



Exodus Study Questions

Week 10

Are you the kind who likes to keep your options open? Do you prefer a buffet over a menu? Do you struggle to commit because...well...you might miss out on something else? Even if this isn't you, chances are good that you know these people! This week, rather than moving on in Exodus, we're going to focus on God's instructions for Israel. When it comes to following the LORD, the starting point and foundation is an option-eliminating, exclusive commitment to Him and Him alone. Sorry, buffet-lovers!

Main Text: Exodus 20:1-17 (This overlaps with last week's passage.)

Connect

1. Do you like to keep your options open? If so, share an example of how you do this.
2. What do you think motivates people to want to keep their options open?
3. What did you find most significant from this week's sermon?

Understand

1. Read chapter 20, verses 1-8. What do you see as a common idea or theme running through these first four commands?
2. In verse 5, God describes Himself as "a jealous God." We don't often think of jealousy as a good thing, so what could it mean for God to be jealous?¹
3. Read verses 9-17. What common idea or theme do you see running through these six commands, and how are they distinct from the previous four?²
4. Remember that these commands are part of God's covenant with Israel (refer back to 19:5-6). What are some of the lasting benefits Israel would experience by keeping these commands?

Apply

1. In a world with lots of “options,” what are one or two specific things that challenge or threaten your undivided loyalty to Christ—to “have no other gods before me” (v. 3)? Take time to confess this and pray for each other.
2. We might imagine *an angry God* when we read these verses. To be clear, this *is not* a weak, soft, God! Even so, where (if at all) do you find God’s mercy and love imbedded in and around these commands?
3. The 10th commandment deals with *coveting*, which can be described as a selfish desire to acquire what belongs to another person. What’s so wrong with this? Can you think of how this kind of “coveting” might be acceptable or even encouraged in our culture?
4. Most of us aren’t looking for more rules to follow, but discuss a few ways our world would be different if we and those around us lived out these commands.
5. Read Matthew 5:17. Take time to thank Jesus for doing what the people of Israel and every other human being has been unable to do, all so that we can belong to His covenant people!

Notes:

1. God’s jealousy should be understood in light of the exclusive relationship He demands in these first four commands. Since there is only one God, He is “jealous” for His creatures to know Him as He truly is rather than as people might imagine Him to be (i.e., one of many gods). To worship Him merely as one of other “options,” is to not worship Him at all! (See, for example, Paul’s speech to the Areopagus in Acts 17). It is also tragic for people to worship a god who does not exist!
2. OT scholar John Durham writes, “The first four commandments set forth the principles guiding Israel’s relationship to Yahweh; the last six commandments set forth the principles guiding Israel’s relationship with the covenant community, and more broadly, with the human family.”