A PERFECT TEN

 **DATE: 1/14/2018 am**

**TEXT: Exodus 20:1-17**

**INTRODUCTION**

In 1976, in Montreal, Canada, a 14 yr. old Romanian by the name of Nadia Comaneci became the first gymnast in Olympic history to be awarded the perfect score of 10 for her performance on the uneven bars

She went on to record a perfect 10, six more times and became the youngest all-around Olympic gold medalist ever

She will be remembered for a long time for this amazing feat

But there was another Perfect Ten around a long time before this Olympian accomplished hers

The Perfect Ten that I’m talking about are …

“The 10 Commandments”

Ted Turner (The TV Mogul) once said that the 10 Commandments were “obsolete,”

Well … I want to go on record and say that the 10 Commandments are not obsolete

They are Absolute!

Furthermore, the 10 Commandments are as relevant …

… today as they were thousands of years ago when God first gave them to Moses and the children of Israel

For that reason, I want to take our time and study the 10 Commandments

I believe it will be the Perfect Way to start our Journey on the Old Paths

I want to call this series *A Perfect Ten for a Perfect Life*

I give them this title because of what the Bible says in **Ecclesiastes 12:13 –**

***“Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His Commandments: for this is the whole duty of man”***

The word ***“duty”*** in this verse is in italics, meaning it was added there by the translators

If you remove the word ***“duty”*** it reads - ***“Fear God, keep His commandments: for this is the whole of man”***

(I’m not trying to change the Scriptures)

Solomon is speaking of a whole person and the kind of life that is lived if a person is to be whole (perfect / mature)

If you want to be a whole person, then we must Keep the Commandments of God

Solomon tells us that Keeping the Commandments of God makes a person Perfect!

To put it another way, the Commandments of God are the secret to a Healthy, Happy and Holy life

Listen carefully to what God says in **Deuteronomy 5:29 –**

***“O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear Me, and keep all My Commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!”***

The word ***“well”*** means *to be Happy, Successful, and Right*

Like Ted Turner there are some who say we no longer need the 10 Commandments (That’s their business)

The truth is … we can’t do without them!

They are the Secret to being a Perfect Person

They are Essential if we are to live a Healthy, Happy and Holy life

Someone has said that the 10 Commandments were given to people in tablet form

And by following their directions, we can save a lot of other tablets from being used

Understanding this, we realize that the 10 Commandments are Relevant and Important

I want to begin by laying the foundation and considering the 10 Commandments as a Whole

 Next week we will begin looking at them one by one

Let’s pray and then think about …

***“A Perfect Ten for a Perfect Life”***

**~~~Prayer~~~**

**I. THE “REQUIREMENTS” OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

The Requirements that are Presented

It was Vance Havner who said that the 10 Commandments were 10 Commandments, not 10 Suggestions

We need to be reminded that the 10 Commandments are not Recommendations … They are Expectations!

They are Laws - God’s Laws - that are to be Obeyed

As we look at the Commandments God gave,

Let me suggest 2 Purposes they serve for our life

First, they have been given to …

**A. ‘Guide’ us in the Right Paths**

The 10 Commandments are Heaven’s Road Map

They gives us Spiritual and Moral Direction

The Natural Man has no clue which way to go

I like to think of them as the road signs on the highway of life … that say - *“This is the way to go”*

They Guide us in the Right Path

**Ill.** We are all familiar today with GPS. GPS was first developed by the US Dept. of Defense at a cost of $12 Billion. The Gov’t’s system was accurate to within centimeters. Today GPS has found its way into cars, boats, airplanes, farm machinery, and even our computers and phones. Many commercial fisherman use GPS to guide them to their best fishing holes so they don’t have to wander around searching.

The point is this …

The 10 Commandments are God’s GPS

So we don’t have to be Wandering around Searching

We live in an age of …

**1.** Moral Relativism

Moral Relativism is the idea that there are no Moral Absolutes (No right and wrong)

Everybody decides for themselves what is right and what is wrong

**Ill.** An alarming survey by the Barna Research Group discovered that many Christians are unsure about moral absolutes. In a survey of 4,000 people, only 32% of professing Christian adults believed in moral absolutes. That’s less than 1 in 3 Christians. It was found that 33% of professing Christians took their moral cues from other sources than the Bible. Only 26% based their ethical and moral decision-making upon the Bible. When it came to teenagers, only 9% believe in moral absolutes, less than one out of ten.

