

*Exodus 20:12-16; Matthew 22:34-40 (Romans 13:8-10; Proverbs 27:10; Acts 20:28, 34-35; 2 Corinthians 9:7-8)*

**Introduction:** There are numerous divisions among people in this world. Jesus warned that before He came back the love of many will be made cold (Matthew 24:12). \*\*\* So, where can people find hope in this world? Hope is in the 'Good News' of Jesus. Some three thousand five hundred years ago God gave people carefully worded, detailed instructions as to how people should live before Him in order to enjoy His amazing, life-giving, life changing LOVE. It can be summed up as: 'Love God, love people'. But that is too simple. \*\*\* A little better summary is: people can thank God for His love for them, when He gave them all He is, by living in fully surrendered faithful obedience to Him as the perfect loving Father. Then as they grow in their love of Him, and the fruit of the Holy Spirit, to become more like Jesus, they will have a strong desire to share all they have experienced of God with their neighbors. When Jesus is always first and foremost in a person's life, that person wants to share his or her joy over this with all his or her neighbors. This is how people love their neighbor as themselves. \*\*\* Today we are considering the first five (of six) commandments as to how God wants people to love their neighbors. We will see this involves honoring those who brought us into the world, respecting the life of all people, protecting the intimacy of 'one flesh' marriage, respecting personal property, and always speaking truth to and about neighbors. \*\*\* We will also see how good neighbors give to each other generously and cheerfully because they have experienced the generosity and joy of God in Jesus. \*\*\* We are ready to go deeper into God's Word.

**I. 'Commandments' concerning family and neighbors. (Exodus 20:12-16)**

A. Each person is to honor the two people who caused him or her to be born into this world. (Verse 12)

1. Thou must honor father of thee and mother of thee ... (Verse 12a)

**Honor:** To honor also means to glorify, attribute greatness, respect and heed. God commands parents to teach their children about Him (Deuteronomy 6:6-7; Proverbs 2-7); and, children are to learn to obey God in gratitude for all He has done for His people: acts of salvation and His words of life.

**Footnote:** There are bad parents who damage their children. The only hope for children of these parents is that they will come to know God as their Father. But, by God's grace, people with parents like this can grow to respect their parents

2. ... in order that they will be long, the days of thee, in the ground which Yahweh, God of thee, is giving to thee. (Verse 12b)

**Live long in land:** The God of Israel would give His people the ground (*adamah*) He spoke about to Abraham, and if they keep His words to them by faith they will get to live long on it (Ephesians 6:2).

B. Each person will not do four things that disrespect and violate his or her neighbor. (Verses 13-16)

1. Not thou will kill (murder). (Verse 13)

**NOT murder:** Positively put, every human life is to be respected. This includes helping people to maintain good health and develop good life skills. This can be done by sharing wisdom acquired from walking with God in the Holy Spirit according to His Word.

2. Not thou will commit adultery. (Verse 14)

**Respect and protect 'one flesh':** God has ordained a special intimacy for a man and a woman who have entered into the marriage covenant before Him and their family and friends. They must both guard this 'one flesh' relationship (Genesis 2:24) with the help of others, and let nothing come between them.

3. Not thou will steal. (Verse 15)

**Respect personal property:** God endorses the right for His people to have personal property, especially the land He gave them and the fruit of that land. He provides all His people with all they need. It is an offense against God to take whatever belongs to another person, especially a poor person.

4. Not thou will testify against the neighbor of thee a witness of falsehood. (Verse 16)

**Tell truth, to and about, a neighbor:** To say anything false about a neighbor is offensive to God. God desires that neighbors be treated as family. All who are in Jesus Christ are adopted into God's family. He is their Father and they are brothers and sisters of each other (Ephesians 2:13-22).

**Bottom line:** These five commands can be summed up as follows. God requires proper relationships among generations; and, respect for: life, marriage, property and truth. In this way ...

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**II. People should love the neighbor who is nearby, with generosity and cheerfulness. (Matthew 22:39; Romans 13:8-10; Proverbs 27:10; Acts 20:28, 34-35; 2 Corinthians 9:7-8)**

A. The second Great Commandment through Jesus and Paul. (Matthew 22:39; Romans 13:8-10)

1. But the second [Great Commandment] (is) same unto it: Thou will love the neighbor of thee as thyself. (Matthew 22:39)

**Jesus' summary:** As people grow in their all-out love to The Covenant God who is LOVE (the Great Commandment – summarizing the first four given to Moses on Mount 'Thorny'), Jesus sums up the concluding six commands given to Moses with a sentence found in Leviticus (19:18). We love our neighbors when we share the love God has given us with them. We love them with all we do for them; and, when possible, with words the Holy Spirit gives us to help them know Jesus as we know Him.

