

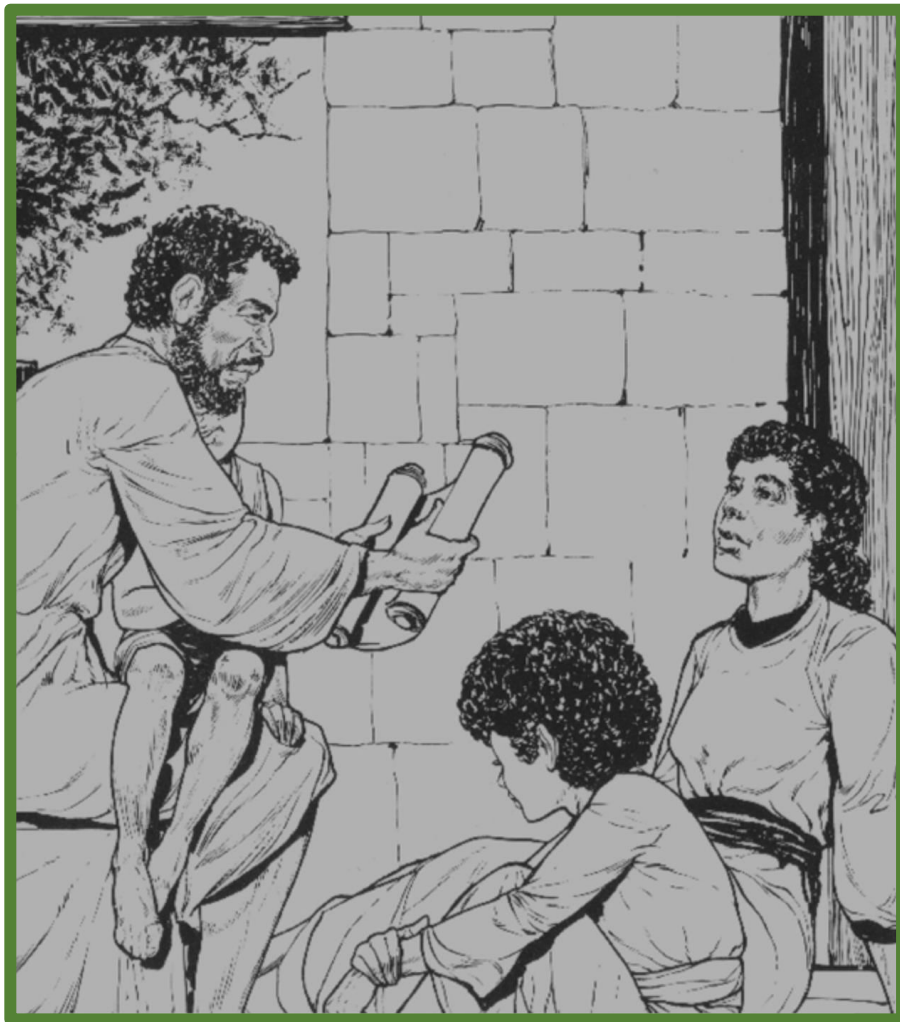
14 September 2025

God Gives Laws¹
How Should We Live As God's People
Lesson Text: Exodus 20:1-21

Black History Article Below Daily Bible Reading

Aim for Change

We will: **AFFIRM** that the Ten Commandments are God's instructions to believers; **BE ENCOURAGED** to follow God's commands; and **DEVELOP** ways of living that reflect godly obedience.



¹ Banks, Melvin, Precepts for Living: Principles for Living in an Unhinged World (2025-2026) UMI (Urban Ministries, Inc.).

In Focus

Monique asked, “Grandma Lottie, how did you and Granddad manage to stay married for 50 years? It seems like I see so many divorces or people just not getting married, and you two have done it for a lifetime. It’s what I want for me and my husband,”.

“Well, baby, the most important thing was we would always pray together and put God first. The other key thing was having clear boundaries after some tough years at the beginning. Your grandfather had to learn what I needed, and I had to learn what he needed. I needed him to listen to me and not yell at me. He needed me to be honest and not tell him what to do. Those are just some examples, but I guess it comes down to respecting each other and communicating,” Grandma Lottie responded.

“I think that’s good advice. But I don’t know if I know what I need well enough to ask for it yet,” Monique admitted.

“What you need first is to rest and seek God. Did you know that is one of the Ten Commandments?”

“I hear you, Grandma. You know I’m always working and planning. But I’ll give it a rest because you said it!”

How can learning about God’s laws from elders we respect make a difference in how we view God’s laws?

Keep In Mind

And showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments. (Exodus 20:6 CKJV)

Lesson Text

Exodus 20:1-21

1 And God spoke all these words, saying:

2 “I am the Lord thy God, who have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

3 “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me.

4 “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.

5 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,

6 and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love Me and keep My commandments.

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.

8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

9 Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work.

10 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.

11 For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

12 “Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

13 “Thou shalt not kill.

14 “Thou shalt not commit adultery.

15 “Thou shalt not steal.

16 “Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor.

17 “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 anything that is thy neighbor’s.”

