

I
Thou shalt have no other gods
before Me.

II
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: for I the LORD thy God
am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity
of the fathers upon the children unto the third
and fourth generation of them that hate Me;
and shewing mercy unto thousands of them
that love Me, and keep My commandments.

III
Thou shalt not take the name
of the LORD thy God in vain;
for the LORD will not hold him guiltless
that taketh His name in vain.

IV
Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.
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,
thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter,
thy manservant, nor thy maidservant,
nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is
within thy gates: 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.

V
Honour thy father and thy mother:
that thy days may be long
upon the land which the LORD thy God
giveth thee.

VI
Thou shalt not kill.

VII
Thou shalt not commit adultery.

VIII
Thou shalt not steal.

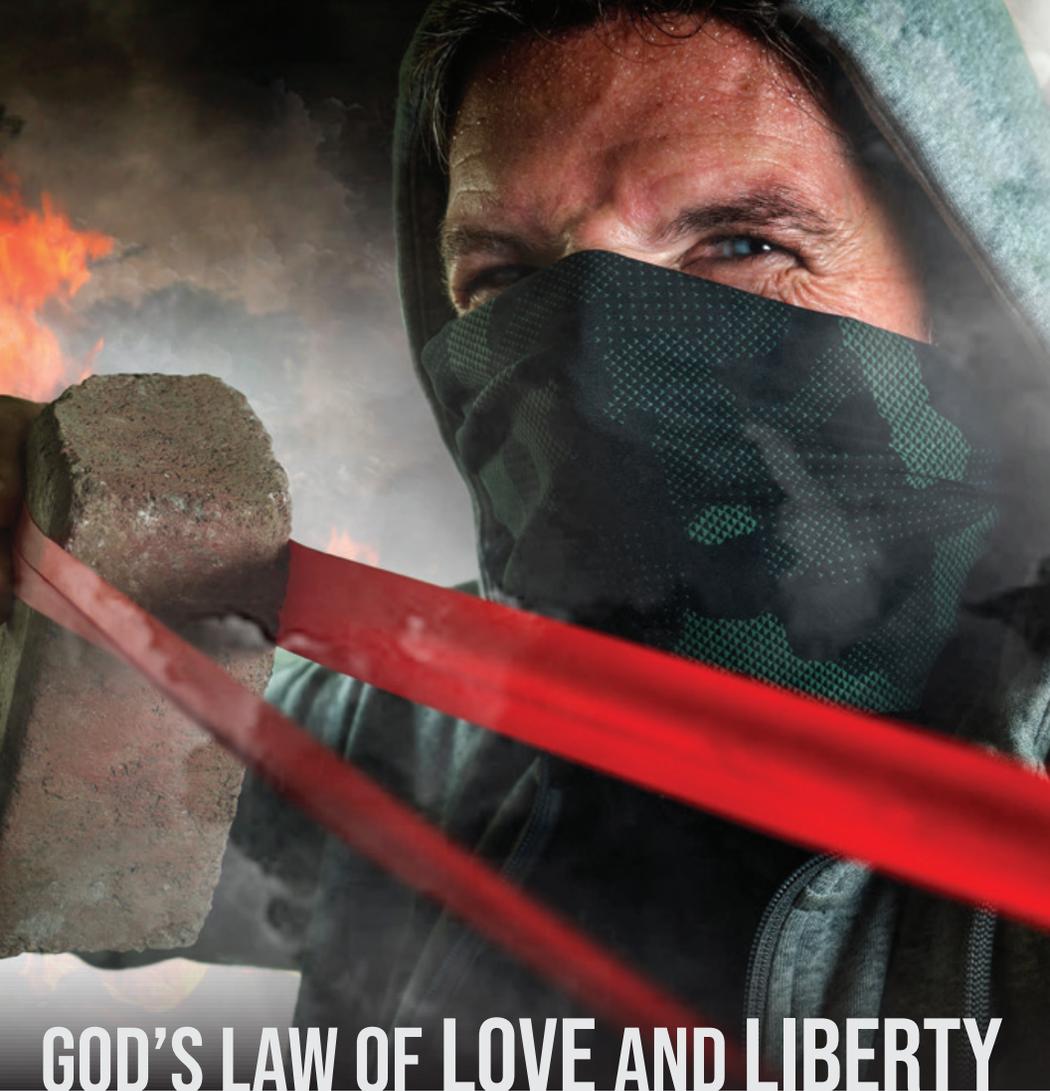
IX
Thou shalt not bear false witness
against thy neighbour.

