept in the Ark of the Covenant. The first tablet was thought to contain the first five commandments. The first four of those five were about our relationship with God, and the fifth was our relationship to our parents. The second tablet was believed to start with the sixth commandment that we will look at in this study, ***“Thou Shalt Not Kill.”*** There are many scriptures that I used to prepare for this commandment.

This is only an abbreviated list and the basic ones I began with. As we study other scriptures on this subject, I will announce them then.

Genesis 9:9-12

Exodus 20:13, 21:12-26, 22:1-3

Numbers 35:9-34

Deuteronomy 19:2-13

Matthew 5:23-28, 40-50

At first sight ***“Thou Shalt Not Kill”*** seems pretty straight forward; however, as I began to study this commandment, it became a lot more complicated to understand. For instance, is there a difference between a pre-mediated murder versus an accidental killing of a person? How about a crime of passion? Or the taking of a life in defending yourself, your family, or your country (also known as war)? How about if you do not really carry out the deed of killing someone, but you despise or hate a person? What about if we killed a person’s spirit, by belittling them or running them down? And what if through the killing of that person’s spirit, they end up taking their own life (suicide)? Would we be as responsible as they are? And what about the taking of the life of an animal? Is that part of ***“Thou***

shalt not kill”? While I will endeavor to answer some of these questions, I will not answer them all, but will leave some for your research.

“Thou Shalt Not Kill” is one of the shortest commandments of the ten. It is only four words, but oh how it raises so many questions. So, as we work through this commandment, let us ask our heavenly Father for understanding, discernment, and insight.

The scriptures lay out and deal with the protection of life: first dealing with bodily harm to man and then dealing with harming animals. This reinforces the love and concern that God has for all living creatures. When one of His animals, in the Old Testament, had to be sacrificed in their innocence to atone for a transgression committed by a man against God, it grieves God for this animal to die. All those millions upon millions of animal sacrifices that occurred century after century were no small thing for God. Each one of those sacrificed lives mattered a great deal to Him. In Hebrews 10:1-18 we find the reason for these animal sacrifices; it was a temporary covering of sins for the Israelites and a type and shadow for the sacrifice that His son, Jesus Christ, would make on the cross in the future. And so, we might think that our study would logically begin with what the Lord gave Moses when he came down out of the mountain with the Ten Commandments, but I would suggest that we should begin earlier than that.

Animals and fowl of the air had a relationship that was, to begin with, very docile and domesticated as God told these animals and fowl, in Genesis 2:25-27, to come before Adam and be named. We also learned, in verse 26 that each one of these animals and fowl had a living soul because God formed them out of the ground and breathed into each one the breath of life. We found out in Genesis that because Adam and Eve had sinned and found themselves naked that God had to kill some of these creatures to clothe them (Genesis 3:27). So, we know that the

killing of animals began after Adam and Eve were kicked out of the Garden to fend for themselves in the world. They were told in Genesis 4:5 that they were to offer the firstlings of their flocks, for an offering unto the Lord. We see, clear up to the time of Noah and the ark, that animals remained in a docile state as they came to the ark and boarded two by two. Nothing is mentioned here about animosity towards man or other animals. So, pretty much man and animals were living peaceably together at this point even though man had to slaughter some for-blood sacrifices to the Lord.

However, that all changed after the flood. In Genesis 9:8 we see that “*the fear of you (man) and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, every fowl of the air, upon all that moves upon the earth and also the fishes of the sea.*” The Lord gave us all of these creatures for food (Genesis 9:9); however, there was one stipulation and that was that man would not drink of the blood of animals (Genesis 9:10 and Deuteronomy 12:16, 22-25). Blood was only to be used for sacrifice and never for human consumption, for blood, which is the root of life, was simply too holy for man to partake of it. Doctrine and Covenants 49:5d-f makes these points quite clear. I found in a book called the “Teaching of the Prophet Joseph Smith” (pg. 78) when he and his small army of saints were making the trek back to Missouri in May of 1834, by revelation, to face armed conflict with the persecutors of the members of the church in Missouri, to give their lives or to take lives in defense of others, if necessary. However, the Prophet prevented them even from killing three rattlesnakes that had been found in camp. He told them to leave the snakes alone, and Joseph exhorted the brethren not to kill a serpent, bird, or an animal of any kind during our journey unless it became necessary in order to preserve themselves from hunger. Joseph then went on to comment that men must be harmless before the brute creation, and when men lose their vicious dispositions and cease to destroy the animal race, the lion and the lamb can dwell together, and the sucking child can play with the serpent in safety.

You might ask, why spend so much time talking about animals here? Wasn't God talking about humans when he gave the commandment not to kill? Absolutely, but we have seen that even the shedding of an animal is grievous to God. So, also, we see this carried over into man. In Genesis 9:12 we are told that *"...whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed; for man shall not shed the blood of man."* Up to this point God had dealt with murder in a very different way. Now if a man kills another man, and this refers to murder (as we will see later), he should be killed himself. Remember the penalty for Cain killing his brother Abel? It was banishment from God. God even went so far as to put a sign upon him declaring he was off limits to anyone who was tempted to take matters into their own hands and harm Cain. Mere separation from God was punishment enough at that time. We are finding, in these passages, God establishing the principle of earthly government. Civil law was hereby created with God delegating some of His authority to man. In Rom 13:3-4 we find that rulers are ministers of God as revengers *"to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil."* This is better known to us in present day as capital punishment."

