

Eight Weeks of Conversation Cafe Week Three: Bible Topic- Laws of Relationship

The nation of Israel had been enslaved to the Egyptians, from approximately 1846 B.C. until around 1446 B.C. One of the most famous stories from Israel's history tells how God helped Israel escape from Egypt through the Red Sea. God parted the waters helping Israel reach the other side. (See the painting on the next side.) When the Egyptians entered the Sea, the waters returned to cover them up, destroying the entire army. Israel was now free and God was going to help them establish their nation. They were unique among all of the other nations because they were the only ones who worshiped One God, the unseen God who created the heavens and earth. As the nation journeyed in the desert, God met with them. He reminded them of his love for them. Then he detailed how their relationship would work. We call these rules of relationship, "The Ten Commandments." You will see that the first four commands have to do with the relationship with God. The last six commands have to do with the relationship with each other.

Exodus 20 Here are all the words God spoke. He said,

"I am the Lord your God. I brought you out of Egypt. That is the land where you were slaves.

1. "Do not put any other gods in place of me.
2. "Do not make for yourself statues of gods that look like anything in the sky. They may not look like anything on the earth or in the waters either. ⁵ Do not bow down to them or worship them. I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.
3. "Do not misuse (misrepresent) the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will find guilty anyone who misuses his name.
4. "Remember to keep the Sabbath day holy. ⁹ Do all your work in six days. ¹⁰ But the seventh day is a Sabbath to honor the Lord your God. Do not do any work on that day.
5. "Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long time in the land the Lord your God is giving you.
6. "Do not murder.
7. "Do not commit adultery.
8. "Do not steal.
9. "Do not be a false witness against your neighbor.
10. "Do not want to have anything your neighbor owns. Do not want to have your neighbor's house, wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey."

Questions:

1. *Define any unfamiliar words.*
2. *The first 4 laws explain our obligations toward God. The last 6 laws explain how people are to treat each other. Why do you think God gave these laws?*

Most relationships are defined by rules. Parents have rules for children and children have expectations for parents. Professors give a syllabus for students and students expect professors to be proficient in their areas and able to communicate. Husbands, wives, boyfriends, girlfriends, employers and employees, government, citizens all have guidelines that define their relationships and help people get along. The problem comes when one party breaks the relationship by violating the rule. Then what happens? This is where things can get complicated. Usually, the one who broke the rule is expected to apologize and to repair the damage. For example, if a student misses an exam, they will need to

communicate with the professor and hopefully be able to make it up. If two friends have an argument, they will need to find a way to apologize and start over. If someone gets a speeding ticket, they will have to pay the fine.

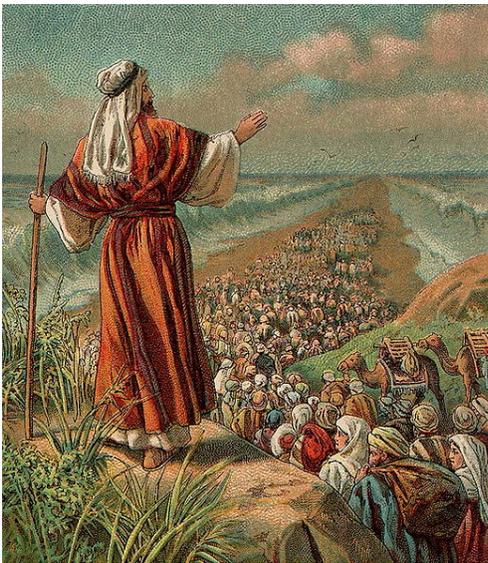
3. Give some examples of rules in relationship: parents/children, teacher/student, employer/employee, husband/wife, friend/friend.
4. Give an example of a relationship that went through a break but was eventually repaired.

The problem comes when we do things that break the rules of relationship with God. In fact, it is impossible to keep the laws of the Ten Commandments perfectly. As it says in the New Testament, Romans 3:10, "There is none who does right, no, not one."

So now what? How do we repair our relationship with God, when we love other things more than him or we hurt other people? What does he require from us? Choose from the options listed below or something else you thought of and explain how that might work.

1. Just do better the next time.
2. Make up for the wrong you did by helping someone.
3. Tell yourself that you had a reason to treat the other person badly.
4. Acknowledge the wrong you did to God and apologize.
5. Hope God doesn't notice.
6. Tell yourself everyone else does bad stuff too and you are not as bad as most people.
7. Try to forget about it.
8. Ask God for help.

The best personal relationships are motivated by love. God demonstrated his love to Israel by helping them escape slavery in Egypt. God's love was supposed to be a motivation for obedience and loyalty. *How do you think we experience God's love for us today? Would God's love motivate you to love him?*



Israel's Escape from Egypt. The Providence Lithograph