

## DOCTRINE FOR THE YOUNG

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# OBEYING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

by the Rt. Rev. Elmo Acton

You may wonder why the Ten Commandments were given with so many wonders and signs striking fear into the hearts of people. You may think that the Children of Israel knew these commandments before, when they were in Egypt, for no people could live together unless they obeyed these commandments.

The commandments were given with so many signs and wonders so that the people might know that they are the *Lord's* commandments, and therefore the commandments were introduced with the words, "And God spake all these words, saying..." The commandments are not just the best laws by which people can live together. The commandments are God's laws and they are to be obeyed because the Lord has spoken them.

Again you may wonder, what is the difference between obeying the commandments because God has spoken them or because they are the laws of the people among whom we live? There is all the difference in the world. For to live according to them because God has spoken them is to walk in the path that leads to heaven. But to live according to them only because they are the best laws by which we can get along with each other is to walk in the path that leads to hell.

But what is the difference? If you live according to them because your parents have told you to, because your teachers and the other adults in the society in which you live have told you that you are to obey them, then you might obey them in act, but you will not obey them in your thoughts and in your imagination. And when you obey them in act but not in your thought and your imagination, then eventually you will disobey them.

If you obey them because they are God's commandments, then you will obey them wherever you are. And because the Lord is present everywhere and the Lord sees all, you will shun these evils in your thoughts and in your imagination as well as in your actions. So again, if you obey them only because they are the laws of society, the laws of those among whom you live, then if those laws should change, you would change also. And your actions would only become sins or become evil when you were found out, but they wouldn't be evil if you were not found out. But because God is everywhere and knows all things, if you obey them because they are God's commandments, then you will obey them whatever the people around you may do. Whether they live according to them or not, you will live according to them because you will believe that they are God's commandments.

This is the most important lesson you have to learn all during your childhood and youth – that these commandments are not the commandments of your parents; they are not the commandments of your teachers; they are not the commandments of the adults among whom you live; they are God's words. God has spoken them. And your parents, and your teachers, and other adults must also obey them as God's commandments. When the time arrives for you to join the

church, you will acknowledge that these are God's commandments, and you will understand what is meant by the words, "And God spake all these words." This is why every time we repeat these commandments we introduce them with the words, "And God spake all these words, saying..." We must then obey these commandments because God has spoken them. It is He who has said: "Thou shalt have no other gods before My face. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain. Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Honor thy father and thy mother. Thou shalt not murder. Thou shalt not commit adultery. Thou shalt not steal. Thou shalt not bear false witness. Thou shalt not covet."

If you walk according to these commandments because God has spoken them, then you are walking in the path that leads to heaven, to eternal happiness, and to true freedom.

**Text: Exodus 19:20**