In Exodus 20:13 we find the commandment, **"Thou shalt not kill."** The word kill is used 146 times in our scriptures. It is used 125 of those 146 times in the Bible. However, of those 125 times there are only 4 (Exodus 20:13, Numbers 35:27, Deuteronomy 4:42, and Deuteronomy 5:17) that use the Hebrew word "ratsach" and Exodus 20:13 is one of them. We are somewhat limited in the English language as our words can mean many different things. Kill means kill, right? Well, in the Hebrew language kill has nine distinct meanings. "Ratsach" refers to unjust killing and ONLY unjust killing, whether intentional or unintentional. It does not mean to execute as in carrying out a completely lawful and judicial sentence as we talked about earlier. It does not mean killing an enemy in battle or killing an intruder in defense of yourself or another.

“Ratsach” is an action word (verb). A good translation for “ratsach” would be “to dash in pieces, to murder a human being.” So, the word kill, used in these four scriptures, referred to above, is one translation from Hebrew to English, but a much better word would be murder. Murder, as the way the Western world of today thinks of murder or manslaughter, is exactly as this verse (Exodus 20:13) and the other three intend.

What is so ironic is that as history moves along, mankind has begun to think of himself as becoming more civilized and humane, and so most societies have abolished the death penalty. This is a direct rebellion against God’s law (Genesis 9:12), and in fact by not taking the murderer’s life according to the Lord’s justice system, human life is cheapened. There is no latitude to commute a murderer’s death sentence. Today it is common practice to commute death sentences to life in prison, payment to victim’s families, or abolishing capital punishment altogether. This, however, is not a modern-day theme. It dates to the time of Christ. The imposition of the death penalty was extremely rare, and most Christians today think it was because the Romans took away the right of the Jews to carry out executions. In reality all the Jewish courts had to do was to go to the local Roman authorities with their decision in a capital offense, and the Roman governor would review the case and, unless he had serious doubts (as in Jesus’s case), the Romans would approve and carry out the execution for the Jewish religious authorities. In this country, many states have abolished the death penalty, and the legal system makes it almost impossible in states where it is allowed. Bloodshed (murders) have not decreased but have continued to rise. Capital Punishment is a political electrifying topic, and one that I think each individual needs to come to terms with through study and discernment. I also like what one of the women brought forth as I was listening to their class and that was that “man’s law” does not always align with “God’s law,” and of course, we know whose law will win, and who will be sitting on the judgment seat that we all have to come before.

So, we have talked about animal killings, murder, and manslaughter. These were premeditated killings where someone intentionally meant to take a life. What about when someone did not mean to kill a person? We will tackle that next.

I think an unintentional killing is pretty well addressed in Exodus 21:12-14 where it distinguishes between murdering a person or accidentally killing a person. To start with it says that if you smite a man and he dies, then the person doing that act should die. In verse 14 it says that if it was premeditated that person should also die. However, in verse 13 it tells us if a man did not lay in wait, but killed someone, that he did not have to be slain. I think here about several scriptures that specifically relate to this. So, these verses clearly separate a premeditated killing from an accidental killing. In Exodus we see through Moses' commandment that 3,000 people were slain, and earlier Moses had slain an Egyptian that was beating up a Hebrew. Or how about the one in the Book of Mormon where Nephi slew Laban to retrieve the plates. None of these instances plus many more in the scriptures were premeditated or carried out under hate. When the laws (613) were given to the Hebrews, one of those laws was that the person who killed someone unintentionally was given a safe place (city of refuge) to go (Exodus 21:13 and Deuteronomy 19:3-7) and in Joshua 20 we see the assignment of these cities of refuge. This is just another example of how the Lord gave the Hebrews laws that governed every part of their lives.

I think as far as war goes that the scriptures are very clear. Although it is quite clear, to me, that God would rather see us come to another conclusion. There is clear evidence in the scriptures that there comes a time for war, to carry out God's judgements. In Proverbs 20:18 we are told ***“Every purpose is established by counsel; and with good advice make war.”*** We are also told in Proverbs 24:6 ***“For by wise counsel thou shalt make thy war; and in multitude of counselors there is safety.”*** We find in Mosiah 6:27 ***“And I caused that there should be weapons of war made, of every kind, that thereby I might***

have weapons for my people, against the time the Lamanites should come up again to war against my people.” Does that mean that war will always be needed? Absolutely not, because after the return of Christ we see in 2 Nephi 8:20

“And he shall judge among the nations and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their swords into plow shares, and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.”

So unfortunately, until our Savior Jesus Christ returns to this earth, I think there will be wars and rumors of wars, and we will have to deal with them.

In talking about the taking of one’s life (suicide), it is very difficult for me to comprehend. Many families must deal with this issue and indeed my own family has seen bouts of it over forty years ago when one of my cousins took his own life. It is so easy for us to point fingers and condemn; after all, we are told to endure to the end, right? However, when we fall into the error of judging others, we may tend to write off the violator of the sixth commandment as a lost soul. However only God knows the minds and hearts of His children. Judgment for these sins is not always cut and dried. Some commentators point out that mental, emotional, or physical factors may play roles in suicide that we do not understand. Our responsibilities are to be as compassionate as possible in all cases and to leave the judging to the Lord. We should reach out in love every way we can. Sometimes our response may be restricted to prayers on behalf of those who grieve.

To close, it will be our faith in God, in the midst of a violent world. Knowing the nature of our God we will find strength to face this world and the things of it. Remember God sent his son to die for the sins of this world, but it’s more personal than that. He died for my sins, He died for your sins, He died for our sins. He is a righteous and loving God and again quoting from

the Prophet Joseph Smith Jr; “Our heavenly Father is more liberal in His views, and boundless in His mercies and blessings, than we are ready to believe or receive, and, at the same time, is more terrible to the workers of iniquity, more awful in the executions of His punishment, and more ready to detect every false way, than we are apt to suppose Him to be.” We need to put everything in God’s hands.

