

Ten Commandments – Foundations for Success

Shane Willard

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Ten Commandments (Shane Willard 2009)

Am I me, regardless of what I'm producing; or is my entire life and worth defined by the number of bricks I can make? Is God still the creator, even when He's resting?

The Sabbath is a day where you live like your work is done, even if it isn't - and that is healing. The world goes on, because God is God, and you are not.

The supply of everything I need, is as close to me as the air that I'm breathing, I just need to stop and become aware of that.

The 10 Commandments is about Grace, its God giving people something that they did not earn or deserve - it's: welcome to being human again.

[Ten Commandments \(1 of 6\) \(Shane Willard\)](#) God wants to marry you - leaven and all. No matter what you've done, or where you've been, God is determined to make it right for you - that is what the 10 Commandments are all about.

The OT marriage covenant (and its Hebrew context), are used to understand some things Jesus said about his return, and about the rapture.

The introduction of the 10 commandments is considered from the perspective of a long line of slaves. So we get a day off? You can't kill me, or take my things, just because you're stronger than me? My human rights and dignity will be respected in our new culture? That is fantastic!

[I am the Lord your God \(2 of 6\) \(Shane Willard\)](#) The Ten Commandments starts with Grace, with God giving people something that they did not earn or deserve:

"I am the Lord your God", who is choosing to bless you with freedom from slavery, not because of anything you've done, but because I love you, and want all the people of the world to know that I am a loving God. Welcome to being human again.

Its: Anokhi - an offer to increase us, inside the "hedge of praise and submission"

[Foundations for Your Success \(3 of 6\) \(Shane Willard\)](#) We don't like spirit, because we can't control it. It doesn't obey our rules. Where is God? How big is He?

If you want to live a successful life, you've got to organise your life to where God is with you all the time; not a statue/idol that's with you one minute, but not the next. We can't make God manageable.

To have the best relationship with God, don't make your prayer life about words and needs, He already knows what your needs are.

The supply of everything I need, which is as close to me as the air that I'm breathing, I stop and become aware of that.

[Remember the Sabbath, Keep it Holy \(4 of 6\) \(Shane Willard\)](#) Is God still the creator, even when He's resting? Am I me, regardless of what I'm producing; or is my entire life and worth defined by the number of bricks I can make?

Anything we do around Sabbath that puts people in bondage, instead of bringing relief to a situation, misses the point. The last thing a group of slaves needs is another piece of bondage - and we're no different.

When our worth becomes about bricks, we become machines. Sabbath is a day where you live like your work is done, even if it isn't - and that is healing. The world goes on, because God is God, and you are not

[Honour \(5 of 6\) \(Shane Willard\)](#) How do I honour someone who wasn't honourable? Nobody's parents are perfect. Honour is not ignoring wrong things, or saying wrong things are right, or having no boundaries.

Honour has more to do with what we pass on to the next generation; than how we respond to the previous one. It's maintaining godliness through our generations. It's choosing to be honest about the ungodliness, and choosing to break the cycle.

Be thankful you're alive; realise your parents were a part of fallen humanity; give up the urge to take vengeance, and to judge - realise they were wounded too.

[11th Commandment \(6 of 6\) \(Shane Willard\)](#) God has not called us to be right - we're just Joe & Jane.

God has called us to be compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiveness. He's called us to show the whole world what He looks like.

Taking His name in vain is about: don't sign cheques I wouldn't sign, don't put my name to things that aren't me.

As a Christian, you're actually picking up and carrying (Nasah) the name (Shim) of God around with you. Shawv (in vain) means to live your life in a way that manifests (not disappoints) the hope that rests upon it.

The name of God rest upon a person (Ex 23:20), its a prophetic utterance of character (Exodus 34:6-7), it sits in a place (Deur 12:11), a force that provides protection (Ps 20:1), that has the ability to move with emotion - to fire a place up (Is 30:27).

It's a realm of awareness, that we can live in, or outside of (Micah 4:5). Its a force that brings about the best life (Jn 20).

The name creates a life so good, it's worth suffering & dying for (Acts 5:40-41). The demonstration of that life is so powerful, it threatens other people.

If you are reviled for the name of Christ, then you are blessed (1 Peter 4:14). Jesus : I have manifested Your name (John 17:6).

God has called Christians to be nice, more than He has called us to be right.

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Prelude

I want to talk to you tonight about the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20); but we have to make one ground rule really quick: in order to study God; and in order for the church, I believe, to get its credibility back - all of us have to lose our addiction to being right!

