

Read: Exodus 20:1-17

God Wants Us to Keep his Commandments

Exodus 20:5-6 EHV

I the LORD your God am a jealous God. I follow up on the guilt of the fathers with their children, their grandchildren, and their great-grandchildren, if they also hate me. But I show mercy to thousands who love me and keep my commandments.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“Do I have to??” Ruth whined. The kitchen counter was covered in dirty dishes. Mom had asked Ruth to load the dishwasher. “But why?? That’s not fair!! Why can’t Jacob and Ellie do it?” Ruth’s older brother had homework to do, and Ellie was cleaning her room. Mom made it clear that Ruth was to load the dishwasher. There was no getting out of it.

“Do I have to??” So often we complain when we have to do something we don’t want to do. Yet it’s not just the assignments or chores that make us whine. We complain about the every-day tasks that God gives to us.

God tells us, “Always put me first in your life above everything and everyone. Don’t misuse my holy, saving name, but instead use it for prayer and praise. Spend time with me in my Word and give it the respect that it deserves. Listen to your parents and teachers. Don’t have hateful, dirty, or greedy thoughts. Don’t speak poorly about others, but rather speak well of them and defend them. Recognize that what I have given to your neighbor is not yours, but my gift to them.”

God tells us to do them and we think, “Do I have to??” “Do I really have to put you first, Lord? Do I always have to listen to your Word when we have devotions or when I go to church? Do I always have to listen to my parents? What about that person who made fun of me? Or what about that toy or that game that I really, really want?” Yes, God wants us to keep his commandments, but we fail. When we disobey, we deserve consequences that last forever in hell.

That might not seem fair, but our God is a holy God. He is serious about wanting us to keep everyone of his commands. So what can we do? First, shiver a bit. Because we can’t keep all of God’s commands perfectly all the time, it’s okay to be afraid (like you are when a parent punishes you). Second, say, “I’m sorry.” We are sinful in God’s eyes. But third, be relieved. We also have a Savior who kept all of those commands perfectly in our place. Just think about that! Jesus kept every single one of God’s commandments perfectly for you and me. Then Jesus suffered the punishment that we all deserve. Because Jesus did all that for us, we now live to serve our God and our neighbor in love.

The questions below are to help families discuss this devotion. The questions are divided by age group as suggestions, but anyone could reflect on any of the questions as they desire.

Questions for the Younger Children

- Name two commands that God has given us.
- Why are we not able to keep God's commandments perfectly?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Explain this statement: *Love your neighbor as yourself.*
- How does God give us the ability to keep his commands even though we are sinful?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- How is loving my neighbor also loving God?
- How can the Ten Commandments be summarized with the word *love*?

Closing Prayer:

Lord God, your will is holy. You want me to keep your commandments each and every day, but I am a sinner. For Jesus' sake, forgive me for disobeying your will and help me to live for you. Amen.

Hymn: CW 287:1,2 – The Law of God Is Good and Wise

The law of God is good and wise;
It sets his will before our eyes,
Shows us the way of righteousness,
But dooms to death when we transgress.

To Jesus we for refuge flee,
Who from the curse has set us free,
And humbly worship at his throne,
Saved by his grace through faith alone.