

Read: Exodus 20:1-17

Rules, Rules, Rules!

Exodus 20:2-3,7a,8,12a,13-17a

"I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt. ... You shall have no other gods. ... You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God. Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy. Honor your father and mother. You shall not murder. You shall not commit adultery. You shall not steal. You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor. You shall not covet."

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

So many rules!

You wake up. Eat your breakfast, make your bed, brush your teeth, dress for school, go to work... rules, rules, rules!

You're sitting at your desk. Stay quiet, raise your hand, no phones, it's not break time yet... rules, rules, rules!

Everywhere we go, we find rules: What to do, what to say, what to wear. We get so used to rules—we actually, feel kind of comfortable with more rules.

And at first glance, it looks like God just gives us a list of rules: do this, don't do that. We even call them *commandments*—not "rules" from God, but "commands"!

The really cool thing is what God says at the beginning. "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt." God doesn't focus on our *doing*—God focuses on his *giving*.

Our "doing" isn't nearly as important as God's "giving." God reminds us that he is a rescuing God, not just a rule-giving God. This rescuing God has rescued you from death; he rescued you in Holy Baptism. He rescued us! Now, how should we live? We ought to fear and love God—so that we serve him.

It's not another list of *rules*, but a remembering of *rescue*.

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 a person who gives you rules to follow in your life.
- What is one rule that helps to keep you safe?

Questions for Elementary Age Children

- Why do parents give us rules to follow?
- What is one reason why God gives us rules to follow?

Questions for Middle School and Above

- Think of the commandments as you are learning them from catechism. What words follow the question, "What does this mean?" Why are they so important?
- Should these commandments (and Luther's explanations) be taught in all the schools and homes of our nation? Why or why not?

Closing Prayer:

Dear Lord, help me never forget how you rescued me. Because you are mine and I am yours, help me serve you day by day. Amen.