We're all "addicted to being right". We could start our own 12 step program: Hi, my name is Shane, and I am an addict. I am an addict to 'being right'; you are an addict to 'being right'; and the worst addicts to 'being right', in the whole world, are: white Pentecostals!

Most of you look white; and 'Pentecostal - judging by how you just started this meeting. Everybody pray in the spirit for two minutes - that's pretty good. That means: you're white; you're Pentecostal - which means we are the worst in the world at thinking we have God figured out.

God does not expect us to have Him figured out! Jesus runs into people who were caught in the act of adultery. He runs into thieves on crosses. He runs into prostitutes in the middle of the night, and He's forgiving them. The people who really ticked Jesus off, were the ones who thought they had it all figured out - that they were in, and everyone else is out.

He goes into one place in Galilee, which was known for its orthodoxy. What they did is: they took the Torah - and then they made it harder; so they tried to live even harder; and because they were keeping the Torah better than everybody else, they thought they were saved. They actually called themselves: 'The Remnant', 'The Chosen Ones', or 'The Elect'. We would never do that would we?

So they thought they were in, and everybody else was out; they were going to heaven, and everyone else was going to hell. So Jesus shows up, and they said: "Rabbi, are only a few going to be saved?" Of course, they mean them right; so basically they were trapping Jesus into agreeing with them.

Jesus - You tell us, are only a few going to be saved? Jesus gets so ticked-off, He says: at my marriage table, many will come from the north, east, south and west; but you who actually think you're in, will be the ones shut out - because you thought you were better than other people.

One of the things that the rabbis said - which I love: if we spent two hours tonight talking about God, if 95 per cent of what we said was wrong, God would still be pleased, just

because we gave a night to talk about Him. God does not expect you to get it right, and let me show you why.... (gets out the whiteboard)

Let's be Gods for a second, alright? So I'm the Chairman of the Council of the Gods, and you are Gods (for the sake of our example). So I convene a meeting of the Council of the Gods, and I move that: because we're bored with each other, we're going to create something.

We choose to create people, and we'll call them Joe and Jane; and we make them perfect in our sight; they have all the mental and physical capacities that we do (to think). We make them in our image, and in our likeness. We say: that that is done; and we look back and we say: it is good, it is finished; what is still the problem with Joe and Jane?

There's still a problem with them: they're stuck on that board - their world is limited to what they can perceive in two dimensions. If I was to whisper in Joe's ear: Joe - in my world, I'm God; and in my world I can extend my arm out. Joe goes: that is unbelievable! Joe can't fathom a way that an arm can be extended out. Why? Because he is stuck in two-dimensions.

I whisper in Joe's ear: Joe - Jane is gorgeous, she's got nice curves. Joe looks over and says: she's just a line - I don't understand what you mean. Why? Because he's stuck in two dimensions.

If I wrote Joe a book about me; and I say things like: Joe, my ways are so high above your ways, you can't fathom it; "as high as the heavens or above the earth, so great are my ways above your ways". Scientists tell us that the furthest star they know of is 12.3 billion light years away - that is a long way above us.

If I wrote Joe a book, and said: Joe, my ways are so high above your ways you can't understand it; Joe can't fathom that, in his world, I can go behind him; and in front of him. He can't understand that, because he's stuck in 2-D.

Let's get their attention: I take my hand, and I stick it through their world - they're going to see my hand in 2-D. What does my hand look like in two dimensions? #1: it's flat; #2: it would be five dots, coming through their world at differing times, followed by a series of dashes.

Joe says: Jane - did you see that? That's five dots, followed by a series of dashes! Jane says: no, I think it was bigger than that. I think that was the 'hand of Shane'. He says: man, are you smoking something?

What if I took this ring, and I stuck it through their world - what would they see? That would just be one dot, which then separates into two dots, which then come back together as one - and then it disappears. He says: did you see that? That was roughly 20 dots that went like this. She goes: no, no - that was Doug's ring! He says: man, are you smoking...

What if I put my face up close to their world? She goes: do you smell that? Smells like curried chicken; I can feel something! Joe goes: no, no - that's the face of Shane - I can sense his presence. Who's right, and who's wrong? None of them - it takes faith to believe it all.

In two dimensions, the ring is a circle; but when you turn it (in 2-D) it's a rectangle. Are there ever enough dimensions to make a circle a rectangle? Yes, you need 3-D. We just need an axis to turn it on, to make a circle into a rectangle - but in their world it can never be. Mathematicians refer to a 'dimension' as a 'degree of freedom'.