**2.** Tolerance

The buzz word today is “tolerance”

Meaning *the Acceptance of different views*

(You can have any view you want, but that doesn’t mean it’s right)

By being tolerant, society is saying that all ideas are morally equivalent, that truth is relative, and that everything is now negotiable

-- Let me say, there are Moral Absolutes

-- These Absolutes are Non-negotiable

-- The Bible is the source for these Absolutes

The 10 Commandments are those Absolutes

They proclaim loudly and explicitly –

***“This is the right way, walk therein!”***

Not only do the 10 Commandments …

‘**Guide’** **us in the Right Paths**

But they also …

**B. ‘Guard’ us from the Wrong Paths**

Just as there is a right way, there is a wrong way

There are Paths that God Commends and there are Paths God Condemns

The ***“Thou Shalt Not’s”*** of the 10 Commandments Guide us in the Right Direction …

As well as, Guard us from going in the Wrong Direction

Just as they serve as Signposts that say - ***“This is the right way,”***

They also serve as Guard posts that clearly say - ***“This is the wrong way!”***

**Ill.** Several years ago *Newsweek* published on its cover, in large print, the word *Shame.* Under it was the question, *“How do we bring back a sense of right and wrong?”*

The implication being, that we live in a society where there is no sense, or clear understanding of what is right and wrong anymore

At an alarming pace we are becoming a nation in which what was once viewed as wrong … is no longer viewed that way

The claims are … that we are a changing culture

Let me be clear and say that contrary to how people feel today … there is still such a thing as Sin

There are things that the Bible Plainly, Clearly, and Firmly declare as Sin

-- Regardless of how our Society may think and feel,

-- Or what Courts may say about this and that,

If the Bible declares something as Sin, it is Sin!

If it was Sin in the Past, it still Sin in the Present

Sin will always be Sin!

The attitude in Society is that the individual as the right to determine his own code of conduct

We decide for ourselves what is right and what is wrong

We are free thinking people and it’s nobody else’s business what we do, especially in our private life

However, our society is Forgetting one major truth

There is still a God in Heaven

He’s the One that has determined the code of conduct

He calls the shots and says what is right and what is wrong and *it is His business*! (He’s the Creator)

In the 10 Commandments God has given us a set of spiritual and moral codes that enable us to determine what is right and wrong

-- What God has said is wrong … is absolutely wrong

-- What God has said is right … is absolutely right

Case closed!

God warned in **Isaiah 5:20 - *“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light,***

***… and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”***

They are more than Suggestions or Recommendations

They are Commandments!

Since they are given to us by God, they call for our whole-hearted Acceptance

Since they are Commandments, they call for our whole-hearted Obedience

**THE “REQUIREMENTS” OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

**II. THE “RELATIONSHIPS” OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS**

Relationships that are Promoted by the Commandments

As we look carefully at the 10 Commandments we see that they are divided into 2 sections

The first 4 Commandments address our Relationship with God

The final 6 addresses our Relationship with Man

A Relationship *is the way we Behave and Feel towards one another*

 *How we treat each other (Which includes God)*

The 10 Commandments give us instructions on how to Develop and Deepen our Relationships

They also guide us in how to Promote and Protect our Relationships

We first see they are Portrayed as …

**A. Two ‘Distinct’ Relationships**

There is Our Relationship with God

There is Our Relationship with Each Other

**1.** Our Relationship with God

Again this Relationship is addressed in the First 4 Commandments

The 1st Commandment teaches us …

-- To **Acknowledge** God

**Exodus 20:3 - *“Thou shalt have no other gods before Me”***

This command is against worshipping any god other than the one true God

All other gods are false gods

We are to *Acknowledge* that He is the one and only God

The 2nd Commandment teaches us …

-- To **Adore** God

**Exodus 20:4, 5 - *“Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth:” “Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them”***

This command is against making an idol, *a visible representation of God*

There is no image we can create that can accurately portray God

To make an idol to represent God is to worship a false god

There is to be no rival to His place in our heart and life

He is not only … *the one and only God*,

But He is to be *the one and only God in our life*

In the 3rd Commandment we are told …

-- To **Appreciate** God

**Exodus 20:7 - *“Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain”***

This is a command against taking the name of the Lord in an empty way / without regard

We are not to treat God’s name lightly

We are to show reverence to God always by referring to Him in respectful and honoring ways

God’s names are descriptive of His Person and Nature

And understanding His names deepen our *Appreciation* of who He is and what He does

