

Russell Kelfer

Cornerstones of the Faith

720-A

Series: God's Living Legends (Part 1)

dtm DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.
INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230 • (210) 226-0000 / 1-800-375-7778 • www.dtm.org • dtm@dtm.org

Cornerstones of the Faith

His was a life characterized by contrast. He was transported to the heights, but he had his share of the depths. He experienced years of walking with God in the forefront of the battle, watching seas part, water come from rocks, bread fall from heaven. But he also experienced forty lonely years, walking with God only in the silence of a world separated by apparent greatness both in years and miles.

His name was Moses, and his journey was not at all unlike that of Joseph, and not at all unlike that of Jesus. He went from the king's court to exile on a desert as a lonely shepherd. Then he came to a burning bush and a new life of spiritual greatness. But even his new life was so plagued with conflict and warfare that this man Moses was constantly having to cry out to his God so that his God could constantly meet his needs. The sheer responsibility of his calling and the continued conflicts within his constituency caused him to be humbled even more. He had to lean on God for his very breath.

He had to rest the weight of his life on God, until we saw in our last lesson, a man who would not so much as move without God's word to lead Him. He was a man so dependent on God that he insisted of Him, "If Your presence go not with me, I will not go." He was a man who, as a result of spending so much time with God, was thought of by God as you would think of one of your best friends. And the more time he spent with God, the more desire he had to know Him even better. This resulted in Moses crying out one day, "Lord, show me Your glory!" And God took His best friend, Moses, and hid him in the cleft of a rock. God then revealed just as much of His character as this man Moses could bear. Oh, the spiritual truth wrapped up in the life of Moses.

As we looked in on Moses in the last lesson, he had just been commissioned by God to gather the nation of Israel together and stand at the foot of Mount Sinai. There the Living God was to

Cornerstones of the Faith

pay a personal visit to His people. God spoke of His purpose and His purity. He then revealed a tiny little fragment of His power. The heavens darkened. Thunder filled the atmosphere. Lightning flashed through the sky until the heavens were aglow. The earth shook. The entire mountain quaked at the presence of God. Then a trumpet began to blow. It blew longer and louder and longer and louder until its eerie blast so penetrated the minds of those who listened that they could scarcely hear anything. Then God spoke. He had but dropped His calling card. He had but breathed a whisper. Should He ever shout, and one day He will, every man alive will stand in awe. The cloud of His presence covered the mountain. He called Moses and Aaron to come away for a time. They were to come away from the awestruck multitude. They were to spend some time alone with Him. He had a King-sized revelation that He could only share with a man who had a God-sized heart. He needed a man He could trust to communicate that revelation to the horde of followers, supposedly waiting at the foot of that mountain.

It is there that we take up our study. Moses had taken a rather awkwardly sized steno pad up the mountain and a writing tool that was definitely not felt-tipped. He was seated at the feet of Jehovah ready to write down everything the Living God had to say. Now let's hush for a moment and listen carefully. If we do, we can hear everything God said, just as He said it. It is recorded for us in Exodus 20:

And God spake all these words, saying,

I am the LORD thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:

Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them: for I the LORD thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me;

And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

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.

Cornerstones of the Faith

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Six days shalt thou labour, 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, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that *is* within thy gates:

For *in* six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them *is*, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day, and hallowed it.

Honour thy father and thy mother: that thy days may be long upon the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that *is* thy neighbour's.

And all the people saw the thunderings, and the lightnings, and the noise of the trumpet, and the mountain smoking: and when the people saw *it*, they removed, and stood afar off.

And they said unto Moses, Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die.

(Exodus 20:1-19)

So here we have the passage commonly referred to as the Ten Commandments. For the sake of this study, we will look at them as ten foundations for living. This lesson will attempt to show a God's-eye view of the first three. Our lesson is entitled, "Cornerstones of the Faith." Our outline will look like this:

- I- The Mountain and the Message
- II- Ten Foundations for Living — the Cornerstones
 - A- The holiness of God's position (Exodus 20:1-3)
 - B- The holiness of God's image (Exodus 20:4-6)
 - C- The holiness of God's name (Exodus 20:7)

Thousands of years have come and gone since that day.