If this is a space in a jigsaw (2-D puzzle), and this is the piece that's supposed to go in the puzzle space, can you ever squeeze that into that, in two dimensions? No, you have to pick it up, move it over the top, and put it down. You need to have another degree of freedom in order to do that.

My point is this: that we are 4-D people. We live in 3x 'space-dimensions', and 1x 'time-dimension'. We can only be at one place at one time - that's our limitations, that's our world. We are stuck to perceiving things that only exist right in front of us, something we can see, something we can touch, feel. We exist in three space dimensions, and one time dimension, so we are 4-D.

These are the complications that exist when a 4-D person tries to communicate with a 2-D one. These are the complications that exist.... They will never understand me; I would simply be pleased with the fact that: they even noticed; that they were giving it a go. Someone stuck in 2-D has no hope of understanding a 4-D person. All they can know is what I tell them; and even then, what I tell them is limited to their way of understanding things.

Imagine the complications that exist when an infinitely-dimensional God, tries to communicate to four-dimensional people? Can you imagine the intricacies? That's why God just kind of covers His bases. He says: "As far as the heavens are above the earth, so great are My ways above your ways." You can't get your head around Me.

In Deuteronomy He says: "If you can imagine it, it isn't Me"! I'm so much bigger than you, that if you took your imagination to its furthest bounds, whatever's there - I'm bigger than that. Every aspect of Me is bigger than that.

If you just take "my love"; how wide, and how deep, and how broad, and how great, is the Love of God - that you can't even get your head around it. So before we go any further: God is infinitely big; and we're going to talk about this when we talk about the second commandment.

God is infinitely big; He's also infinitely small. Have you ever heard of the 'Butterfly Effect' (not the scary movie)? The phrase was coined by a MIT physicist in 1960; so this was a guy really, really smarter than us. He wanted to come up with a way to predict weather patterns with greater accuracy; so he was working with an algorithm on a computer program.

His algorithm contained a constant: .504162; he was using it to do wind patterns, in order to greater predict meteorological phenomena. So he'd type in that constant, and then let the computer run for a while, to see what would happen. One day he was in a hurry, and accidentally, he just typed in: .504 (...and left off the 162).

Two hours later he came back; and the effects of leaving off those last three digits caused catastrophic weather events 150 miles away, and it was just a mistake. So on the computer

model, he left off 162 hundred-thousandths of a percentage point, and it caused catastrophic effects 150 miles away.

They asked him: what's the equivalent of that, in wind? He said: the puff of air that is caused by a butterfly's wing. So he said: theoretically, if a butterfly flutters in the wrong direction, at the wrong time - it can cause catastrophic events 150 miles away; so he coined the phrase in the scientific community the 'Butterfly Effect'.

You say: Shane, what in the world are you talking about? God is so big, that He has His head around every puff of air that comes out of a butterfly's wing 100 miles from here - in order to protect you. God is huge!

We just need to come to the place of humility, a big place of humility, which just says: I am not God; and any attempt by me, to put my 'box of God' around people - just is not right.

One other thing, before we get into the Ten Commandments itself - I want to speak to you about the Humility factor. One of the tests of ministry, in the First Century, was something called the 'Disposition of the Messiah'.

In English we write like this: $A + B + C = D$. So D is our main point; and we make three statements to end up at D.

Hebrew people don't write that way - they're not allowed to. They say: $A + B + C = D = C + B + A$. It's called 'Reverse Concentric Symmetry'. When a Hebrew person writes, they write connecting points at the end, and it backs up into a middle point.

That looks like a Menorah! The theology of the menorah comes from Isaiah 11:2 - "the spirit of the Lord will rest on me - the spirit of wisdom, understanding, counsel, power, knowledge, and the fear of the Lord". A later writer said: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom".

These are (to use our term) the 'anointings' that can come on somebody, from the Lord. There are six; but the centre one, which is the main point - the rest of this does not light without the centre one. The centre candle is called 'The Servant'. Every anointing you'll ever get from the Lord, does not light up properly, unless it's done from the Heart of Humility - the Heart of a Servant.

As much as we learn this week, we're wrong. It's not in the 'being right' or 'being wrong'; it's the questions that it puts in our lives, to make us change our lives, to be more godly. It's about the fruit that it might bear. If you just gain a bunch of knowledge - that is helpful, but it misses the point.

Will the girl at KFC know that you're saved, even when she messes up your order?

When you're on your way home from work, and you stop by the grocery store to pick up three things, and someone jumps in front of you in line, with 50 things - are you saved then? When you end up in the line with the slowest cashier in the entire store - are you saved then? Wives: does your husband know you're saved - even when he leaves his underwear

on the floor? Husbands: do your wives know you're saved - even when they make a decision that disappoints you?

