

An artistic illustration of Moses standing on a wooden plank, parting the Red Sea. The sea is depicted with dark, swirling waves above and a bright, glowing path of water below. Moses is shown from behind, wearing a blue robe and holding a staff. The word "MOSES" is written in large, white, serif capital letters across the center of the image, with a yellow and green gradient overlay.

# MOSES

DAILY DEVOTIONAL - WEEK 4

# IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF MOSES

WEEK 4





# MONDAY

## “A kingdom of priests for me and a holy nation”

After the shocking destruction of Pharaoh’s army, Egypt was definitively part of Israel’s past. Through Moses and the pillar of smoke and fire, God led the newly freed people to Mount Sinai. They knew who they weren’t: slaves to Egypt. Now God began the process of helping them understand who they were. As they reached Sinai, God gave them this divine purpose statement: “You will be a kingdom of priests for me and a holy nation.”

On God’s behalf, Moses said to the Israelites, “You saw what I did to the Egyptians, and how I lifted you up on eagles’ wings and brought you to me.” What made it so important for them to remember clearly that God’s power, not their own strength or cunning, had brought them freedom? How did this foreshadow the Christian message that God’s grace, not our own goodness, is the source of our salvation?

Many scholars think 1 Peter came from a sermon preached to new Christian converts. It said, “You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people who are God’s own possession. You have become this people so that you may speak of the wonderful acts of the one who called you out of darkness into his amazing light” (1 Peter 2:9).

How did Peter’s use of the Exodus 19 “identity” words show that the Christian faith was not a divine rejection of Israel, but a furtherance and extension of God’s eternal saving mission?

### read

Exodus 19:1-8, 16-25

### pray

*Lord Jesus, I am a member of “a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation?” Wow—thank you. Help me to live in ways that speak of your wonderful acts on my behalf. Amen.*

# TUESDAY

## No other gods

Before God gave any commandments, he reminded Israel (again) that he alone had freed them from slavery. This was consistent with the form of Middle Eastern covenant treaties— they often began by recounting the overlord’s generous acts toward the vassal person or kingdom. The first two commandments taught that Israel had only one true God, unlike Egypt, and did not need human, handmade images in order to worship their God.

The Jewish and Christian faith in the Scriptures (and the Muslim faith also) taught what is called “monotheism”—that is, that there is only one God. Remember, the Israelites were freshly delivered out of Egypt, a land that worshipped multiple “gods” of nature, in addition to their Pharaohs. **How did these commandments reflect God’s effort to embed the principle that there is only one LORD for us to worship, rather than many “gods”?**

The second commandment might seem obsolete at first. **In our rational age, who worships hand-carved stone or wood figures (cf. Isaiah 44:9-19)? What things (besides money and fame—the most obvious, easy answers) do some people worship?** “I am a passionate God” was the Common English Bible’s translation of God’s self-description in verse 5, not the “jealous” God of many other translations. **How can it deepen your link with God to see him, not as petty or possessive, but as passionately eager to start and sustain a loving relationship with you?**

### read

Exodus 20:1-6

### pray

*Lord God, you made me. You freed me. You are the source and sustainer of all that exists. Help me to worship and serve you, and you alone. Amen.*

# WEDNESDAY

## God's name and God's day

The third commandment warned against using God's holy name (especially the personal divine name revealed to Moses—cf. Exodus 3:13-14) in any way that is trivial, profane or false. The fourth commandment taught the importance of rest, of one day in seven devoted to God for spiritual and mental renewal. Indirectly, it also called for humility—we must recognize that we are not carrying the whole world on our shoulders, and cannot do so even if we try. **Did you grow up in a setting where people mainly spoke the names of God and Jesus in reverent, respectful ways, in coarse or profane ways, or not at all? How have those early models influenced the ways that you speak God's name(s)?**

The fourth commandment's principle was straightforward: remember the Sabbath (likely a reference to Genesis 2:2-3) and do not work on that day. Applying the principle was more challenging. By Jesus' day, it had produced a complex tangle of rabbinic rules about what was and wasn't work which Jesus more often defied than obeyed (cf. Mark 3:1-6, Luke 6:1-5). Christians, too, apply the principle in many different ways—but, sadly, many Christians totally ignore it. **How can you keep one day each week set apart for time with God, family and rest?**

### read

Exodus 20:7-11

### pray

*Lord Jesus, let me honour your name with my speech, and with my way of life. And guide me to know how best to make the Sabbath rest you commanded a reality in my life. Amen.*

# THURSDAY

## Honouring life and relationships

The first four commandments focused on how people related to God. The last six spoke to how God's people treated other people. The command to honour parents pointed to the importance of family love and respect. Do not murder (Israel's history clearly showed that there were some kinds of killing—e.g. military service, judicial executions—they regarded as authorized) said God's gift of life had to be respected. And adultery meant violating the vows of someone else's committed relationship—clearly a hurtful choice.