By Elder Rick Terry

Worship #7 Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery

Scripture:

“Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else; and he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not, he shall be cast out. Thou shalt not commit adultery, and he that committeth adultery and repenteth not, shall be cast out; but he that hath committed adultery and repents with all his heart and forsaketh, and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive” (D&C 42:7d-e)

Hymn: #502 *“Lord, Thy Mercy Now Entreating”*

When the woman was brought to Jesus to be condemned for adultery, Jesus told the accusers: ***“He that is without sin among you, let him be first to cast a stone at her.”*** As Jesus wrote in the sand, the accusers sneaked away, and Jesus asked the woman: ***“Where are thy accusers – has no man condemned thee? She answered, “No man, Lord.” Then Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn thee – Go and sin no more”*** (John 8:10-11).

True repentance merits forgiveness. This woman’s repentance was evident. She glorified God and believed on the name of Jesus; her life changed because of her encounter with Jesus, the giver of love and light.

God created man and woman to be a companion one to the other. God also created rules and gave commandments for them to abide by, so they could live in harmony with Him. Because God is Love and loves His creation, the gift of Love was poured out on mankind, and we learned to love because He first loved us. Love is beautifully described in 1 Corinthians 13 –the hymn of love:

Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful or proud or rude. It does not demand its own way. It is not

irritable and it keeps no record of being wronged. It does not rejoice about injustice but rejoices whenever the truth wins out. Love never gives up, never loses faith, is always hopeful, and endures through every circumstance! (New Living Translation)

It is the goal of people who choose to follow Christ to love God and to love their fellow men. It is with this desire to love that we choose to marry and develop a responsible, sacrificial, appreciative, and respectful love for our partner – hopefully always abiding in God’s design that marriage is a sacred covenant between a man and a woman and God. The covenant that the church has recognized asks “Do you both mutually agree to be each other’s companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition – that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other and from all others, during your lives?” When both have answered “Yes,” the person officiating pronounces them husband and wife in the name of the Lord, Jesus Christ, and then adds a prayer that God may add His blessings and help them to fulfill their covenants from henceforth and forever.

Helen Steiner Rice has written a poem entitled “What is Love?” The poem says:

“What is love? No words can define it, it’s something so great – Only God could design it...Wonder of Wonders, beyond man’s conception, And only in God can love find true perfection, For love means much more than small words can express; what *man* calls love is so very much less than the beauty and depth and the true richness of God’s gift to mankind—His compassionate love . . . For love has become a word that’s misused, Perverted, distorted and often abused, To speak of “light romance” or some affinity for A passing attraction that is seldom much more than a mere interlude of inflamed fascination, A romantic fling of no lasting duration...But love is enduring and patient and kind, It judges all things with the heart, not the mind, And love can transform the most commonplace Into beauty and splendor

and sweetness and grace...For love is unselfish, giving more than it takes, And no matter what happens love never forsakes. It's faithful and trusting and always believing, Guileless and honest and never deceiving...Yes, love is beyond what man can define, For love is immortal and God's gift is divine."

The first commandment given was that we should love God. When we love God, that love expands to our fellowman. The Ten Commandments are those that most everyone has heard of and may even be able to recite them. The seventh commandment in this list says, "***Thou shalt not commit adultery.***" It is sandwiched between "***Thou shalt not kill***" and "***Thou shalt not steal.***" The second half of the Ten Commandments is often mentioned together as "sins of the people that bring judgment." Adultery is the willful choice of breaking the marriage covenant and is strictly denounced throughout the scriptures, and judgment is always the result. Many scriptures list whoredoms, which always seem to include adultery. Adulterers sometimes excuse their actions by saying they were unhappy in their marriage. The author, Henry Drummond, said, "Instead of *allowing* yourself to be unhappy, just let your love grow as God wants it to grow. Seek goodness in others. Love more people more. Love them more impersonally, more unselfishly, without thought of return..."

The greatest thing of all is love – probably nothing pierces God's heart more deeply than our not reflecting His image of love. Everything that is an enemy of love, is sin. When we are unloving, without even realizing it, we can crush people's spirits. The root of an unloving nature is self-love. We love ourselves too much, and our love for God is too little. Our lack of love for God – our first love – is the real reason for our sin of being unloving to our spouse in our covenant marriage. To overcome this sin, we must repent. Jesus wants to free us from our unlovingness as well as our misguided love for worldly things.

Love not the world, neither the things of the world...For all in the world that is of the lusts of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever
(1 John 2:15-17)

By Brenda Evans

Lesson #7

Thou Shalt Not Commit Adultery

Thou shalt not commit adultery (Exodus 20:14).

Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none: For I, the Lord God, delighteth in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me: thus saith the Lord of hosts (Jacob 2:36-37).

Social Downfall

Sadly, adultery has become part of the fabric of life in countries and cultures across the globe. The complete sinfulness of adultery remains largely overlooked and even camouflaged by less offensive terms such as “having an affair” or “stepping out” or “enjoying a fling.” Thus cheating is often glamorized, legitimized or fantasized by those who are spiritually deluded. Self-centered persons often fail to perceive the cost and permanent damage to a relationship caused by infidelity.

Commitment

Do you mutually agree to be each other’s companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other and from all others so long as you both shall live? This is the covenant and promise made by a couple in the sacrament of marriage. (The Priesthood Manual)

Since our first parents were brought together by marriage in the Garden of Eden, the eternal principle of covenant has bound spouses. The temporal bounds of the marriage are for our earthly existence, but the love and promise are spiritually celestial by nature. Love is eternal, but marriage is for this world (Matthew 22:29). The three parties of this covenant are Jesus Christ, the husband and the wife. We can trust our Lord to sustain and nurture our marriage by His Spirit, but can He trust us to keep our promise to each other and especially to Him?