In the 4th Commandment we are told …

-- To **Accommodate** God

**Exodus 20:9-11 - *“Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:” “But the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work…” “For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it”***

We are to *Accommodate* God in everything He asks us to do

We are to Exclusively Honor Him on a Given day

For the Jews it was the Sabbath – Saturday

For Christians it is the Lord’s Day – Sunday

**Our Relationship with God**

The next 6 Commandments address …

**2.** Our Relationship with each Other

-- The 5th Commandment speaks of ***parental*** relationships

We are told in **Exodus 20:12** to ***“Honour thy father and thy mother”***

This is a command to always treat one’s parents with honor and respect

-- The 6th and 8th Commandments speak of our ***social*** relationships

We are told in **v. 13 - *“Thou shalt not kill”*** and in **v. 15 - *“Thou shalt not steal”***

These Commands speak against the premeditated murder of another human being and against taking anything that doesn’t belong to you

-- The 7th Commandment speaks about our ***marital*** relationships

We are told in **v. 14 - *“Thou shalt not commit adultery”***

This is a command against having intimate relations with anyone other than one’s spouse

Marriage as Designed by God

Adultery is any physical relationship outside the Marriage

-- The 9th Commandment speaks of ***personal*** relationships

We are told in **v. 16 - *“Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour”***

This is a command prohibiting testifying against another person falsely

It is essentially a command against lying, gossip, or any unfounded accusations

-- The 10th Commandment speaks of ***material*** relationships

We are told in **v. 17 - *“Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his manservant, nor his maidservant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's”***

This is a command against Desiring anything that is not your own

Coveting can lead to breaking one of the other commandments listed above; murder, adultery, and theft

If it is wrong to Do something, it is wrong to Desire to Do that same something

Furthermore, notice that these relationships are also …

**B. Two ‘Dependent’ Relationships**

Even though these Relationships are 2 Distinct and Separate Relationships

They cannot be Separated, one from the other …

They are Dependent on one another for Fulfillment

**1.** The ‘Priority’ of our Relationship with God

We see by the order God places His Commandments in His Word, where the emphasis is

We noticed that it is our Relationship with God that was addressed first

The fact that it is addressed first, tells us that our Relationship with God is to be first

Our Relationship with God is to be ahead of all other Relationships

Jesus made an interesting statement in **Luke 14:26 –**

***“If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple”***

That’s a pretty strong statement

It would seem that Jesus is telling us in order to be a Disciple we must hate our father, mother, husband, and wife, etc.

However, we know that is not the case, because it is contrary to everything else He has taught

So what does it mean?

The word ***“hate”*** that He uses means *to love less*

What He was saying is that we are to love the Lord more than anyone else

It’s not that we are to hate father, mother, and wife,

But rather we are to love them less than the Lord

In all the Relationships of life, the Lord is to be our first and strongest Love

**Matthew 22:37, 38 *– “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind” “This is the first and great commandment”***

If there is anyone or anything that is before the Lord

Then you are living in disobedience to God

The 10 Commandments by their very order command that we place Him first in our life

Putting God first in our life is motivated by all He is, and has done for us

The 10 Commandments begin with the words -

**v. 2 - *“I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage”***

Seeing that the Lord has delivered us from the bondage of Sin and Satan, (Egypt = The World’s way)

Putting Him first in our life is nothing less than an expression of our Gratitude

Why would we give Him anything less?

**2.** The ‘Revealing’ of our Relationship with God

What kind of Relationship we have with someone is Revealed by the Priority we place upon it

If the Lord is first in our life, it is revealed by our keeping of the first four commandments

-- If He is first, we will have no other gods

-- If He is first, we will remove any idol that is a rival

-- If He is first, we will honor His name

-- If He is first, then we will keep the Lord’s Day

Your Relationship with God tells on you

We can spin it anyway we want to, and make excuses,

But if we do not keep the first four commandments

It reveals the Truth, the Lord is not first in your life!