What are we doing to: live the Life of a Servant; to extract the Anointings of the Lord; in order to live it in such a way, that we are in fact a servant - that Jesus is the centre point of our whole life? Now with that being said, let's look at Exodus 20...

Introduction

I need to introduce the Ten Commandments, before we actually start talking about them, to put it in proper context. Exodus 20 starts something like this: "And the Lord spoke all of these words, saying: I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, to be your God. Have no other gods before me".

So the Lord spoke all these words saying: "I am the Lord your God". The people that were listening to this - how would they have heard it? Who were they? What was their background? What sequence of events led up to this incredible event?

The people at the bottom of that mountain were slaves for 430 years. A 430-year heritage of slavery; 430 years of your opinion not mattering; 430 years of getting up every day at sun up and making bricks - hopefully enough bricks to keep yourself from getting killed. You get up every day: you make bricks; you go to bed. Seven days a week; 12 hours a day; 365 days a year - day in and day out.

You were treated with no dignity. You were a slave. You were less than human. If an Egyptian soldier wanted your wife, they just came in and raped her. There was no repercussions whatsoever; no thought to your dignity; no thought to the fact that you were even human. You were less than human. If they wanted something of yours, they just took it. If they wanted to kill, you they killed you, no repercussion. Moses only got in trouble because he killed an Egyptian, not because he killed a Hebrew.

These people had no human rights; so when you think of the Ten Commandments as a whole, I want you to think of it in terms of: a group of slaves learning how to be human again. God is trying to teach a group of people (and all they knew was slavery): this is how to be human.

He's also trying to create a culture that's going to have His way to live - so the whole world would look at what they have, and want it. He's trying to create the world's best culture. He's trying teach a group of slaves, after 430 years of slavery: this is how you be human.

It's also a wedding proposal: God proposing marriage to a group of people.

For 430 years, slavery was all they knew, and here's what they hear: "Thou shalt not kill". Are any of them going: "oh no, that's the law"? No, everyone's going: wait a minute - in our new culture - you can't kill me, just because you're stronger than me?

Wait a minute, in our new culture, you mean that he has to respect the basic dignity as a human being God gave me? That he has to actually respect the image of God in me - that's how we're going to do this thing? That is fantastic!

Murder is the light sin; the heavy sin is actually believing someone's worth less than you. The heavy sin, is a belief that says: someone else isn't worth as much as you are. That's the heavy sin! So in our new culture, we're going to respect the basic human dignity?

Can you imagine: "Thou shalt not steal"? No one's thinking: "that's the law - we're being put under bondage, no, no, no". They just got out of bondage.

God is not trying to make you good; God is trying to make you free. Make you good? Good compared to who - Him? No way, come on. He's trying to free slaves. He's trying to free people, when all they knew was: bondage and slavery. He's trying to free them to be human again.

"Thou shalt not steal" - no one's thinking: "hey, that's the law"; everyone's thinking: "wait a minute - in our new culture - you can't take things from me, just because you can? That is awesome!"

Can you imagine, all you knew was 430 years of slavery, and you hear: "Thou shalt take a day off"? Can you imagine that?

We haven't had a day off in 430 years; and He's actually commanding us to have a day, where we remind ourselves that our worth doesn't come from how many bricks we make? That is fantastic!

"Thou shalt not lie" - wait a minute, in our new culture, we actually have to have integrity in our business dealings?

I mean, if you know anything about sociology, you know that once a culture (or a country) becomes rampant with murder and theft and corruption in business dealings, the whole economy goes down the tubes - because no one wants to do business with you.

God is not trying to make people good, He's trying to make people free.

Main Message

For the rest of this first session, I want to talk to you about a wedding proposal. The Ten Commandments, Hebrew people call it a 10-word Ketubah.

In a Hebrew wedding, there were five steps. The five steps were: Lakah, Segullah; Mikveh, Ketubah and Huppah (Chupah).

I'm going to explain this in the natural; and then show it to you in the Bible; and hopefully bring this together to introduce the Ten Commandments.

Lakah: let's say Ali and I were dating, and she's out of my league, but it doesn't matter so - it's just hypothetical. So Ali and I are dating, and there comes a point where we cross the threshold of serious. There's a bit of chemistry going on between us. People are starting to ask her: how serious is this getting? This would have happened all the time.