Choices and Consequences

Jesus identified the sin of adultery as being conceived in the mind (Matthew 5:30). When a spouse is tempted with a lustful thought and chooses to nurture rather than immediately forsake it, they commit adultery in their *heart*. When they engage in any form of romantic, intimate, or sexual activity with someone other than their legal marriage partner, they commit adultery against their *spouse*. Infidelity also occurs when a married individual divorces their spouse for non-scriptural reasons and marries another.

In cases of adultery, God's heart always desires for the adulterer or adulteress to repent and the violated spouse to forgive, so Jesus can restore the marriage relationship. Several factors must be present for this to occur, beginning with the adulterer or adulteress demonstrating their repentance through words and honorable actions consistently over an extended period. This visible repentance helps rebuild the shattered trust caused by infidelity and facilitates the spouse's healing and forgiveness.

With God's grace and intervention, both spouses should make every effort to work through the devastation caused by adultery and affair-proof their marriage for the future. When this is not possible, or the damage is too severe for the violated spouse to overcome, God has lovingly and graciously provided an allowance for divorce as a last resort (3 Nephi 5: 80). This type of scriptural divorce releases the violated spouse from their marriage covenant and renders them free to remarry without committing adultery themselves.

Whether a marriage survives the aftermath of infidelity or not, the violated spouse should continue making strides toward forgiving their betrayer. Even in cases where the adulterous spouse has not repented, the violated spouse should still work toward forgiving them in their heart to keep bitterness and resentment from becoming permanent residents. Otherwise,

anger and hostility will hold them captive for life and affect all of their future relationships. It has been well said that harboring unforgiveness is like drinking poison, then hoping the other person dies.

Questions:

1. In Jacob (BOM) Who did God commend for their family commitment?
2. Does God give us the option to refuse to forgive our spouse?
3. Is marriage eternal?
4. Are lustful thoughts a sin or just a weakness?
5. How does God define marriage?

A study resource is at the Remnant Church website (theremnantchurch.com) RGCR1064 “Statement on Marriage, Family & Moral Values”

Answers:

1. Lamanites
2. You must forgive all others
3. Marriage is for this life
4. Sin of the heart
5. A life-long covenant between one man and one woman

By Bishop Dan Keleher

Worship #8

Thou Shall Not Steal

Scriptures:

“Thou shall not steal and he that stealeth and will not repent shall be cast out” (D&C 42:7b).

“And they durst not steal for fear of the law” (Alma 1:27).

“Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another” (Leviticus 19:11).

Hymn: #405 *“Guide Us, O Thou Great Jehovah”*

As you can see by these scriptures that stealing is not acceptable in keeping Christ’s law. But if you truly repent and cease to do it again, God does forgive you if you are truly repentant. In the 1908 dictionary “stealing” is defined as “to take and carry away feloniously, as the personal goods of another.” To constitute stealing or theft, the taking must be felonious, that is, with the intent to take what belongs to another, and without consent.

Felonious: adj. - malicious; indicating or proceeding from a depraved heart or evil purpose; villainous; traitorous; perfidious; as a felonious deed. In law, proceeding from an evil heart or purpose; done with the deliberate purpose to commit a crime.

Satan tried to steal God’s authority in heaven, and he also tried to steal our agency from each of us. People who write books sometimes steal other people’s ideas or thoughts and use them as their own which is called plagiarism.

Kyle Rittenhouse is a caring and helpful seventeen-year-old who saw that the police had been told to stand down while his community was ravished and burned. He wanted to help save the businesses of his community. The owner of a used car lot whose cars had been torched the night before asked him if he would like to help protect what was left of his business. He saw that some of those who were rioting were carrying guns, so to protect himself, he took his

rifle with him. He was an EMT, and he thought he could use those skills to help those who had been hurt. He also helped remove graffiti from some of the buildings. The mob tried to steal his gun, they chased him and tried to steal his life. They tried to steal his right to self-defense. They tried to steal his right to the First Amendment. The press tried to steal Kyle's Second Amendment by lying about crossing the state line with a gun, which was not true. The media tried to steal Kyle's good name and bashed his character by calling him a White supremacist, which he was not. The media tried to steal a policeman's right to the First Amendment when he donated to the Kyle Rittenhouse's Go Fund Me fund, and he lost his job because of the comments he made about defending Kyle's situation.

As you can see, there are many ways that one can steal from another person or group and change the outcome or effect the situation. God has told us to repent and keep His Commandments and sin no more. That is the key: repent and come unto Christ.

By Geri Madden

Lesson #8

Thou Shalt Not Steal

Looking at the Doctrine and Covenants section 42:7b, this commandment reads: *“Thou shalt not steal; and he that stealeth and will not repent, shall be cast out.”*

“Thou shalt not steal” was the eighth commandment given to Moses on the second set of tablets, written by the hand of God, after the people had rejected the greater law by their acts of idolatry. Let us read in Exodus 34:1-2:

1. And the Lord said unto Moses, Hew thee two other tables of stone, like unto the first, and I will write upon them also, the words of the law, according as they were written at the first on the tables which thou brakest; but it shall not be according to the first, for I will take away the priesthood out of their midst; therefore my holy order, and the ordinances thereof, shall not go before them; for my presence shall not go up in their midst, lest I destroy them.
2 But I will give unto them the law as at the first, but it shall be after the law of a carnal commandment; for I have sworn in my wrath, that they shall not enter into my presence, into my rest, in the days of their pilgrimage. Therefore do as I have commanded thee; and be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto Mount Sinai, and present thyself there to me in the top of the mount.

