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The Ten Words

5: 1-5

The ten words DIG: What might you infer about human nature in Moses' day from these ten words? Is this an acknowledgement of sinful humanity, or are these ten words an attempt to change humanity? Explain.

REFLECT: What effect have these Ten Words had on our laws today? What does that tell you about them? Do you think human nature has changed since these Ten Words were given to Moshe? Why or why not? Although most of these are written in the negative, they also imply a positive behavior and a divine freedom. Ultimately, everything belongs to and is given by ADONAI to free us from worry. As you read the following Ten Words, restate in your own words the positive behaviors and divine freedom contained in each of the Ten Words. In what ways might your relationship with God and with others be changed if you lived by the positive and freeing intent of the Ten Words? As you read through them, think about which ones are the most difficult for you to follow.

Moses summoned the Israelites (or their tribal representatives) to a covenantal assembly and called for them to give careful attention to YHVH's expectations.



Compared with Suzerainty Treaties (to see link click [Ah](#) - Treaty of the Great King), the Torah also had general stipulations (see [Bj](#) - The First Address: **The General Stipulations of the Covenant) which included the Ten Commandments, or in Hebrew, literally, the Ten Words. The fact that YHVH adds nothing more to these mitzvot and inscribes them on stone tablets (4:13), highlights how sacred they are. These Ten Words represent the central core of God's expectations of His people.¹⁴¹**

The Ten Words continue to stir controversy in both the community of believers and society. Some would question their relevance in public life today. Militant groups battle to remove **them** from schoolrooms, courtrooms and government offices, confining **them** instead to the area of private religion. More disturbing is the extent to which teaching **the Ten Words** in the Church has been replaced by the widespread heresy of antinomianism, or the idea that all one has to do is to try one's best to be saved, and that **the Ten Words** should be ignored.¹⁴² That is why every generation must hear **the Torah** and **obey it** for themselves.

Yeshua said to **His** disciples: **Come, follow Me (Matthew 4:19)**. Following **Jesus** involves keeping the **mitzvot** of **ADONAI**. **He** declared: **Whoever has My mitzvot and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love him and show Myself to him (John 14:21)**. Not only that, but the coming of **the Messiah**, did not do away with **the Ten Words**. **Jesus** taught: **Do not think that I have come to abolish the Torah or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them** (see the commentary on **Exodus [Du](#) - Do Not Think I Have Come to Abolish the Torah**).

Therefore, what is the purpose of **the Ten Words** today for believers? First of all, they are not a set of rules. Rules cannot bring freedom; they can only accuse. What they do accomplish is to reveal the heart of **God**, and thus are an indispensable part of the life of a believer. They have nothing to do with our justification, but they have everything to do with our sanctification. Justification is a one-time action by **the LORD** whereby, negatively, He forgives the sins of believers and, positively, **He** declares them righteous by imputing the obedience and righteousness of **Christ** to them through faith (**Genesis 15:6; Psalm 32:2; Jeremiah 23:6; Romans 3:28 to 4:6; Gal 2:16, 3:8-9, 21, 24**). Sanctification, however, is to be set apart, specifically, to the holy use and purpose of **God**. It takes work, and is a continuous lifetime struggle to be **transformed into** the **likeness** of **Messiah (Second Corinthians 3:18; Romans 12:1-2)**. It is a goal, and in reality, is never

accomplished during our lifetime (see *Perfectionism* by B.B. Warfield). The result of being **transformed** is inward peace (**Isaiah 32:17**), observable spiritual fruit (**Second Corinthians 9:8; Second Peter 1:5-11**), and a deep desire to honor **ADONAI** (**Matthew 5-16; John 15:8**).