X
Thou shalt not cover thy neighbour's house,
thou shalt not cover thy neighbour's wife,
nor his manservant, nor his maidservant,
nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing
that is thy neighbour's.



3ABN BIBLE STUDY GUIDES
Looking Higher

GOD'S LAW OF LOVE AND LIBERTY



GOD'S LAW OF LOVE AND LIBERTY

Imagine a world where there is no law, no boundaries, no restraint. In this world everyone does what is right in his own eyes. Each person takes what he wants to take, obeys any desire for pleasure, and only looks out for himself. Sadly, some people have experienced this kind of world, and the result is selfishness, chaos, and fear. Those who value freedom know that when a government makes good laws, its citizens may live in freedom, with peace and happiness. God's government is the Universe. His citizens may experience the highest freedom, peace, and happiness—but only if there is a perfect law.

1 Does God have a dependable way He governs the Universe?

Matthew 6:10 "... Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

God has a single will for Heaven and Earth. It is His Law, which expresses what He is like. Like the God who gave it, "the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Romans 7:12). God's Law is obeyed in Heaven by "angels, who excel in strength, who do His word, heeding the voice of His word" (Psalm 103:20). This is the law of love Satan rejected in Heaven. Dependable order is the basis of everything God has created. He has "appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth" (Jeremiah 33:25) so that even nature is established on unchanging laws from God.

2 What gives God the right to tell me what to do?

Psalm 100:3 "Know that the Lord, He is God; it is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; we are His people and the sheep of His pasture."

We belong to God, who made us and loves us. "Does He not see my ways, and count all my steps?" (Job 31:4). He has both authority and complete wisdom to instruct us in the best way to live. What a blessing to know that "the Lord is good" (Psalm 34:8) and that His law can be trusted.

3 Where did God's Law come from?

Psalm 78:1 "Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth."

God shared His Law audibly with His own voice so it could be understood, remembered, and shared. His words reveal to us His thoughts and His character. "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil ..." (Jeremiah 29:11).

4 What is God's Law that He spoke for all people?

Exodus 20:1-17 "And God spoke all these words, saying:

[1st Commandment] "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:2-3).

[2nd Commandment] "You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who

love Me and keep My commandments” (Exodus 20:4–6).

[3rd Commandment] “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain” (Exodus 20:7).

[4th Commandment] “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. For in six days the



**“Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.”
Exodus 20:12**

Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it” (Exodus 20:8–11).

[5th Commandment] “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you” (Exodus 20:12).

[6th Commandment] “You shall not murder” (Exodus 20:13).

[7th Commandment] “You shall not commit adultery” (Exodus 20:14).

[8th Commandment] “You shall not steal” (Exodus 20:15).

[9th Commandment] “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor” (Exodus 20:16).

[10th Commandment] “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s” (Exodus 20:17).

These are God’s Ten Commandments—brief, simple, and easy to remem-

ber. Four commands for loving God, and six for loving our fellow man. They deal with our actions, words, and thoughts—as well as our time, priorities, and relationships. They are not recommendations, nor are they multiple choice. To ignore, omit, or alter even one of them slightly, is to break the entire Law and sin against God (James 2:10–11).

These instructions are not hidden away in just one part of the Bible, but are repeated to a new generation of people in Deuteronomy 5:6–21, showing that they do not change from one generation to the next.

Hundreds of texts in both the Old and New Testament confirm we are to obey God’s commands. The very last chapter of the Bible reminds us that “Blessed are those who do His commandments, that they may have the right to the tree of life” (Revelation 22:14).

5 Did God’s Law begin when He spoke it to the people of Israel in Exodus 20, or was it known before?

1 John 3:8 “... the devil has sinned from the beginning...”

Romans 5:12 “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”

The Law of God has been His standard for all eternity, as long as He has existed. Even in Heaven, Satan chose to turn away from God’s Law and sin. “... sin is lawlessness” (1 John 3:4). God’s Law was known to Adam, who sinned in the Garden of Eden, before there were any cultural or national groups. And God says that Abraham, who lived over 500 years before God spoke His Law in Exodus 20, “obeyed My voice and kept My charge, My commandments, My statutes, and My laws” (Genesis 26:5). Read Genesis 4:7, Genesis 13:13 and Exodus 16:23 for other examples showing that when God spoke the Ten Commandments, He was just putting on display what was already known.

