

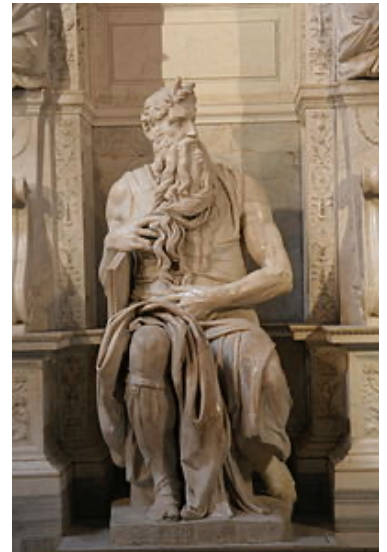
International Conversation Cafe

Old Testament: The Ten Commandments, Exodus 20

Relationships thrive when each person knows what is expected of them. When you know what a professor expects, your job becomes clear. If a teenager knows he is expected to be home at 11 PM, then there is no doubt about how to make his parents happy. God gave Israel the 10 commandments because he loved them. He knew that when people live up to these expectations their lives are easier and happier. These commands also reflect something about God's character.

The Ten Commandments - Exodus 20 (Contemporary English Version)

- ¹God said to the people of Israel: ²I am the LORD your God, the one who brought you out of Egypt where you were slaves.
- 1) ³Do not worship any god except me.
 - 2) ⁴Do not make idols that look like anything in the sky or on earth or in the ocean under the earth. ⁵Don't bow down and worship idols. I am the LORD your God, and I demand all your love.
 - 3) ⁷Do not misuse my name. I am the LORD your God, and I will punish anyone who misuses my name.
 - 4) ⁸Remember that the Sabbath Day belongs to me. ⁹You have six days when you can do your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day of each week belongs to me, your God. ¹¹For in six days I made the sky, the earth, the oceans, and everything in them, but on the seventh day, I rested. That's why I made the Sabbath a special day that belongs to me.
 - 5) ¹²Respect your father and your mother, and you will live a long time in the land I am giving you.
 - 6) ¹³Do not murder.
 - 7) ¹⁴Be faithful in marriage.
 - 8) ¹⁵Do not steal.
 - 9) ¹⁶Do not tell lies about others.
 - 10) ¹⁷Do not want anything that belongs to someone else. Don't want anyone's house, wife or husband, slaves, oxen, donkeys, or anything else.



Michelangelo. C. 1513-1515.
Marble. 235 cm. San Pietro
Vincoli, Rome

Discussion

The first four commands speak about our relationship with God and the last six direct our conduct with people. Restate the first four laws in your own words.

1. *Define unknown or unclear words or phrases.*
2. *What do these laws tell us about God and his demands on people?*
3. *How do you feel about these rules?*

The last six laws speak about our relationships with people.

1. *Identify unknown words or phrases and discuss them.*
2. *Restate the laws in your own words.*
3. *Say what these laws imply about people and God.*
4. *How are these laws reflected in your country?*

Jesus was asked what the most important command is. In his summary notice that he articulated the law into two parts.

Jesus answered (the man who asked the question), "The most important one says: 'People of Israel, you have only one Lord and God.'³⁰ You must love him with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.'³¹ The second most important commandment says: 'Love others as much as you love yourself.' No other commandment is more important than these" (Mark 12:29-31).

What do you think it means to love God with your soul, mind, and strength?

Can you give an illustration of loving your neighbor as much as you love yourself?

Do you think it is possible to live up to these expectations?