Cornerstones of the Faith

However, the message that was received on that mountain still stands in all of history, sacred and secular alike, as the basis on which most moral and spiritual principles have been built. Never before had God so clearly revealed His heart and in such a practical way. Now the Living God had shared with an entire nation of people what was and was not acceptable to Him. His law before had been engraved on man's heart, but sin had marred the message. Now God engraved it in stone. We have, at last, the written word. Now fallen man is totally without excuse.

We may ask, "Why the Ten Commandments?" What was their significance to the Jew? Certainly, what is their significance to us? For God to make such an earth-shaking announcement, we know that He had earth-shaking purposes. What were they? Why the law? Are we, or are we not, free from it? There are at least five reasons God gave us the law and shared the Ten Commandments in particular. Let's look at those five reasons.

1- The commandments were God's tool to expose sin. The sin nature of man and the sinfulness of men in particular was to be exposed by them. For sin to be seen as sin and not simply as relative behavior, it must be viewed against a backdrop of absolutes. That is why Galatians 3 describes the law for us as a schoolmaster, showing us we are sinners.

Wherefore then serveth the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator.

Now then a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one.

Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

But the Scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up into the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

(Galatians 3:19-24)

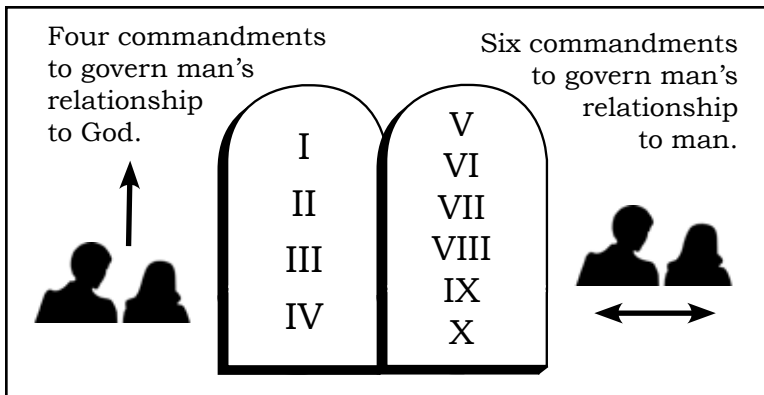
So there is reason number one: to expose sin for what it is.

Cornerstones of the Faith

2- The purpose of exposing a problem is to offer a solution. The Galatians passage just confirmed that God's purpose in uncovering sin was to offer a Savior, the Coming One, who when received by faith, would cancel the sin question and set men free once and for all.

3- The commandments were to restrain the unholy effects of sin on the world. They established standards by which the world and God's people in particular could restrain themselves from uncontrolled behavior and continue to at least have a standard of right and wrong.

4- The commandments were to establish a semblance of order in a world now under the intoxicating influence of rampant sin. Our court systems, even our local and religious rules and regulations down through the years would reflect in varying degrees the imprint of these absolutes. Now stealing would be a crime. Murder would not be tolerated. Adultery would carry the stigma of unnatural behavior. An entire judicial platform would be constructed on the basis of honest testimony. God was bringing order into a world of confusion until the day that He would bring the Living Word into the world whose Spirit would take the law and breathe it through the fabric of the heart and complete it by etching it forever in the fiber of the new man which, after God, is created in righteousness and true holiness.

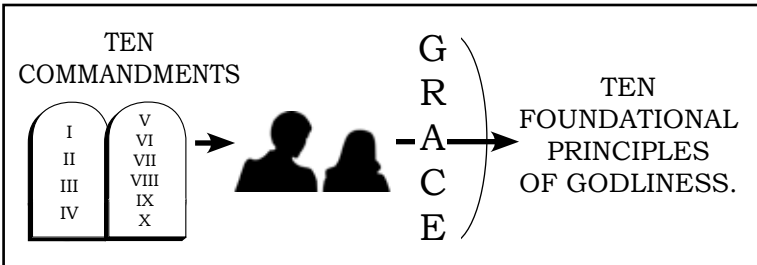


So there you have four basic reasons for the Law. All of these point to the fifth reason:

5- That God might build into each converted man's mind, a foundation of principles which could not be shaken. The

Cornerstones of the Faith

transition looks something like this: The Jew needed rules to govern his life and recognize sin when he saw it. So God gave him four commandments to govern his relationship with God. He gave him six commandments to govern his relationship with man. He needed these rules, so God gave them to him foundationally. But now Jesus has come and along with Him grace. Now the Christian looks through the scope of the Ten Commandments and still sees four commandments to govern our relationship with God and six to govern our relationship with men. But now they are seen through the lens of grace. Now they become more than laws, they become principles of godliness. Jesus kept saying, *"It is written of old time, but I say unto you..."* and then He would share God's laws applied through grace, and as the law finds its expression in grace, the absolutes become attitudes, attitudes that can change the world.



Our study of these ten foundation stones will major on this aspect of the Ten Commandments and how it ought to affect our lives. Let's look a moment at how these ten points will converge.

1- The cornerstones of the commandments involve the first three: His essence, His image and His expression.

2- The fourth commandment will be looked at next, as the centerpiece, or centerstone, the Sabbath rest of God.

3- Then we will look at the six pillars that hold up the building. We will look at the principles of Scripture revealed in these commandments.

How does God view the home?

Honor thy father and thy mother. (Exodus 20:12)

How does God view anger and life?

Thou shalt not kill. (Exodus 20:13)

How does God view sex and marriage?

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

Cornerstones of the Faith

How does God view ownership and possessions?

Thou shalt not steal. (Exodus 20:15)

How does God view truth?

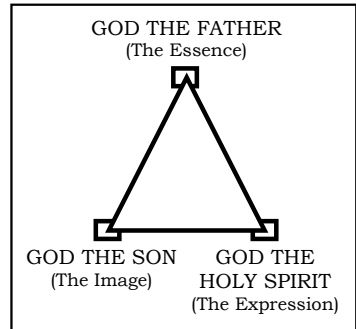
Thou shalt not bear false witness. (Exodus 20:16)

How does God view contentment?

Thou shalt not covet... (Exodus 20:17)

So when we see it, we will also see that these two segments will blend together into two basic thoughts. The first four commandments are summarized by “Thou shalt love the Lord God with all thy heart, mind, soul and strength”. The last six are summarized by “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself”. Our prayer is that all of these will blend together in Jesus and give us a panoramic view of God’s kind of supernatural life. It is all wrapped up in ten principles of living.

First, let’s look at the cornerstones of the Christian life, the first three principles of living. For the sake of this study, look at our lives as God-shaped structures built by a sovereign God to reflect His glory. The base or the foundation is triangular in shape. It has beneath it four cornerstones. One is on each corner, and one is central in the middle representing the fourth commandment. It might look like this:



Commandment number one speaks of God’s essence. It represents God the Father. Commandment number two speaks of God’s image. It represents God the Son, who is the express image of the Father, so much so that He said when you have seen Him, you have seen the Father, which is exactly what an image does. Commandment number three represents God the Holy Spirit. It speaks of God’s expression of His name, or His character. The fourth and final commandment that deals with man’s relationship with God represents the believer at rest: The Sabbath rest of God, made possible by the indwelling Spirit bringing essence, image and expression into perfect focus of a life that is yielded to Him. We will look at this fourth commandment in the next lesson.

So the Ten Commandments were not just for Moses and

Cornerstones of the Faith

the Israelites, they were for us. They form the foundation, the cornerstones, and the centerpoint upon which rest the pillars of our day-to-day walk with God.

CORNERSTONE 1- THE ESSENCE OF GOD THE FATHER

And God spake all those words saying,

I AM the LORD thy God who brought thee out of the land of Egypt out of the house of bondage.

Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. (Exodus 20:1-3)

God introduces Himself to Moses, and as He often does, He gives His name, “the I AM”, with an accompanying reminder of something He has done. To you, He might say, “I AM the LORD, I am your God. I brought you out of bondage to drugs.” Or He might say, “I AM the LORD your God. I brought out of the pit of despair.” Or to all of us He might say, “I AM the LORD your God. I brought you out of a destiny in hell, out of bondage to the enemy. I have set you on a rock and put a new song in your heart, even a song of praise to your God.” “That is who I AM,” says God, “remember?” It has a definite bearing on what He is about to say. He is about to say that the essence of the supremacy of God and the cardinal rule to understanding your relationship with God is this: Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. A better rendering would be this: Thou shalt have no other gods *besides* Me. Or better still: *there are no other gods.*

In other words, what God is saying to Moses, He is saying to us as well. It is that the nature of God is such that He is both supreme and unique. There is no one else like Him, there is nothing else like Him, nor is there anyone or anything else capable of being who or what He is. His character and His characteristics can be found nowhere but in Him. *He is God.* He always will be. There is no other god. There never can be. He alone is omnipotent. The words to describe His power cannot be used to describe any other. His power is not just greater than ours, it is so far beyond ours that our language can't even paint a picture of it. What power we do have is power He has given to us. It is a little tiny infinitesimal taste of what He possesses. The gods of Egypt had no power. They couldn't speak. They couldn't move. They couldn't feel. They couldn't move the forces of nature. For certain, they couldn't raise the dead. They were not gods.

The word is unique to the vocabulary of eternity. It rightfully

belongs only to Jehovah. *And thou shall have no other gods.* You must not place another in His place upon the throne of religious worship or on the throne of your life. He is perfect power. He is perfect love. Love is measured by Him. He is perfect mercy. Mercy begins and ends with God. He is perfect truth. Truth is defined by Him. He is perfect wisdom. All wisdom comes from Him. He is everywhere, always. He knows all things. He knows everything that has happened and everything that is happening, and everything that ever will happen, because He is God.

Now I am quite sure that thus far at least I have said nothing you do not already know. But the bottom line of this foundational truth is that God not only *is* everything but He is not satisfied if He is *not everything to you*. The principle beneath the commandment is, that God is not only the only God, He is a jealous God. He is jealous in the precious sense. He loves you with a jealous love, a love that wants what is best for you. He is what is best for you.

So the gods of this age that vie for His total control of your life, the gods of possessions or prestige or pleasure; the gods of recreation, or religion or relaxation; the gods of entertainment or education or achievement, are not acceptable as co-gods with Him. What He desires is that the whole of your being throb only at the name of Jesus. What He desires is that the only consideration in your decision making process is to be: "What is the will of God?" What He desires is that He be not a moving force, not even the primary force in your life, but the *only* force in your life. God is my co-pilot was not written by Jehovah. He is not in the business of being a co-pilot. He built the ship. He designed the controls. He drew the map. He owns the clock. He is the pilot. He needs no other gods besides Him. God is supreme. There is no other. God is jealous. He desires no competition for our affections.

Lastly, God's salvation is unique as well. For there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby you can be saved. Jesus never claimed to be *a* way to God, He claimed to be *the only way* to God. Either He is what He claimed to be or He is one of the greatest liars in history. Jesus never claimed to be a good man. He claimed to be the God-man. Either He is, or He is the biggest hypocrite in history. If a man walked up to you and claimed to be God, would you call him a liar and still proclaim him to be a prophet or a good man? Not on your life.

Cornerstones of the Faith

If you couldn't believe his basic claim about himself, how could you believe anything he had to say? So the final basic application to the first commandment is this: Jesus Christ is God and the only way to the Father. *And thou shalt have no other gods.*

Very simply put, and not a surprise to most of you, all other roads are dead-end streets. Jesus said it Himself in John 14:6. An accurate translation might be this:

Jesus said unto them, "I am the only way. I am the only truth. I am the only life. No man or woman ever could, ever can or ever will come to the Father unless he or she comes by Me.

What Jesus was saying is that any religious endeavor that either bypasses the cross or adds to the cross is an abomination to God. It does not lead to heaven. This means that any group that advocates your good works as *a* means or *the* means of finding God is a lie. Any church that teaches that man becomes a god is proclaiming a horrendous lie and it does not matter how righteous or moral their people seem to be. Their righteousness bypasses the righteousness of God. God says that it is like filthy rags in His presence. We must never make the gospel more exclusive than it is. Whosoever will may come, but we must never make the gospel less exclusive than it is.