Once it crosses a certain point, Ali would be longing to hear one word from me, and that word is: Lakah. She'd be longing to hear Lakah from me; so one night we're out on a date, we're down at the pizza place, and she bites into a piece of sausage - just perfect. That sausage fat and juice goes all over her. And I look across that table, and I think: I want to spend the rest of my life with that woman. Any woman that can bite into a piece of sausage like that - oh yeah!

So I take her home, and there's a moment on the porch, and she's still got a little bit of it right there on her face, and I say to her: Ali, Lakah. Well, on the outside she acts excited; but on the inside - she's 100 times more excited. On the outside she hugs me, and there's a moment there; but on the inside she's just clapping and going nuts, and on the inside she's just: OH MY GOD! OH MY GOD! He said Lakah! He said Lakah! So she goes in and she calls her three best friends, and she's clapping... He said Lakah to me! He said Lakah to me! OH MY GOD! He said Lakah to me!

Lakah means: I want to make you my own.

The Book of Exodus is just one big giant marriage proposal between God and a group of slaves. Exodus 6:6 says something like this. He's talking about His accolades. He says: I have delivered you out of the hands of the Egyptians, and from the yoke of bondage; and He's just giving them a ra-ra sort of: this is my heart for you, this is what I've done for you.

Then in verse 7: "and I will take you as my own". If you look that up in Strong's Concordance, it's just the word Lakah; I will take you as Lakah.

These are Hebrew people, so you didn't have to explain all this to them. They were standing there, and they would have thought: did God just say Lakah to us? Did God - does He want to marry us? Does God want to take our relationship with Him that far?

Doesn't He know we have issues? I mean, these people had issues! He had to tell them things like: don't be intimate with your mother, it's a bad plan. Well duh, right! But He had to tell them - that's how much issues they had. Later He had to tell them: don't throw your children in fire, not a good idea. So He had to tell them all these things, but He is instituting (He is initiating) a marriage with them.

You cannot understand the Ten Commandments outside the context of this: that God loves you so much, that He wants to marry you - Lakah.

So after I've said Lakah; what would be the next word she'd be longing to hear? Segullah!

You guys know how women are right? I don't want the women to turn on me, but there we go right - I'm going to step out there in faith! How long would it be, before Lakah wore off? Not long... Not long!

It wouldn't be too long after that, her girlfriends would be saying: has he said Segullah yet? Girl, is he scared of commitment? He needs to be saying Segullah.

So one night we're out on a date; and on the way to where we were going, she's hungry; and the noises that are coming out of her stomach are something God-awful. It's like a rhino's mating-call (ggroar), and I think to myself: that's the woman I want to spend the rest of my life with - a woman whose stomach can make noise like that. It's like a female drummer - there's something awesome about a woman that likes to beat on things, you know what I'm saying? They just...

So I take her on the date; we get home, and there's this moment and I say: Ali... Segullah!

Now this time, she can barely keep her hands off me - because I'm so irresistible. She is so excited; so she calls her friends: he said Segullah to me! He said Segullah to me! OH MY GOD! He said Segullah to me!

Segullah means 'treasured possession'. It takes Lakah one step further, and that one step further is: I don't just want to make you mine, I want to make you the most important person in my whole life, treasured possession.

Exodus 19, same group of people. Leading up to the Ten Commandments, they've already heard Lakah; and they would have been longing to hear the word Segullah.

In Exodus 19:5 here's what God says to them. "If you obey me fully, and keep my covenant, then out of all the nations, you will be my treasured possession (special treasure)". In Hebrew it's: Segullah.

So once again, these people - for 430 years, all they've known is slavery - and they're like: does God want to marry us? Is He serious? Did He just say 'Segullah'?

Now the next one, the next word she'd be longing to hear is Mikveh. Now Mikveh is not as romantic as the first two. The first one's sort of romantic; the second one's really romantic, like: I want to make you the most important person in my whole life. Women hear that and they go: isn't that something! They like that!

Mikveh is far less romantic, but it was necessary. Mikveh was a three-day warning that the betrothal was coming, and Mikveh meant this. Mikveh meant: go wash. Like: girl - you need a bath. Your breath is stinky!

Mikveh meant: go wash; or if you want to get spiritual with it, you could say: consecrate. It was a three-day warning, and the reason they did it was gracious; you wanted to give them a three-day warning before the betrothal happened, so that they could be touched. You wanted to be clean at the proposal, so you could be touched; so you'd give them a three day warning: go wash.

