



Loving Others

(based on Exodus 20:12-17)

Remember that God had led the Hebrew people out of slavery, and they were camped, waiting for Moses. He had climbed the mountain to receive a message from God for the people. God had a set of rules, Ten Commandments that God wanted the people to follow. God knew that these rules would help them, and their children, and their children's children, and so on for generations. These rules would help them remember who God is—first and most important in their lives—and these rules would help them live together in peace and grace.

The first four rules were about how the people ought to love God.

The other six rules were about how people ought to love one another:

5. Treat your father and your mother with respect. Look after them.
6. Don't kill anyone. Respect all people.
7. Be true to your husband or wife.
8. Don't steal things that belong to others.
9. Don't lie about anyone. Always tell the truth about others.
10. Be happy with what you have.

Moses thought about these rules too. They were perfect. They were all about treating others as you would want to be treated.

Rule 5 would remind children to honor their parents, especially when children think they know everything. God figured out that children need their parents, and parents need their children.

Rule 6 seemed like a pretty obvious one, but as Moses thought about it, he realized that it went beyond just killing someone. It had to do with respecting the life of all people. Harming another person, with force or words, is also wrong.

God knew that to build a new nation in a new land, families needed to stick together. So God made a rule to help people keep their promises in marriage. Moses thought that it was a good rule to keep all the promises we make to others.

Moses thought Rules 8 and 9 just made sense when people were living in community together. People shouldn't take things that aren't theirs, and they shouldn't lie about others.

Moses fully agreed with Rule 10; we all should be happy with what we have. "After all, everything is a gift from God," Moses said to himself.

The Ten Commandments were just what the people needed to hear. Following God's rules would help them love God and love one another. Now they knew how to serve God gratefully and live in peace. Once again, God had taken care of the people.