For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. (Romans 10:13)

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: (John 1:12)

Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby ye must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

Today if you are a supporter of God and maybe even consider yourself a friend of God, but you have never become a child of God by receiving the Son of God, you have violated the first commandment. Without it, there is no basis for the other nine. But you can change all of that right now. You can come to the one, unique, jealous God by means of His one, unique Son, Jesus Christ, by simply declaring to His Father, "I shall have no other gods but Thee. I will not try to come to You any other way but Yours. I have sinned. My sin has separated me from You. Your only Son paid the only price for me on Calvary. I accept that gift.

Cornerstones of the Faith

I receive Your Son right now. God has said,

...if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come
in to him, (Revelation 3:20)

If you did, He did, and He will never leave you nor forsake you. He is yours. One God. One way.

The false gods of the nations surrounding Israel were many. It was not so much that they desired to put away the existence of Jehovah, they simply wanted to add Him to their collection. Pharaoh was willing to do that. He admitted God existed. He admitted God had power. These Jews had their right to their little God. He could fit right in with Ammon-Re, their super god and Aton-Re, their god of the sun. Or they could add Him in with Osiris, Isis, and Horus or any of the father, son, mother gods who couldn't even get along with each other. The Egyptians, according to the pyramid text, had over 1,200 gods. They included Apis, the bull of Memphis; Hapi, the god of the Nile; Hathor, the goddess of love and beauty; Ma'at, the god of order or Sothis, the dog-star. The Babylonians had over 700 gods. The Canaanites, the Hittites, Perizzites and the Hivites that inhabited the land had gods galore. One of their gods was Asherah, the wife of the god El who alone they say was the mother to 70 other gods. They had gods everywhere. The most prominent Canaanite god was named Baal. They built altars everywhere to worship Baal. The people would kiss his image and bow before him. They would even sacrifice their children to him.

CORNERSTONE 2- THE IMAGE OF GOD THE SON

Is it any wonder, then, that God required that His children separate themselves from those who inhabited the lands, so that the Israelites not add the false gods of the nations to their worship of Him. You say, "Denounce Jehovah as God? Not on your life! They wouldn't do that." However, that wasn't the problem. The danger was that it would be Jehovah plus another god. That is also the danger in our lives. There cannot be a Jehovah plus, for there is no other God.

Now God goes on, as Moses writes what He instructs:

Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth.

(Exodus 20:4)

Cornerstones of the Faith

Here God speaks not only of His essence, but of His image. He speaks not only of His uniqueness, but of His likeness. God, the unique only true God who is a jealous God, cannot tolerate idols. Ever. Images carved of wood or stone or metal that portray a likeness that cries out to be worshipped are against His will. God's word to the Christian was the same in Acts 15:19-20 where James instructs Gentile Christians to abstain from using idols. In Romans 1 Paul speaks of fools who have changed the glory of God to an image of man or beasts or birds. In I Corinthians 10:7 Paul admonished the Corinthians not to be idolaters as some of the Israelites were. In I John 5 we are told that Jesus Christ is the true God and is eternal life. John then adds,

Little children, keep yourself from idols. Amen.

(I John 5:21)

So the commandment was not to have carved images or idols. But what was the principle behind the commandment? It is found in John 4:23-24. The reason found there is that *God is spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth*. There is the truth about His image. His image is spiritual for He is spirit. An image obeys. We are to have no carved images. They can't obey. God is looking for spiritual obedience, spiritual transformation and spiritual multiplication. The disciples didn't understand that. Jesus talked of spiritual blindness. They thought He meant physical blindness. Jesus spoke of spiritual birth. Nicodemus scratched his head and said, "How can I get back in my mother's womb?" Jesus talked of the bread of life. They looked for loaves to eat. Jesus spoke of living water. They looked for springs to drink from. They wanted to see the Father. Jesus said, "Look at Me, you have seen the Father. I am His perfect image." They didn't understand. They couldn't make the spiritual switch.