18 And all the people saw the thundering 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.

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

20 And Moses said unto the people, “Fear not; for God has come to test you, and that His fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not.”

21 And the people stood afar off, and Moses drew near unto the thick darkness where God was.

The People, Places, and Times

Mount Sinai: Mount Sinai is both the site of Moses receiving his call from God (Exodus 3:1) and the Children of Israel receiving God’s Law and covenant (Exodus 19–20). After the Israelites were rescued from Egypt, they crossed the Red Sea into the wilderness; there they camped at the foot of Mount Sinai while Moses climbed the mountain to enter God’s presence. God revealed Himself to Moses and gave to him His law and covenant affirming Israel as His holy nation: they would be one nation under one God, who would be their leader (*Exodus 19:3–6*).

Moses: Moses’ parents were Amram and Jochebed, who were of the tribe of Levi. To save him from death at Pharaoh’s order, Moses’ mother made a basket, placed him in it, and set it in the Nile River (*Exodus 2:1–10*). Years later, God called Moses to lead His people out of slavery in Egypt (*Exodus 3–4*), and his older brother Aaron was made his spokesperson. After Pharaoh’s refusal to listen to Moses, God sent ten plagues upon Egypt. Moses led the Hebrews out of Egypt and across the parted Red Sea, but the Egyptians who chased them drowned (*12:37–15:20*). God provided the Hebrews’ daily needs as they traveled through the wilderness. Moses and the people arrived at Mount Sinai, where God gave the Ten Commandments to them, as well as instructions on building a tabernacle as a center of worship.

Background

The Ten Commandments are God’s first commandments given for the Children of Israel to obey in their covenant relationship with God after they had been delivered from

slavery in Egypt. These commandments serve as the foundation for most of the other commandments in the Laws of God. They were inscribed on stone tablets and placed in the Ark of God's Covenant to show how they were the foundation of God's instructions for relating to God and to other people as God's covenant people.

In Depth

1. Remember God (Exodus 20:1–2): God delivered the Children of Israel from slavery in Egypt, and now they were in the wilderness of Sinai to meet God at the mountain where he met Moses as a burning bush. In chapter 19, the Lord had told Moses to be ready because He would come down upon Mount Sinai in the sight of the people. Moses and the Israelites prepared by consecrating and setting themselves apart and washing their clothes. They only came to the foot of the mountain, because God set boundaries the Israelites could not cross, making the mountain holy for God's presence. Here we see God speaking after Moses went down from the mountain to the people. God ties the promise of deliverance of His people from Egypt with His name. The Lord is now proclaiming His holy name again, the deliverance is reality for the Children of Israel. God reminds the Israelites of past blessings, of His deliverance of them from slavery in Egypt. We must continue to remember what God has done in our lives and associate His marvelous works with His name.

Why does God command us to remember what He has done in the past?

2. How to Love God (Exodus 20: 3–11): God's first commandment is, the Lord is God, and to have no other gods before Him. Having no other gods before Him is best translated as "You shall not prefer other gods to me." The meaning is, God is the only God the Israelites should worship and obey. Ultimately, the Lord is the Highest God, and expects faithfulness to the covenant made with His people. If something takes us away from honoring and obeying the God of heaven who created us, is to elevate anything above our God.

The second commandment is not to make any images of our God or other gods to worship. God is not a creature and cannot be worshipped through created statues the way other gods can. We should worship God the Creator and never the things created, including our family, education, work, and material possessions.

The third commandment is to not take God's name in vain, which means not to take it lightly or treat it casually. God is holy, and we should only say God said something, did something, supports something, or doesn't support something with the most respect,

seriousness, and fear we can. We certainly shouldn't use curses or swears and involve God as people do in popular culture.

The fourth commandment in verse 8 is for God's people to have time set aside to worship God, totally dedicate themselves to Him, and rest. The word "Sabbath" is derived from the Hebrew verb shabbat, which means "to rest or cease from work." The command was to set aside each seventh day as belonging to the Lord. The Sabbath, in essence, was another sign of honoring the covenant which God had with His people.

How can we prioritize God first in our daily lives?

3. How to Love People (Exodus 20:12–21): The fifth commandment is a fascinating hinge commandment to honor your father and mother. It is accompanied with a promise for long and abundant life in the land God promised to the Children of Israel. The meaning is as children care for their elders and obey the commands they pass down from the Lord, God will allow them to prosper in the Promised Land. The sixth commandment is you shall not kill, meaning murder, which directs you not to take another person's life. The seventh commandment, you shall not commit adultery, is particularly directed at married people. They are to honor their exclusive marriage covenant as part of their exclusive covenant with God. You cannot take someone else's spouse. The eighth commandment, you shall not steal, is you cannot take someone else's possessions.

The ninth commandment, not to bear false witness, is a legal commandment not to lie so another person is punished for something they did not do. You cannot take another person's innocence. The tenth commandment, not to covet, means we should not lust after anything that belongs to someone else. If you avoid wanting what is someone else's, then you won't take it and will keep the other commandments. The overall principle of these last five commandments is that you cannot take what is not yours. God will give you what you need; you should respect God's and your neighbor's boundaries. The Children of Israel hear these commandments, see God's displays of power, and are afraid. Moses reminds them we should also remember the fear of God should not drive us away from God but help us stay near to God and not break His commandments.