You see this all over the Bible, but I'll give you the most extreme example in the whole Bible that I know of, and that's Esther. Remember she bathed in perfume - for a year - before she

went in and saw her husband (which I think is overkill). Can you imagine that? Whew girl, where you been! You know she bathed in a year's Mikveh.

Exodus 19:10 – “and the Lord said to Moses: have the people consecrate themselves for three days, and have them wash their clothes” - Mikveh.

Three days from now - a Ketubah is coming, a Ketubah is coming - and they would have known this. This is Hebrew culture - they knew the sequence; so three days from then, Exodus 20 happens. Exodus 20 is a Ketubah.

A Ketubah is a marriage contract. This is what would happen (in the natural)... Three days after Mikveh; I would come and get Ali, and we would go sit at a table. Normally it would be: her, and her father; me, and my father - and we would make an agreement, a list that defined the basic boundaries of our marriage. She could put anything in the Ketubah she wanted; and I could put anything in the Ketubah I wanted - so long as we both agreed.

If you're here today, and you're thinking about getting married, let me give you Paul's advice: don't! Remember what he said? “He who marries does not sin” (but they're signing up for a life of pain)! Marriage is one of those things that, even between two pretty good-hearted people - it's tough!

I'm a counsellor by trade. Anytime a man and a woman comes to me; and it turns into who's right and who's wrong - it never works; because typically, it's not a matter of right and wrong. Typically, it's a matter of just differences. I think marriage might be one of those things that God steps back and goes: what was I thinking? What was I doing? Men and women are just different, okay; they're not wrong, they're just different.

For example, when a woman says: “I have nothing to wear”, what she means is: “I have nothing new” - and other women understand that code! If a woman says to another woman: I have nothing to wear; the other woman says: girl, let's go shopping, right? If a man says: I have nothing to wear; what he means is: I have nothing clean - do some laundry right? Not wrong, just different...

Another example – smells! Women like sweet-smelling stuff, like: flowers and perfume, oil, candles. Two women can go into a candle shop and sniff wax for an hour. Girl, check that out! Ain't that - that is some sweet smelling stuff right there. They just can do that stuff. You give a woman some flowers - the first thing she does is smell them. You give a man flowers - he smells \$70. That's all he smells! Women like sweet smelling stuff - it's in them to do that.

Men like 'stinky' stuff. You'll never see two men in a candle shop going: hey Billy, check that new white-lilac scent out. Now that is something special, right there! Bob, I'm gonna tell you: that is some sweet smelling stuff! You'll never see men do that – never!

Men like stinky stuff though... You have a man, and he plays a rugby match in the rain - and there's blood, and there's mud, and there's sweat - all mixed together on his shirt; and he's got to get to a business meeting really quick after it, so he runs into the locker room and showers. He puts nice clothes on. He takes all those muddy, sweaty, nasty clothes and he puts them in a plastic bag, and he ties it off and puts it in the boot of his car. Three months

later... he's looking for something in the boot of his car, and he sees that bag and remembers what's in it. What's the first thing he's going to do? He's going to open it and he's going to smell it!

That's men - and if there's any other man around he'll say: "hey man, check that out. That's ripe right there, and I'm gonna tell you." Men everywhere owe each other courtesy sniffs - if I smell Hamish's dirty clothes; and then later if I have something - he's got to smell mine, because I smelled his. That's why, if you're ever at a red light, and you see four guys in a car, and three of them have their heads out the window, and one in the back seat laughing - it's just somebody cashing in on his courtesy sniff.

That's all that is, because men like stinky stuff. There's nothing funnier to a group of men than something stinky happening. Women like sweet smelling stuff - not wrong, just different; and so to curb, to try to increase the effectiveness of marriage, we would sit down and talk about our basic boundaries before we got married - that became our marriage contract. She could put anything in there she wanted, and I could put anything in there I wanted, so long as we both agreed; because: "how can two walk together, lest they be agreed?"

Then once that was agreed on, that became the rules of our marriage; so if after marriage, if one of us broke our deal, it was called: 'marital unfaithfulness'. You would go through a four step process to prove it: one-on-one; two-on-one; spiritual-leaders-on-one; and then discipline. This marriage contract became the ruling force of our marriage.

The whole Bible's about a wedding... After it was agreed upon, we would: sign it; then stand and face each other, and..

I would say to her: "I go to prepare a place for you; that where I am, there you may be also".

She would say: "when will you come back, to receive me unto yourself?"

I would say: "I do not know the day or the hour, but when my father approves the wedding chamber, he'll send me back, to receive you unto myself."

So when Jesus is saying this stuff, everybody there is going: God still wants to marry us? This is unbelievable! I want you to think about the Ten Commandments in terms of a marriage contract.