*Dear Heavenly **Father**, Praise **You** for being the Best! The time on earth is so short to show **You** how much we love **You**, compared with all eternity when **Your** children who love and follow **You** will live with **You** in heaven forever in peace and joy! We choose to go beyond the outward following of **Your** Ten Words, by following them from our heart in love (**Matthew 22:37-40**). We submit to **Your** refining of our character by any suffering **You** allow to come into our lives (**Romans 5:3-5, First Peter 1:7**). We love **You**! In **Your** Holy **Son's** name and power of **His** resurrection. Amen*

The Ten Mitzvot reveal the heart of **God** in three ways. First, **the Torah** is still a moral guide by revealing sin (**Romans 7:7**). Secondly, we know that **all Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness** (**Second Timothy 3:16**). Therefore, **the Torah** can be used as a **teaching** tool to show **ADONAI's** standard of **righteousness**, so that we can know **Him** better and love **Him** more. And thirdly, it can also be used to point others to **Yeshua** (**Galatians 3:24-25**). **Nine of these Ten Words are also found in the B'rit Chadashah with conditions of the heart added that make us even more accountable not only in our actions, but in our thoughts as well.** You could say they are **God's** blueprint for living.

Moses called to all Isra'el for the purpose of acquainting the younger generation with the terms of the divine covenant, and said to **them: Hear, O Isra'el (5:1a)**. This cry is heard four times in **Deuteronomy** (here, **6:4, 9:1** and **20:3**), and each time these words **called the people** to consider something very serious, something that would challenge the very survival of **their** nation. **The Ten Words** would be repeated for the sake of this new generation. They were not given in a vacuum, but a kind of introduction to the whole 613 commandments of **the Torah** (365 positive **mitzvot** and 248 negative **mitzvot**).

The Ten Words were divided into two sections. The first four pertain to our relationship with **ADONAI**; the last six with our relationship with each other. **Yeshua** divided **them** for us when **an expert in the Torah** asked: **Rabbi, which is the greatest mitzvah, in the Torah? Messiah** answered: **Love ADONAI your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all**

your strength. This is the first and greatest commandment (Matthew 22:34-38; Mark 12:28-30), which describes our relationship with YHVH. And then Yeshua pointed out that there is a **second commandment that is similar to it: “Love your neighbor as yourself” (Leviticus 19:18; Mattityahu 22:39; Mark 12:31),** which describes our relationship with each other. You can also see the same relationship between **Psalms** and **Proverbs**. The **Psalms** point to our relationship with **ADONAI**, and **Proverbs** teaches us about our relationship with each other.

The statutes (Hebrew: *hachukkim*, meaning *to write into law permanently*) and **ordinances** (Hebrew: *hammishpatim*, meaning *a judgment of the court*) **that I am speaking in your hearing today, learn them and make sure to do them.** This second generation (from the time of the **Exodus**) were not the ones who had originally received **the Ten Words** (**their** parents had), but **Moshe** speaks to this **new generation** as if **they** had been living at that time. **ADONAI our God cut a covenant with us in Horeb** (which is the name used for **Mount Sinai** in **Deuteronomy**). **Not with our fathers** who lived in Egypt **has ADONAI cut this covenant but with us - all of us alive here today.** And even though this new generation was not present at the time, **Moshe** declares: **ADONAI spoke with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire (5:1b-4).** Why would **Moshe** say something like that? Because **Isra’el** is an indivisible entity. **The rabbis teach that every Jew who has ever lived, symbolically stood there hearing the words of Moshe.**

Even though **YHVH spoke with Moses face to face, he** was not allowed to see **His face (Exodus 33:20).** And in addition to drawing attention to **Isra’el’s** unique, intimate relationship with **the LORD, Moses** pointed out **his** role as mediator of **the covenant. I was standing between ADONAI and you at that time, to tell you the word of ADONAI, because you were afraid because of the fire and did not go up the mountain.**¹⁴³

He said (5:5):

As we study the general stipulations of **the covenant**, we need to keep in mind that the specific stipulations (see **Cr - The Second Address: The Specific Stipulations of the Covenant**) begin in **Chapter 12. Deuteronomy** is a very practical book, being our blueprint for living, and still speaks very tenderly to every **Jew** and Gentile today.¹⁴⁴