Further understanding of this is found in D&C 83:4a-c:

4a Now this Moses plainly taught to the children of Israel in the wilderness and sought diligently to sanctify his people, that they might behold the face of God;
4b but they hardened their hearts and could not endure his presence; therefore, the Lord in his wrath (for his anger was kindled against them) swore that they should not enter

into his rest while in the wilderness, which rest is the fullness of his glory.

4c Therefore, he took Moses out of their midst and the holy priesthood also; and the lesser priesthood continued, which priesthood holdeth the key of the ministering of angels and the preparatory gospel, which gospel is the gospel of repentance, and of baptism, and the remission of sins, and the law of carnal commandments.

Praise be to God! The holy priesthood was again brought by Jesus Christ as he established his church here on the earth. And in these last days his restored church was brought again into renewal through the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. We are given the understanding of how the secular is to become sacred, through his prophet Frederick N. Larson. Doctrine and Covenants R- 152:4: ***“I, the Lord, am well pleased with the Presiding Bishopric and the Order of Bishops in the execution of the Temporal Law of the Church.”*** Counsel given in previous revelation, including Sections 128, 129 and R-148 of the Doctrine and Covenants is sound law authorizing the Bishopric to implement the temporal affairs of the Church, including tithing, offerings, consecration and surplus. To that end, let the Bishopric with the temporal law and the First Presidency with the spiritual law come together under the celestial law, such consummation making the secular become sacred and culminating in the attainment of the Kingdom of God on earth.

May it be suggested that this commandment (Thou shalt not steal) could also apply to Malachi chapter 3:8-10 of the Holy Scriptures:

8. Will a man rob God? Yet ye have robbed me. But ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tithes and offerings.

9 Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, even this whole nation.

10 Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in mine house, and prove me now herewith, saith

the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

May it be further suggested that stealing is not only taking what is not ours to take, but also not yielding our hearts to receive of God's abundance. Doctrine and Covenants R-145:6-7b:

6a. As given in previous revelation: 'It is yet day when all can work. The night will come when for many of my people opportunity to assist will have passed.'

b. This counsel is even more portentous now than then and the mantle of leadership will be yours to prepare my people before the night comes.

7a. The Spirit says further: Continue, my faithful Remnant, in the spirit of unity, to strengthen your faith, to spread the love of Christ to a sin-sick world, to study to understand the fullness of my Gospel, and if you do, you will be blessed beyond measure.

7b. The Kingdom of God awaits your response. Make ready for the Bridegroom. Amen.

As this servant began to understand what stealing means, as it pertains to God's Kingdom, I realized that although we are certainly forbidden to take anything that does not belong to us, this commandment can be taken to a higher level. That is, if we break any of God's commandments, we may actually be stealing from the coming Kingdom of God on earth. Please see Doctrine and Covenants section 64:7a: "***Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days.***"

Also in Doctrine and Covenants R-148:4a we read:

Great blessings will come to you, my faithful remnant, as you implement the temporal portion of my Celestial Law now to be set before you by the Bishop. He, and those who counsel him, are a blessing unto me, and their guidance will assist in leading you into the paths of my Zion. Much will be required of you, but great will be the blessings.

8a If thou lovest me, thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments.

8b And, behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support, that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken;

8c and inasmuch as ye impart of your substance unto the poor, ye will do it unto me, and it shall be laid before the bishop of my church and his counselors, two of the elders, or high priests, such as he shall or has appointed and set apart for that purpose.

9a And it shall come to pass that after they are laid before the bishop of my church, and after that he has received these testimonies concerning the consecration of the properties of my church, that they cannot be taken from the church, agreeable to my commandments

9b every man shall be made accountable unto me a steward over his own property, or that which he has received by consecration, inasmuch as is sufficient for himself and family

10a And again, if there shall be properties in the hands of the church, or any individuals of it, more than is necessary for their support, after this first consecration, which is a residue, to be consecrated unto the bishop, it shall be kept to administer unto those who have not, from time to time, that every man who has need may be amply supplied, and receive according to his wants.

10b Therefore, the residue shall be kept in my storehouse, to administer to the poor and the needy, as shall be appointed by the high council of the church, and the bishop and his council, and for the purpose of purchasing lands for the public benefit of the church, and building houses of worship

10c and building up of the New Jerusalem which is hereafter to be revealed, that my covenant people may be

gathered in one, in that day when I shall come to my temple. And this I do for the salvation of my people.

May we as members of the Remnant Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints become one in spirit and in truth. May we continue to follow the path Christ trod for us, through His Holy Word and in our daily lives. Please see Book of Mormon, third book of Nephi, chapter 13:55-56:

55. And ye may know that the words of the Lord, which have been spoken by the holy prophets, shall all be fulfilled; and ye need not say that the Lord delays his coming unto the children of Israel

56. And ye need not imagine in your hearts that the words which have been spoken are vain, for behold, the Lord will remember his covenant which he hath made unto his people of the house of Israel.

Let us conclude with latter day revelation from God through his prophet Terry W. Patience Doctrine and Covenants R-169:1a, 2, 3a:

1a. As you my people continue to prepare for my coming, I ask you to take rest in the Spirit that guides you. Trust in me as righteousness is brought forth among the children of men. Continue to look up. Continue to desire the Kingdom and to do as I have commanded you in days of the past and in the days that you are in.