"You should have no other Gods before Me" - if we're going to be married, I've got to be the most important person in your life. That makes sense doesn't it? Let's take God out of it for a second... For a marriage to work: the husband has got to be the most important person to the wife; and the wife has to be the most treasured possession of the husband, right? It's the only way for it to work.

"Don't make idols" - if we're going to be married, you can't carry pictures of your old boyfriends around, because that's going to hurt my feelings. We're not going to do that, alright!

“Remember the Sabbath Day, and keep it holy” - if we're going to be married, then: one day in seven, it's going to be just me and you.

This is what God did to keep His marriage together; He said: one day in seven; and seven times a year, we're going to leave everything and just be together.

God did everything He could do to make His marriage with the national of Israel work - but it just didn't. In the Book of Ezra (and in the Book of Jeremiah) it says: God had to divorce Israel, because of their continual marital unfaithfulness. They kept breaking their deal. He had to divorce them, for their continual marital unfaithfulness.

If you've been through a divorce, maybe this is for you. There's a scripture that says: I hate divorce; but we teach that as if: God hates divorced people. Maybe God's not saying: I hate divorce (as a matter of judgement); maybe He's saying (as a matter of understanding): I've been through it - I know, it stinks! I hate it for you; I hate it for the other person; I hate it for all the tears it's going to cause - I hate it.

Maybe that's what it was about? If God hates divorced people, then He hates Himself; because in the Book of Jeremiah, and the Book of Ezra, it says: He had to divorce Israel, because of their marital unfaithfulness. Who did He marry? You; me - we're the bride of Christ. He hates divorce.

This was all about a marriage. So this is what would happen: I would go and prepare a place for her, a marriage chamber. Then I'd come back and get her, and we'd have a wedding. At a wedding, there was step five: Huppah.

Huppah means 'under the presence'. Remember the prayer shawl?

There were two huppahs: the first huppah was the marriage altar - and we still have those today - when you see people get married under archways? You get married under archways - that was the first huppah; it was a marriage altar that talked about: when you get married, you're doing so 'under the presence of God'.

The second huppah was in the marriage chamber. They would take bed posts and extend them up. Then they would tie the tassels around the four corners of the bed, and it made the prayer shawl a canopy over the bed. They thought of the 'prayer shawl' as the 'presence of God'

It happened like this: me and my new wife would get married under the huppah. Then they would march us to the door of the wedding chamber, and I would pick her up to carry her into the marriage chamber - do you guys do that in New Zealand - it's a good idea for some, not so good for others... Some people ought to hold off on that tradition okay!

But they'd pick them up, and carry them under the threshold - and that's where we get the word 'rapture' from. The word 'rapture' simply means: 'to pick your bride up'; and carry her into the place you prepared for her.

I would take her then into the wedding chamber, and they had tied the huppah over the bed. They would shut the door behind us, and we would go in and consummate our marriage 'under the huppah'. So the consummation of the marriage would happen 'under the presence of God'.

They would wait outside for us to be done! They were way more 'open with their sexuality' than we are! So they would wait outside for us to be done; and then we'd come out - and we'd have a party. That was huppah; so this was the five steps to the wedding program.

The Ten Commandments was not: 10 proofs that God would love you. It wasn't: 10 conditions for God to love you. It wasn't: you do this - and I'll love you. No, no, no, no...

The Ten Commandments was: 10 proofs He already did! It was God's attempt to make us free.

He opens the Ten Commandments this way: "I am the Lord your God". Before they did anything right, or anything wrong, He said: "I am the Lord your God". He said "Lakah" to them; before anything right or wrong.

This is not about God making a group of people good; it's about God making a group of people free.

Now I want you to look at the end of the Ten Commandments, and I want you to see huppah - Exodus 20:18.

The people were at the base of the mountain, and it says: "and the people saw the thunder, and the lightning, and the billows of smoke; and they heard the sound of a trumpet". They see three things: 1) Thunder, 2) Lightning, 3) Billows of Smoke; and they hear one thing: the sound of blowing wind - the sound of a trumpet.

If you picture this in terms of: Lakah, Segullah, Mikveh, Katuba, Huppah; these people - the Katuba has just been given, and they look up, and the whole mountain covers them in smoke - Huppah.

They look up, and they 'see thunder' and they 'see lightning'. How do you see thunder? You can't see thunder! I looked that word up in Strong's Concordance, and it says that the word is 'Kole. In every other place in the Bible, it's translated 'voices' or 'languages'. It's the same word when Moses heard the voice out of the burning bush - Kole. So they look up, and they see 'voices', or 'languages'.