How does understanding boundaries help us keep God's commandments?

Liberating Lesson

Clearly, God has the power to bring us out of the things that have us bound. We need to realize God is omnipotent (all-powerful), and He can do anything but fail. When the challenges of life knock at our door, we need to remember the God we serve. When we are faced with obstacles and mountains seem too high to climb, we also need to remember the God that we serve. We need to consider His track record and know He still has a lot more He can do in our lives. However, if we want God's blessings to continue to shower down upon us, we need to make sure we are obedient to His Word. We should not constantly challenge Him as the Israelites, His chosen people, did.

Application for Activation

This week, ask God to help you to follow His commands, His statutes, and His Word. Pray God will aid you in successfully living in a way that reflects the commands He has given. Remember how we relate to others is connected to how we relate to God. Which of the commandments is most challenging for us to keep? Ask God for help to honor Him and His commandments.

Take Aways

Closing Prayer

Daily Bible Reading
Christian Season:
Regular
Season Color: Green



Monday: Genesis 25-26, Psalm 5:1-7

Tuesday: Genesis 27-29, Psalm 5:8-12

Wednesday: Genesis 30-31, Psalm 6:1-5

Thursday: Genesis 32-34, Psalm 6:6-10

Friday: Genesis 35-37, Psalm 7:1-5

Saturday: Genesis 38-40, Psalm 7:6-13

Sunday: Genesis 41-42, Psalm 7:14-17

NOT PART OF THE LESSON

Educational Purposes Only

Black History Began in Africa

MARY ANN SHADD CARY²

Abolitionist | Attorney | Editor | Educator



(1823-1893)

The first of Harriet and Abraham Shadd's 13 children, Mary Ann Shadd, was born October 9, 1823. Like her parents and grandparents, Mary Ann would reap the benefits of a mixed ancestry that offered certain privileges (they were mulatto) --they were free born, they worked in skilled trades, and they owned property. The Shadds escaped the worst of slavery while living in a slave state and benefited from a color-conscious social system in which light-skinned blacks had more status, wealth, and power than their dark-skinned counterparts" (Rhodes 5). Because the education of Blacks was forbidden in Delaware, the Shadd's relocated to Pennsylvania. Mary was educated by Pennsylvania Quakers from 1833-1839; shortly afterwards, Mary committed to educating Black children. She was only 16 years of age when she returned to Wilmington to sponsor a private school for Black children. The school's motto was careful to imply both light-skinned and dark-skinned children would be treated the same and educated in the same manner. She spent

² Banks, Melvin, Precepts for Living: Principles for Living in an Unhinged World (2025-2026) UMI (Urban Ministries, Inc.)..).

the next 12 years of her life educating Black children in Pennsylvania, Delaware, and New York. Once the Fugitive Slave Law had been passed in the United States, Mary and her brother Isaac relocated to Windsor, Canada. It was believed Blacks had better opportunities to gain wealth and employment there. While in Canada, Mary developed a weekly periodical designed to appeal to free Blacks. As editor of the *Provincial Freeman*, Mary became the first Black woman in North America to edit a weekly newspaper. The newspaper was used to advocate against slavery and admonish others to relocate to Canada, and to cover stories pertaining to Blacks already living in Canada. Despite her efforts, the *Provincial Freeman* fell victim to the economic depression of the day and ceased publication in 1858. In 1858, when John Brown held a secret meeting in Isaac's home, Mary attended the meeting. As a result of her encounter with John Brown, Mary's concern for slaves grew even more, and her abolitionists efforts increased. She circulated a new pamphlet called *Notes on Canada West* had been widely circulated in the United States, and many Blacks became aware that Canada was an option for those who feared for their freedom. As the first woman to speak at a national Negro convention, Cary began to speak to Black audiences all over the United States and in some parts of Canada and became a friend to the fugitive slave. In 1856, she married Thomas F. Cary (a barber from Toronto) and they had two children. He shared Mary's beliefs and ideals, especially those things relating to freeing Blacks and embracing slaves. After the loss of her husband, Mary Ann Shadd Cary relocated to Washington, D.C. and began to teach in the public school system pursuing a law degree at Howard University. She would be amongst the first Black women to ever receive a Juris Doctorate. The Mary Ann Shadd Cary House in Washington, D.C. has been dedicated in memory of this legendary woman. Though actual details about Mary's life are sketchy at best, many viewed her as a feminist. Her promotion of self-reliance oftentimes fueled her image. The National Women's Hall of Fame reports Mary Ann Shadd Cary fought alongside Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Caddy Stanton in the Women's Suffrage Movement, and she became the first woman of color to cast a vote in a national election. Mary Ann Shadd Cary once said, "self-reliance is the fine road to independence." Though Cary was self-

reliant and ambitious, she served as the backbone for many entangled by the bonds of slavery. Like her father, Thomas F. Cary, who was instrumental in the Underground Railroad, Mary Ann Shadd Cary devoted much of her life to the abolition and eradication of slavery.