2. Know that I am. Know that I am with you. Know that I am coming soon. Work to be with me, your Savior, Jesus Christ.

3a. In the past, you have been asked to read, study, and obey. Continue to be more diligent in this commandment. It will be of great benefit to you as the days ahead become more troublesome.

Thank you, and may the Lord richly bless you as we walk together the path of sacrifice; for His Kingdom to come, and His will to be done on earth, as it is done in heaven. Amen.

Questions:

1. In what ways might a person be robbing God?
2. What qualifies us to eat the good of the land of Zion?
3. How has the Lord provided for Zion to have no poor among them?
4. What do you think are the qualities of a citizen of Zion?

By Bishop Ben Galbraith

Worship #9

Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness Against Thy Neighbor

Scripture:

And ye have set your hearts upon the riches and the vain things of this world, for the which ye do murder, and plunder, and steal, and bear false witness against your neighbor, and do all manner of iniquity; and for this cause wo shall come unto you except ye shall repent (Helaman 3:23).

When I was asked to write a devotional about the commandment, ***“Thou shalt not bear false witness,”*** which is the ninth commandment in the 20th chapter of Exodus verse 16, I made it a matter of prayer as to how to approach this subject.

How many times have we been having a conversation with a friend, and they have asked something like, “What have you heard about so and so?” Unfortunately for me, it has been more often than I would like. In section 105 of the Doctrine & Covenants we read:

Thy voice shall be a rebuke unto the transgressor; and at thy rebuke let the tongue of the slanderer cease its perverseness. 5a. Be thou humble, and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers. I know thy heart, and have heard thy prayers concerning thy brethren (D&C 105:4c-5a)

This verse cautions us about how to respond to a person speaking falsely or slanderously. We must be very careful in how we respond in situations such as these. Why are they asking? What are they trying to discover or expose about that person? Would this be considered gossip, which is something we are commanded not to participate in?

My twin sister Sara has a very good way of responding when she is faced with this situation. She simply says that she does not engage in gossip and changes the subject of the conversation. Although this is a very good and honest way of

responding, there have been instances where it has caused some people to withdraw their friendship from her.

I have to confess that I have listened to others that have spoken about certain individual's private actions. Actions that should have been known only to those persons involved and the Lord. Those conversations should have been left unsaid. Even if we do not spread the gossip, it affects how we respond to that person that it was about, whether they are a member of the congregation or a member of the priesthood. If it was about a member of the priesthood, it affects how we respond to their ministry. We are all guilty of sin in our lives. We must not judge others lest we be judged.

To prevent ourselves from bearing false witness, we must be truthful and honest in all our conversations about others. We must not speculate or repeat something we have heard others say that is detrimental. To do so would be to participate in gossip which could cause contention among us. We must not speak disparagingly about others, but lift them up with kind words in our conversations. This is one way to become more of one heart and one mind.

Remember the mission statement of the church in these last days: "The Remnant Church of Jesus Christ has been called into renewal to preach the fullness of the gospel of Jesus Christ to all who will listen, and to prepare and gather a righteous people for the building of the Kingdom of God on earth, Zion."

by Esther Goodrich

Lesson #9

Thou Shalt Not Bear False Witness Against Thy Neighbor

In the Book of Exodus 21, Moses received the Ten Commandments from God as the children of Israel were camped at the base of Mount Sinai. The ninth commandment states, *“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.”*

When a person lies, they are knowingly uttering a falsehood; stating something as fact that they know is not true. It is an intentional act that is intended to deceive. But when a person bears false witness or testimony against another, they are intentionally telling lies about that *person*. Bearing false witness against your neighbor is an evil act because it can result in the loss of one’s credibility or reputation, their livelihood, a loss of freedom or even death. These acts are often motivated by hatred, greed, to conceal one’s own guilt or the guilt of another.

The commandment uses the word neighbor. In the Old Testament, a neighbor was generally understood to mean a friend, a companion, or someone you associate with. But in Luke 10, Jesus made it clear in the Parable of the Good Samaritan, that we are supposed to consider everyone we meet as being our neighbor. His golden rule in Matthew 7:21 is that we should treat everyone the same way that we want them to treat us. In so doing, we fulfill God’s law.

What we need to remember is that man was created in God’s image. We are meant to be loving, kind, merciful and just, full of grace, equity and truth, just as God is. When someone utters a lie, or accuses someone falsely, it is a reproach to God’s Holy name. God does not and cannot lie. In Zechariah 8:17 and Proverbs 6:16-19, it is written that we are not to imagine *any* evil in our hearts against our neighbor. And God makes it very clear that He hates a false witness and a lying tongue. To paraphrase from Matthew 25:32-47, Jesus said whatever we do unto others, we are in essence doing it unto Him. How sobering is that?

Let's look at some examples of bearing false witnesses in the scriptures. The first is recorded in Genesis 3 when Satan came unto Eve in the garden of Eden. Adam was given commandment that he could partake of the fruit of every tree in the garden, except for the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. Adam was free to choose for himself, but if he disobeyed, he would surely die. Satan, who is the father of lies, knew this. We read in Genesis 3 and Isaiah 14 that Satan wanted to be honored above all of the stars of heaven, and even equal to God. He offered to be our redeemer but wanted to force man to submit to his will by stripping us of our agency. God denied him this honor and cast him out.

So he came to Eve and asked her if she knew what God had told Adam about the fruit of the garden. Eve repeated the commandment just as it was given to Adam. Satan, to paraphrase, lied to Eve and said, "You're not going to die, and God knows that. He just doesn't want you to be like Him. You should be able to decide for yourself whether something is good or bad! This fruit will help you do it." His treachery caused Eve to focus on that *one thing* that she wasn't allowed to touch, instead of all of the other fruit that God had already given her.