Can you? Or are you still looking for Jesus to be a glorified grocery store? Or a super-sized Santa Claus bringing you all of life's goodies in exchange for a few well-chosen prayers? Satan tried to tempt Jesus the same way. He said, "Jesus, I will give you a physical kingdom, physical bread and physical deliverance from harm." Jesus said, "No way." Jesus said to the disciples and to us, "My kingdom is spiritual. You may be hungry, but feast on the bread of life. You may thirst, but be filled with the water of life. You may have few of this world's goods, but have much of God's goodness and you will have found the reason for living."

Cornerstones of the Faith

Herein lies the water that dilutes the power of God in most of our lives. We want God to be our God, but we also want Him to be the God of this world. Our prayers are for comfort, for material possessions, for circumstances. We gauge His faithfulness not by who He is, but by what He gives us. Not by what He does in lives, but by the ease by which He lets us live. We see the God of eternity through lenses that make Him the God of this world. God is spirit. His objectives are spiritual because that which is spiritual is eternal; therefore, you don't set up graven images. God's goal is that we be conformed to His image. It is not our looks but our lives which must be changed. The deeper purposes of a spirit kingdom become all that matters.

CORNERSTONE 3- THE EXPRESSION OF GOD THE SPIRIT

So we have seen the *essence* of God the Father and the image of God the Son. Now God reveals to Moses in the third commandment the *expression* of God the Spirit. It is the expression of His name. Let's look at verse 7:

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)

What's in a name anyway? What is so sacred about a name? We read in the last lesson from Exodus 33 and 34 how God passed by and proclaimed His name to Moses. What was His name?

And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed told him his name, I AM the LORD who is your God. I AM the LORD and My name is Mercy. I Am the LORD and My name is grace. I AM the LORD and My name is patience. I AM the LORD and My name is goodness. I AM the LORD and My name is truth. (Exodus 34:6 paraphrase)

What happened when Moses heard the name of God? In verse 8, we see that he made haste and bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped. The name stands for the character of God. Therefore, it was never to be taken lightly. Never. Never to be used in jest. Never to be used crudely. Never to be used for cursing or swearing. His name is not merely a word. It is the expression of His character and as such it is the holiest word in the vocabulary of the world. Beloved, you just say, "Jesus," and the courts of heaven are silenced. The angels fold their wings. Satan trembles with fright. You just say, "Jesus," and eternity

Cornerstones of the Faith

opens to the lost, sight returns to the spiritually blind, ears who have never heard are open to the song of salvation. One day soon, at the very mention of that word, “Jesus”, every knee on earth will bow and every tongue on earth will cry, “He is Lord” to the glory of God the Father. Never invoke His name lightly in conversation. Never use it flippantly to answered prayer. When you pray, “in Jesus’ name,” you invoke all of His holiness to replace all of your sins. It is a holy moment. Treat it that way.

Oh, the name that is above every name
Thou shalt not take it in vain
Or use it without the respect that is due
Only to that name.

We have to take up there in our next study as we deal with the Sabbath rest of God, which is the fourth commandment. But as we close this lesson, let’s look at the final expression of the cornerstones superimposed upon the law of God. We find it in Mark 12:

And one of the scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that he had answered them well, asked Him, Which is the first commandment of all?

And Jesus answered him, The first of all the commandments is, Hear o Israel; The Lord our God is one Lord:

And thou shalt love the LORD thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment. (Mark 12:28-30)

So Jesus wraps the first four commandments into one beautiful package. Here is the essence of God, to love Him with all of your heart. Here is the image of God, to love Him with all of your soul. Here is the expression of God, to love Him with all of your mind. Here is the rest of God, to love Him with all of your strength. The total essence of the Father, the total image of the Son, the total expression of the Spirit all boil down to one thing: Who or what shares the allegiance of your heart with God? After all, all He is after is all of you. What He wants with all of you is the freedom to take all of Himself and change you so that He can use you to change the world.