“... when God spoke the Ten Commandments, He was just putting on display what was already known.”





“God offers freedom to enjoy His blessing without sin ...”

6 Can God change His Law or set it aside?

Luke 16:17, NIV “It is easier for heaven and earth to disappear than for the least stroke of a pen to drop out of the Law.”

Psalms 111:7–8 “... All His precepts are sure. They stand fast forever and ever, and are done in truth and uprightness.”

Psalms 89:34 “My covenant I will not break, nor alter the word that has gone out of My lips.”

Man-made laws change with time, but God’s Word is clear that “the law of the Lord is perfect” (Psalm 19:7). Like God, who does not change (Malachi 3:6), His Law does not change, either.

7 Does God’s Law limit my freedom and place me in bondage?

Psalms 119:45 “And I will walk at liberty, for I seek Your precepts.”

James 2:12 “So speak and so do as those who will be judged by the law of liberty.”

God offers freedom to enjoy His blessing without sin; His gifts are not bondage. When we resist God’s commands, we refuse His blessing, because God does not bless the path of sin and death. Bondage is to live in sin resulting in death (Romans 6:23). “... whoever commits sin is a slave of sin” (John 8:34). Because of Satan’s deceptions about God’s Law, our selfish desire for sin leads us to feel restricted by what He commands.

Psalms 19:11 “Moreover by them Your servant is warned, and in keeping them there is great reward.”

Psalms 119:165 “Great peace have those who love Your law, and nothing causes them to stumble.”

God’s Law is not a collection of unreasonable demands. Instead, it is a description of the happy life God desires for you. It lovingly warns

of the danger of sin so we may enjoy the freedom of obedience, as the angels do in Heaven. This is why David teaches us to say, “Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day” (Psalm 119:97), and Jesus said, “My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me” (John 4:34). “His commandments are not burdensome” (1 John 5:3); they bring rejoicing to the heart and light to the eyes (Psalm 19:8).

8 Will I be saved from sin by obeying the Law well enough?

Romans 3:20 “Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.”

You can’t unbreak the law. Trying hard to obey God cannot turn back the consequence of death or earn eternal life (Galatians 3:21). The cure you need must be provided by Someone who has not sinned Himself. But don’t throw out the Law because it doesn’t undo the consequence of sin. That would be like throwing away your house key because it doesn’t start your car.

9 What is the purpose of God’s Law if obedience doesn’t save me?

Romans 7:7 “... I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’”

God’s Law is the perfect standard that shows unmistakably that “all have sinned” (Romans 3:23). God’s Law does not show mercy; it just shows the truth by comparing our sinful characters to the perfect character of God that we are meant to have. It is like a stethoscope that can’t cure us, but convinces us of the extent of the problem and our need for a cure, “so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful” (Romans 7:13).

Romans 10:4 “For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

The word “end” is translated from the Greek word *telos*, which depicts a goal, a destination, or a purpose. Through God’s Law, we become dissatisfied with sin in our lives and desire the gospel—God’s help through Jesus. The Law leads us straight to Jesus and His perfect character. God’s goal is that we will accept His forgiveness for our past sins and be changed to reflect what He shows us in the character of Jesus.

10 Can Jesus’ death set aside God’s Law?

Romans 3:31 “Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not! On the contrary, we establish the law.”

Romans 6:14–15 “For sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under law but under grace. What then? Shall we sin because we are not under law but under grace? Certainly not!”

Even faith in Jesus’ death does not make the Law of God void. By putting our faith in Him, we are no longer under the Law’s condemnation and penalty. But God’s mercy is not permission to sin (break the law); it leads us to repentance—turning from sin toward His Law (Romans 2:4).

On the night before Jesus died, He prayed, “O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me” (Matthew 26:39). The cup was the full penalty for sin that Jesus experienced in our place (see Revelation 14:9–10). But there was no other way to save sinners. Jesus’ death on the Cross is proof that the Law cannot be set aside. When, on the Cross, Jesus prayed, “Father, forgive them” (Luke 23:34), He did not ask the Father to remove the Law, but to remove the penalty for breaking the Law. Forgiveness takes away the consequence of sin, but does not remove the Law. If God’s Law were set aside, there would be no sin, and we would not need forgiveness through Jesus.