It says: they see thunder and lightning. The word lightning is the word "glorified fire". It's the same word for fire out of the burning bush.

The Katubah has just been handed down; they're standing there, and the whole mountain covers them in a huppah; and they look up, and they see languages inside fire. What would the languages have been saying? Will you marry me.

The Talmud (which is the ancient rabbinical commentary on this) says, that on this day in history: God proposed (it uses the word proposed) to the whole world, using 70,000 tongues of fire.

In 1857, in Rangoon, Burma, an English sociologist went there. This is before electricity, any of that, and he's studying this group of tribal people. He says: I have one question: who is your God? And these tribal people in Rangoon, Burma, in 1857 said this: we serve a God named Ywa, who proposed to us from fire in the sky - 70,000 tongues of fire - but the Israelites got scared, and they stepped back.

They said: Moses, don't have God speak to us any more, lest we die. You go figure out what God wants, and then you tell us what God wants; but don't have God speak to us any more, lest we die. God says: they didn't want to accept, because they felt unworthy.

God marries them anyway - but He institutes a feast every year. Every year, on the anniversary of this day, by law, they had to celebrate a feast. Leviticus 23, the Feast of Pentecost. At the Feast of Pentecost, everybody had to bring leavened loaves of bread. It's the only place, in the whole Bible, that they were commanded to bring loaves made with yeast. Everywhere else, it's: unleavened bread; there: leavened bread.

So they're bringing these leavened loaves, and they would give it to the priest. The priest would wave it before God, and say: "I thank You my God, that Your unleavened life, is willing to become one, with our leavened life". Isn't that the truth: a little leaven, leavens the whole loaf. Sometimes we make God look bad. Sometimes we're the ones that make God look bad, but God is so humble, He wants to be in us anyway.

The priest would bring the leavened loaf down, and he would break it in half; then he'd fill the leavened loaves with oil – signifying, obviously, the Holy Spirit. Then he would say: "now the day of Pentecost has fully come".

So one day, years later, they're all in the upper room; and they would've been celebrating this day, because they had to; and the priest would have raised the leavened loaves, and he would have filled the leavened loaves with oil, and said: now the day of Pentecost is fully come. This time they're in the upper room - and the exact same thing that happened, on the exact same day, years before, happens again: they're standing in the upper room, and the whole place covers them in smoke - huppah - and they hear the sound of a trumpet.

They look up and they see: tongues inside fire – the same exact thing that happened at Mount Sinai; same day, anniversary of that same day! The only difference is: this time they spoke back - which is the birth of the church, the bride of Christ.

To understand your walk with God, to have some cornerstones to your success, you cannot understand the Ten Commandments outside of this axiom: God wants to marry you, leaven and all.

Pentecostals for years have said: you have to get the leaven out your life, for God to use you!

Should you get the leaven out of your life? Absolutely! It's because it's the best life, to get the leaven out of your life; but that is pointless as to how much God feels about you. God wants to marry you, leaven and all.

The whole point of Pentecost: is oil flows through leaven. Aren't you glad that God uses 'leavened' beings? That the whole point of the Ten Commandments is: God, wanting an intimate relationship with a group of people, who are slaves to something.

What are you slave to? What's your slave driver?

If God touched your life tonight, what would be gone tomorrow? What would it be? What's your slave driver?

It's about: me and you, and God's determination to marry a group of people with heavy-duty issues - and make it work.

It's about: God teaching me and you, what it's like to have our dignity back; for our opinion to matter; for our image to be restored; to have dignity.

God wants to marry you - leaven and all.

No matter what you've done, or where you've been, God is determined to make it right for you; and that is what the Ten Commandments is all about.

I am the Lord your God (2 of 6)

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The Ten Commandments starts with Grace, with God giving people something that they did not earn or deserve:

"I am the Lord your God", who is choosing to bless you with freedom from slavery, not because of anything you've done, but because I love you, and want all the people of the world to know that I am a loving God. Welcome to being human again.

Its: Anokhi - an offer to increase us, inside the "hedge of praise and submission"

Exodus 20:1. We've already established that this is a Katubah, and this is how the Katubah starts: "and God spoke all these words, saying: I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage, so you will have no other Gods before Me."

1) God is talking. For almost the first time in their history, God is talking. For the first time since they've gotten out of Egypt, God is speaking! He says: "I am Jehovah, your God" - He relates to them as Jehovah (not as El Shaddai, which was odd).

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