I don’t care what you try to tell me, some things are just obvious

**3.** The ‘Order’ of our Relationship with God

The Order of Relationships described in the …

10 Commandments suggest that if I have a proper relationship to God, I will have a proper relationship to man (Others)

If the Lord is first in my life it will affect every other Relationship

If the Lord is first in my life I will honor my father and mother - I will not kill - I will be faithful to my wife - I will not steal - I will not bear false witness - I will not covet

The flip side is; if I do not honor my father and mother, it reveals He is not first

If I kill, commit adultery, steal, bear false witness, or covet, it reveals that the Lord is not first in my life

Only when these Relationships are in their proper order that each is made meaningful

When I am Rightly Related to God, it enables me to be the kind of husband, neighbor, and friend I should be

All my Relationships with others are enhanced, strengthened, and made meaningful …

 … because of my Relationship to God

If the Lord is not first, all other Relationships will be out of order (weakened and robbed of their potential)

The simplest way I can say it is this …

My Relationship to God Strengthens my Relationship with others

My Relationship with others Shows my Relationship with God

**THE “REQUIREMENTS” OF THE 10 COMMANDMENTS**

**THE “RELATIONSHIPS” OF THE 10 COMMANDMENTS**

**III. THE “RESULTS” OF THE 10 COMMANDMENTS**

The Results that Are Produced by keeping the 10 Commandments

Some seem to think that the 10 Commandments are a set of rigid standards that becomes a ball and chain to the one who keeps them

Nothing could be further from the truth

They are actually a doorway into Experiencing and Enjoying the Christian life to its fullest

Let me close with 2 thoughts

First, the 10 Commandments bring us …

**A. A Life of ‘Liberation’**

Instead of the 10 Commandments being a ball and chain … they set us free

Keeping the 10 Commandments does not put you bondage … but Liberates you

If you don’t believe what I am saying, look at those who have chosen to step outside of the boundaries of the 10 Commandments

The people that are in bondage are those who have ignored the warning signs of the 10 Commandments and have proceeded to travel paths God has forbidden

Oh, they think that living their own life in their own way they are really free / But are they?

Ask the person whose body screams for another drink or another injection if they are free, another puff

Ask the person who lost their home and family over their infidelity, if obeying the flesh is all it claims to be

Ask the man behind bars that did not live by the simple standards God gave … if the path he chose to take was the best to take

**Ill.** In 1631, a pair of printers named Barker and Lucas published in England a handsome volume of the Bible, as well it should have been, for Barker and Lucas were the King's printers. But it had one little flaw: a three-letter word, *not*, was missing from the Seventh Commandment, making it read "Thou shalt commit adultery." The King was outraged and the careless printers of the book that became famous as "The Wicked Bible" were fined 300 pounds, which effectively put them out of business.

If you take the “not’s” out of God’s commands it will always lead to ruin

But on the other hand, obedience to God’s laws Liberates a person

Just ask the person who has honored God and allowed God’s Commandments to Guide their life if they regret doing so

Look at those who have homes that are happy and strong

Look at those who have lasting and meaningful relationships with others

Look at those who have lived clean and moral lives that are absent of guilt, regret and the scars of sin

Is there bondage there? Absolutely not!

*It’s those who disobey God’s 10 Commandments that are not free*

Keeping the 10 Commandments leads to a life of real freedom!

**A Life of ‘Liberation’**

Then lastly, the 10 Commandments bring us …

**B. A Life of ‘Satisfaction’**

God did not give us rules and regulations to Harm us

He gave them to Help us

As we have seen, keeping the 10 Commandments Guards us from the very things that will Defeat and Destroy us

God gave us the 10 Commandments to Protect us!

They were given to Protect us from the fruits of sin, the lies of the devil, and even from our own selves

The 10 Commandments are *A Perfect Ten for a Perfect Life*

To keep them makes us a Perfect person

They result in a Healthy, Happy, and Holy life

**Ill.** Roger Babson, a well-known statistician, business forecaster, and author, once sent his customers a printed booklet entitled *“Essentials of Business Success*,” They consisted merely of the 10 commandments plus the “New Commandment of Jesus.” Many letters acknowledging it poured in. One very enthusiastic Western businessman wrote: *“I have never seen such a fine statement of the essentials of success. Where did you get it?”*

The 10 Commandments are indeed Essentials for a Successful and Perfect life

They are the Pathway to a Perfect life

They may take them down in the courthouse, but don’t you take them out of your house!

May God help us over the next few weeks to not only become better acquainted with the 10 Commandments,

… but also Hide them in our Hearts to lead us into the kind of life for which they were given

**INVITATION**

**THE “REQUIREMENTS” OF THE 10 COMMANDMENTS**

**THE “RELATIONSHIPS” OF THE 10 COMMANDMENTS**

**THE “RESULTS” OF THE 10 COMMANDMENTS**

**A PERFECT TEN FOR A PERFECT LIFE**