I imagine her thinking to herself, "Oh, that fruit *does* look good! Why is God holding out on me?" And so, sin conceived in Eve's heart, and she partook. You know the rest of the story. Adam and Eve did die. First spiritually, and then physically. Looking at what Satan did, he did not just lie to Eve; he bore false witness against God. He portrayed God as someone who should not be relied upon because His commandment was in some way cruel and unjust. He portrayed Him as someone who has no idea what is best for man. Worse yet, he portrayed our *Creator* as powerless, His laws meaningless, and His judgment ineffectual. Sadly, this belief still permeated the hearts of wicked men today.

Another example comes from 1 Kings 21, where King Ahab sought to purchase a vineyard that belonged to Naboth, but

Naboth refused to sell. So the only way to take Naboth's land was to have it legally forfeited. Queen Jezebel knew this, so she and Ahab sent a letter to the elders, accusing Naboth of blaspheming God and the king. Such a crime was punishable by death. But the Mosaic law requires more than one witness. Queen Jezebel knew this also, so she sent two false witnesses to testify against Naboth, and he was stoned to death. Ahab then took the land for himself.

Our Savior Jesus was accused of being a glutton and a drunk. He was accused of violating the sabbath, performing miracles by the power of Satan, and of being a false prophet. The only thing Jesus was guilty of was exposing the hypocrisy and the lack of understanding that was had among the religious leaders of the day. Their fear was that Jesus would turn the people away from them and the Mosaic Law, which was their means of maintaining control over them. But for all of their efforts, not one false witness could lay a single charge against Jesus! Their only justification for crucifying Him was that He confessed to Caiaphas that He was the Son of God.

Telling lies and bearing false witness are equally destructive to society. If false witnesses are allowed to go unpunished, it would destroy public trust. We expect witnesses to be honest, just as we expect our laws and our courts to be just. It wasn't too long ago that courts would sentence a false accuser to the same punishment that the falsely accused would have received had their treachery not been discovered. God's laws were given to us to protect us from societal breakdown and chaos (see D&C 42.22h-i).

Today, it is becoming more and more apparent that the prevailing court system is the court of public opinion where men and women are tried and convicted for their core beliefs. False witnesses line up to viciously attack the credibility and character of others simply because they don't espouse the same ideals. Social media, schools, big tech, and political activism have become the judge and jury, hurling accusations of racism,

homophobia, misogyny, and more. We may not literally take the life of ideological enemies, but we openly advocate for the disruption of their basic human rights, their health, their employment, and some even go so far as to wish for or applaud their death. How far have we fallen! Truly the love of man has waxed cold (Matthew 24:31).

We don't need a commandment to know within our hearts that lying and bearing false witness is wrong. If we want to help put an end to it, we must be courageous enough to speak the truth in the face of those who are bearing false witness. If we would seek the Holy Spirit in all things, then the following scripture will be alive in us. 1 Peter 3:8-12 states,

Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile; Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

Questions:

1. What is the difference between lying and bearing false witness? (One is intentionally speaking an untruth; the other is intentionally defaming or discrediting another person.)
2. How many of the Ten Commandments did Ahab and Jezebel break in the story? (6th-steal, 8th-kill, 9th-lie, 10th-covet)
3. What should we do when we hear someone bearing false witness? (speak the truth in love Ephesians 4:15)

4. How do we inherit a blessing? (have compassion one of another; love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous; not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing)
5. In thinking of Matthew 25:32-47, when we bear false witness, who are we really attacking? (God)

By Apostle William Baker

Worship #10

Thou Shalt Not Covet

Scripture:

“Incline my heart unto thy testimonies, and not to covetousness” (Psalms 119:36).

Hymn: #460 *“Come, Learn of the Meek and Lowly”*

To covet is to desire what belongs to another. I believe it is okay to think, “I wish I had a house like that.” It is really not okay to think, “I wish I had Maria’s house.” The subtle difference seems to be that you see something nice and wish you had something like that, to which I say, “Then go out and work for it.” You plan to better your situation in life and better yourself. It is quite a different thing to want specifically what Maria has. It implies that you do not want to save and work for it – you just want hers. One is energetic, and one is lazy. Which do you think would please God? Let’s turn to the scriptures for a clue about which one we should strive for. Exodus 20:17 says, ***“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbor's.”*** It does not say, *Do not covet a house that you could have if you worked hard.* It talks about your specific neighbor’s house.

I worked with a lady from church. As we talked on our break, she said they had just finished doing their income taxes and decided to buy a grand piano with the money left over. As someone who had learned to play piano on an old upright ‘saloon’ type piano, I could have been envious and coveted her piano. But it did not even dawn on me until later how easily I could have coveted that nice, shiny new piano. Instead, I was very pleased for my co-worker and friend. Then I felt sad for her and her husband. I could only imagine how much money they must make to have that kind of money left over. Think of the amount of taxes they must pay each year from their combined salaries. Imagine the extra tax forms that must be involved and how very complicated their life must be. Also, in order

to have that kind of money, her husband was not a nine-to-five worker, which meant that he was gone a lot, leaving her at home frequently. Then I began to chuckle. There is no way a grand piano, which is very large, would fit in my small house! (Besides, it is just more to dust; although, she probably has a cleaning lady.) My soul could have rotted away from all the things I wish she had, but I was very happy with my life and my family...AND I did not have to worry about where to put that on my tithing statement, but she did! She had to justify spending that kind of money to the Lord. She already had a piano, but it looked too small in her living room. She had bought it just because there was an empty space. I mentally shook my head when she told me that and chuckled some more. Tucked away in the book of Romans in the Bible, chapter 13, verse 9 sums up the Ten Commandments very nicely. It says,

“Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Thou shalt not covet; and if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”

Loving is so much more fun than coveting. How do we learn not to covet? By sitting at the feet of Jesus and doing what He told us, by His actions, and by what He showed us. I especially like hymn #460 *“Come, Learn of the Meek and Lowly”* verse 2: *“Oh, if we were more like Jesus, and more from the world apart, communing with Him in spirit and nearer to Him in heart.”*

By Coral Rogers

Lesson #10

Thou Shalt Not Covet

“And they covet fields, and take them by violence; and houses, and take them away; so they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage” (Micah 2:2).