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2. To no one nothing you all must be owing, except (if not) one another to be loving, because one loving another, law (instruction), he or she has fulfilled: not thou will commit adultery, not thou will murder, not thou will steal, not thou will covet; and, if any other commandment in the Word, it is being summed up in this:

Thou will love the neighbor of thee as thyself. (*Romans 13:8-9*)

**Paul's summary:** Paul uses different, and many more, words than Jesus; but, with the same heart and the same mind as Jesus.

2. Love to the neighbor, harm not it is working; therefore, fulfillment of law (instruction): love. (*Romans 13:10*)

**No harm:** Selfless (*agape*) love in no way harms a neighbor.

**Fulfillment:** Rather, selfless (*agape*) love is the fulfillment of all God instructs His people. Love begins and ends the apostle Paul's commentary on God's commandment to love our neighbor.

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- B. Neighbors can be closer than family, give generously and cheerfully. (*Proverbs 27:10; Acts 20:28, 34-35; 2 Corinthians 9:7-8*)

1. Friend of thee and friend of thy father thou will not forsake, and house of the brother of thee, thou will not go in day of thy calamity: Better is neighbor near than brother far. (*Proverbs 27:10*)

**Other Proverbs:** This is a rare proverb that is positive about neighbors. Here are some negative neighbor Proverbs: do not devise evil against thy neighbor (3:28); he despising his neighbor is sinning (14:21); a violent man will entice his neighbor, to lead him in a way not good (16:29); do not witness against thy neighbor without cause, and do not entice him with thy lips (24:28, see also 25:18).

This last one is a good example of how Proverbs apply the Torah in real life situations, in other words, wisdom.

**Proximity counts:** People who are in God and love God by the faith of Jesus, are in a new forever family.

Although members of this new family do not have the same family trees or similar DNA, loving and helping nearby fellow believers with God's love is more beneficial to them than if they had to go far to a biological sibling.

And, there is this cliché: we are all descended from Adam and Eve.

2. Paul charged the elders in the churches in Ephesus to feed the sheep God purchased with His Blood; and, he reminded them his team labored to show them that they ought to help those being weak, and to remember Jesus' words:

It is more blessed to give than to receive. (*Acts 20:28, 34-35*)

**Farewell address:** Paul commands these elders to be careful to themselves and all the flock of sheep of which the Holy Spirit made them overseers, to be feeding the Church of God which He purchased with His own Blood. (Verse 28)

**True servants of God:** He says they are truly knowing his own hands and those of his fellow-servants met their own needs; and, in this way (by example), he showed them that laboring this way is necessary to be helping the weak. (Verses 34-35a)

Paul and his team showed how we are to love our neighbors.

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**Blessing of generous giving:** They must also remember the words Jesus Himself said: Blessed it is being more to give than to receive. (Verse 35b) From this we clearly see ...

### **Good neighbors are generous.**

3. Each one according as he or she has decided in the heart (to give), not from regret nor of necessity, because cheerful giver He is loving, God; and, He is being able, God, all grace to abound to you all, that in all things, always, all necessary (things) having, you all may be abounding in every good work. (*2 Corinthians 9:7-8*)

**God gives grace:** The key to all the apostle Paul wrote is that those who have received the grace of God are more than willing to give to whoever will take His gift of His Son, the Savior-King.

**Cheerful giver:** All people who experience the generosity and joy of God through His expression of LOVE in Jesus will be able to generously pass His LOVE on to their neighbors. And, all who are in Jesus by the grace and faith of God, will be enabled and empowered by the Holy Spirit of Jesus to give abundantly and generously to others of their time, talent and treasures.

### **Good neighbors are generous.**

**Conclusion:** God wants His people to honor the people He chose to be their parents. Positively, people need to support: life, the sanctity of marriage, personal property, and to be truthful in the love of their neighbors. God knows that left to themselves people will do harm, so He has sent His Son to be the way, the truth and the life for all people. The Holy Spirit will enable and empower people to fulfill what they cannot do in their own strength.

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