This is the gospel. God so loving a man, God so loving a woman, that He abandons for their good the most precious thing He has, His own Son, to purchase that person and bring

Cornerstones of the Faith

them into a new relationship with Himself. That is redemption. Now what He wants from His newborn, adopted child is this: He wants the freedom to be God. He wants to be the God He is without competition. He wants no other gods to intrude, causing confusion. His goals are spiritual. He has not come to bring comfort, but character. Without condescension, His name and His character ought to be held in such esteem that all else in life ceases at the mere mention of His name. This is what He wanted of the children of Israel. That is what He wants from you. That is what He wants from me. He is not interested in being added to our collection, even as our favorite. *He is interested in becoming our life.*

If you have never come to a place of decision and asked Jesus Christ to come into your heart, the other cornerstones can't hold you up until you do. Trust Him right now. Give Him all of your life and He will give you all of His in return. If you find that, to some degree, you have given God a place in your life, but perhaps not *His* place which is *every* place, or perhaps He has been dethroned by the lesser deities this world calls important, wouldn't this be a perfect time to once again acknowledge that the Lord, He is God and there is no other? Ought we not to cry out, "I shall have no other gods, nor shall I bring Him down from His spiritual throne or treat His name as less than it is." The Lord, He is God; there is no other. Let's say it softly together, "The Lord, He is God; there is no other." Oh, that we could live this truth in such a way that it would be self-evident in our lives, and that our message might be something like this:

YOU'RE OUR ALL

Dear God, we do not pray
That you may be to us
A god to add to others;
Another god to trust.

Oh, God, may it forever be
The touchstone of our call,
That You are not our favorite;
But, rather, you're our all.

So take us, break us, make us
To whate'er You choose we be,
Until our every breath becomes
A song of praise to Thee.

Cornerstones of the Faith
For Focus and Application

1- Review the five reasons why God gave the law, (pages 5 and 6.) Consider them in the light of your own life and the place God's Word plays in that life:

- a- The need for something tangible to define sin.
- b- The desperate need for a solution for sin.
- c- The restraint God's Word places in a world dominated by sin.
- d- The effect God's Word has had on the laws and standards of man.
- e- The principles that evolve from the absolutes that allow us to make right decisions and walk by faith.

2- Reread the Sermon on the Mount with this concept in mind. See how often Jesus focused the lens on the law, then added, "*But I say unto you.*" He never diluted the law, *He applied it.* Grace had come and now the law was the bed of absolutes from which would spring the principles that, when applied, would change our lives. Make a list of some of those absolutes found in Matthew chapters 5-7.

3- Try to visualize the ten commandments as ten basic principles which govern our walk with God. Think of the first four as governing our relationship with God, the second six as governing our relationship with man. See if you can put in your own words how this structure fits together.

4- Focusing on the first three, look at the progression. Each builds on the other. Stop and thank God for the wonderful structure of His Word. Look at how the first three express the Father, Son, and Spirit.

5- What are some of the gods of this age? Remember, a god is something that you consciously or unconsciously deify by focusing your attention on that person or object as of such importance that it dominates your life or your thinking. Think carefully. Ask God to reveal to you what things you have deified. Consider such things as family, career, technology, church activities, entertainment, recreation, sports. It does not mean you worship them *instead of God.* It means that on occasion, they vie for control of your life and wrestle it away from God. Consider anything that so occupies your time or your emotions

Cornerstones of the Faith

that they take the place of time with God.

6- How can the second commandment become applicable in our day? What kinds of idols do we have? How are they the expressions of our gods?

7- What significance does the name of God have in our generation? What kind of respect is it shown? Why has this happened? How can we restore an atmosphere of reverence and respect to the nature and name of God? Write down some suggestions.

8- How does Mark 12:28 sum up the commandments? Write out in your own words what you think this passage *is really saying*. Is God your very life? Or is He a convenient addition? Search your heart this week for the answer to that question.

dtm DISCIPLESHIP TAPE MINISTRIES, INC.

10602 Mossbank, San Antonio, TX 78230
210-226-0000 or 1-800-375-7778
www.dtm.org • dtm@dtm.org • © Russell Kelfer

(03.07.15)