The New Testament quoted the fifth commandment approvingly—but added a clear call for the honour in family relationships to be reciprocal (cf. Ephesians 6:1-4). **What factors have you seen make the difference between nurturing, healthy parent/child connections, and those that cause pain on both sides of the relationship? How can you more fully honour your parents and/or your children?**

Ironically, Leviticus 20:10 said adultery was one of the actions for which ancient Israel executed people—the seventh commandment enforced in a way that showed how they limited the sixth commandment's application. On the other hand, Jesus extended the reach of both commandments into our heart and thoughts (cf. Matthew 5:21-30). **What helps you resist inner urges to hate or to lust, which Jesus identified as violations of the sixth and seventh commandments?**

### read

Exodus 20:12-14

### pray

*Lord Jesus, some of the commandments sound simple, until I set out to live them. Guide me by your Spirit, so that I may honour family relationships, and treasure your gift of life. Amen.*

# FRIDAY

## Integrity, inner as well as outer

The last three commandments were about various aspects of living with integrity. “Don’t steal” was perhaps the most universal commandment—no society can function if its members steal from each other. “Don’t testify falsely” was also vital—without it, justice became impossible. The final commandment anticipated what Jesus would do more broadly in the Sermon on the Mount. It spoke not to outward actions, but to the thoughts and wishes of the heart, and said God’s people were to control those, too. Moses said God aimed to create holy awe “so that [the people] don’t sin.”

No respectable person would steal or testify falsely, right? No—but sometimes respectable people will drag out the process of paying a debt they owe, or sign off on an exaggerated expense report. **Find some time today to spend in quiet prayer, and ask God to help you identify the ways in which you already live with integrity, and any areas where you might ask God to strengthen you to do better.**

The apostle Paul, who had been a rigid, rigorous Pharisee before he met Jesus, said the tenth commandment was the one that made him realize that he, too, was a sinner (cf. Romans 7:7-12).

**It’s not a sin to admire nice things someone else has. But have you ever found that admiration turning into an almost obsessive wish that you could have something (or someone) who belongs to someone else? In what ways has God helped you learn to pull away from that kind of excessive, destructive wanting?**

### read

Exodus 20:15-21

### pray

*Lord Jesus, shape me more and more into a person of integrity, whose actions and words are honest and straightforward. Teach me how to guard my thoughts and my wishes, so that they will not lead me away from your path. Amen.*

# SATURDAY

## Preparing for a life of covenant worship and service

The Ten Commandments were the foundation of God's covenant with Israel. Written on stone, they were the "covenant document" stored in the Ark of the Covenant. With blood and solemn promises, Israel sealed their covenant with God. (Sadly, they would learn all too soon that it was much easier to say, "Everything that the LORD has said we will do, and we will obey" than it was to actually live that out.) Right after this covenant ceremony, Exodus 25:1-8 began recording directions for the sanctuary we studied last week, and the gifts the people were to bring to help build the place that symbolized God's presence with them.

Are you glad that at church no one throws blood from freshly slaughtered oxen over you (see verse 8)? Probably we all are. But do not miss the serious symbolism in that rather grim ancient ceremony. New Testament Christians said repeatedly that Jesus' blood cleansed us (cf. Romans 3:25, Ephesians 2:13, Hebrews 9:14 and 12:24, 1 John 1:7 and Revelation 1:5). There is divine mystery, and many differing ideas, about exactly how that works—but no mistaking the teaching that, spiritually, we must be covered by Jesus' blood. **Ponder the scene as Moses used blood to seal ancient Israel's covenant with God. Thank God that by Jesus' blood you can be a part of his eternal covenant of forgiveness and salvation.**

### read

Exodus 24:1-8, 12-18

### pray

*Lord Jesus, yes—blood is a symbol. But you shed your real blood on the cross, and you did it for me. Touch my heart, and draw me close to you, as I remember the price you paid to be my Saviour. Amen.*