“And again, I command thee that thou shalt not covet thine own property, but impart it freely to the printing of the Book of Mormon, which contains the truth and the word of God” (D&C 18:3b).

This second verse reminds me of a story I heard several years ago. It seems a pastor was approached by a deacon and treasurer of his church. The deacon told the pastor that there was a bad leak in the roof of the church that he noticed after a recent storm. Upon looking at the roof, he noticed it was in bad need of being replaced, but there was not enough money in reserves to cover the cost of replacement.

The pastor prayed about it and asked the Lord how they could raise the funds for such an expensive repair. That night, the Lord granted the pastor a dream where the church had a brand new roof and smiles covered the faces of his people of the congregation. He also saw a new steeple on the church and the windows were all new and over the door entering the church was a scripture verse from Doctrine and Covenants 101:2f: *“The earth is full, and there is enough and to spare.”*

The first Sunday morning after the dream, the pastor read from the Doctrine and Covenants 101:2b-g and then told the congregation about his dream.

After sharing what the Lord had blessed his mind with, he told the people, “I have some really bad news to share. Our beloved church is in dire need of a new roof, and our windows are in bad shape as well. We have no money in reserves to tackle this big expense.” The people had sad expressions on their faces and tears of remorse at the thought of having to close the church.

Then, the pastor looked out on the congregation and smiled, “There is some really good news I must tell you. Our budget is shot but the money we need is in your pockets!”

This story sadly is the case in many churches today. It seems we hold back, afraid to give of our abundance unless there is a catastrophe. I believe many of us have found when we give sacrificially, the Lord blesses us with bounty we never dreamed of.

Hanging on to our abundance is a way of coveting what God has given us. Read Doctrine and Covenants 101:1a-c.

2 Corinthians 9:7 says, ***“Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity; for God loveth a cheerful giver.”*** An elder and friend of mine, Lloyd Vickery, told me forty-four years ago that this was his favorite scripture.

I have shared several times over the years about one of my four sisters who told me the secret of giving. She said, “Brother, we shouldn’t give until it hurts; we should give until it feels good.” I have tried to live by that because it is true.

Coveting is also craving what someone else has. Life today is like that. We want all the nice things in life, even though they are things we do not necessarily need. Commercials on TV today tell us we need a new car, expensive tennis shoes, name brand clothing, Sleep Number beds with memory foam, a riding lawn mower, exclusive make-up, and the latest brand of perfume. (You get the idea of what I am saying.) There are probably people you sit next to in church that have needs, and if we are sensitive to the Spirit, we can discern what they need and what to do about it.

What about coveting talents? I wish I could sing like Tennessee Ernie Ford. I should be content with what I have and share it, not hide it away. Alma the Younger realized he was coveting when he ***“wanted to speak with the voice of an angel,”*** but he corrected himself. In Alma 15:52-54, we read,

O that I were an angel, and could have the wish of mine heart, that I might go forth and speak with the trump of God, with a voice to shake the earth, and cry repentance unto every people; yea, I would declare unto every soul, as with the voice of thunder, repentance, and the plan of redemption, that they should repent and come unto our God, that there might be no more sorrow upon all the face of the earth. But behold, I am a man, and do sin in my wish; for I ought to be content with the things which the Lord has allotted unto me.

What can happen when we do not covet? When Solomon was king over Israel, God visited him in a dream. He asked Solomon what was his heart's desire. Solomon's father was David, who had just died, and Solomon was overwhelmed at leading this huge group of people. He asked God for an understanding heart and the ability to discern between good and evil and judge accordingly. Since he did not ask for worldly riches, long life, or the life of his enemies, God gave him wisdom, riches, honor, and the promise of a long life if he remained obedient. Just because we do not ask for things does not mean God will not give us gifts. In fact, He is waiting to shower us with gifts and blessings. We get more gifts from God when we use wisely what He has given us.

In another story involving Solomon, there were two women who came before King Solomon because they were fighting over who the true mother was. Both women had given birth about the same time, but one of the infants died. During the night, the mother of the dead child coveted the living child. She placed her dead baby on the other woman's chest and took the live baby for her own. They went before the king and asked what they should do because both claimed this living baby. Solomon called for a sword to divide the child in half and give one half to each mother. The real mother cried not to cut the baby, but just give it to the other woman. The other 'mother' said she was okay with dividing it even though it would not really be hers or the other woman. She was only concerned that the other woman did not

get the child. From that response, Solomon knew who the true parent was and commanded that the baby be given to the first mother who did not want the infant divided.

Questions:

1. What was coveted in the story at the beginning of this lesson?
2. If you were asked today for a sacrifice offering of your surplus, would you be willing to share abundantly and not covet your money?
3. Has God given you the ability to share a testimony and you keep it to yourself instead of sharing it with others? Is that not coveting what God has given you? Read 1 Peter 3:15. How can we expect more from God when we do not use what he has given us?
4. Are there things in your life that you covet that someone else has?
5. Why is Zion not here today?
6. Have you considered consecrating?

By Bishop Elbert Rogers