11 What did Jesus say about the Law?

Matthew 5:17 “Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.”

Matthew 19:17 “... But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments.”

John 12:50 “And I know that His command is everlasting life....”

Isaiah spoke prophetically of Jesus, saying, “He will exalt the law and make it honorable” (Isaiah 42:21). Jesus demonstrated perfect obedience to God’s Law, revealing an exact example of the character of God.

Jesus responded to an “expert” in the Law who tested Him by asking, “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” (Matthew 22:36). Jesus replied (by quoting from Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18): “‘You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets” (Matthew 22:37–40). All of God’s Law continues to hang on the one principle of God’s character: Love—to God and to people.

12 Can I choose to love God without obeying God’s commandments?

John 14:21 “He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me”

1 Timothy 1:5 “Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure

“Do we then make void the law through faith? Certainly not!”
Romans 3:31



heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.”

Amos 3:3 “Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?”

Love is not a substitute for obedience, and it cannot be separated from obedience. Genuine love motivates true obedience from the heart. They go hand in hand. While we are not saved by our obedience, when we turn our back on God’s Law, we walk away from His friendship and His salvation.

13 Is there a solution for sinners who are guilty of breaking God’s Law?

There is a solution for each sinner who has broken God’s Law. God gave Israel another law to point forward to the solution which is Jesus, the sacrifice for our sins.

Leviticus 6:8–9 “Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Command Aaron and his sons, saying, “This is the law of the burnt offering: The burnt offering shall be on the hearth upon the altar all night until morning, and the fire of the altar shall be kept burning on it.’””

Just as governments have different kinds of rules that are all described with the word, “law,” God also has more than one law, each with a different purpose and duration. We read the detailed instructions of this law of symbolic sacrifices and rituals in the last half of the books of Exodus and Leviticus. Paul referred to this law as “the law of commandments contained in ordinances” (Ephesians 2:15). It is sometimes called “the ceremonial law” or “the law of Moses,” because it contained symbolic ceremonies, and God gave it through Moses, rather than by His own voice. The ceremonial law established ordinances regarding priests (Hebrews 7:15), offerings (Hebrews 8:4), sacrifices for sin (Hebrews 9:22), festivals like the Passover (Hebrews 10:1), and a physical Sanctuary on Earth (Exodus 25:8). These instructions were a separate law that were not included in the Ten Commandments. The ceremonial law instructed those living before Jesus’ death on how to put their faith in Jesus by symbolically acting out His life and death for their sins many years before He was born. Jesus

brought this law to an end when His life fulfilled the symbols contained in the ceremonial law (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14). Today, we have an even clearer understanding of God's Plan of Salvation by studying the symbols of Jesus' love for us in the ceremonial law.

14 How did God set apart His Ten Commandment Law as separate from the ceremonial law?

The difference between God's moral Law, the Ten Commandments, and the ceremonial law of Moses is clear when they are compared side-by-side.

God's Moral Law—The Ten Commandments

a. Given by God's own Voice to all the people gathered together, accompanied by lightning, thunder, an earthquake, smoke, fire, and the sound of a trumpet (Exodus 20:18-19)

b. Called the royal law (James 2:8)

c. Also called the "Ten Commandments" (Deuteronomy 4:13), and God "added no more" (Deuteronomy 5:22)

d. Written by God's finger (Exodus 31:18)

e. Inscribed on stone prepared by God (Exodus 24:12)

f. Placed inside the ark of God's Covenant (Deuteronomy 10:5)

g. Points out our sin (Romans 3:20; 7:7)

h. Lasts forever (Matthew 5:18)

God's Ceremonial Law

a. Given through Moses, who shared it with the people by his own voice (Exodus 35:4)

b. Called the law of Moses (1 Corinthians 9:9)

c. Also called the "Book of the Law of Moses" (Joshua 8:31), and God continued to reveal instruction through Moses (Exodus 25:1; Leviticus 1:1; Deuteronomy 10:13)

d. Written by Moses (Deuteronomy 31:24)

e. Written in a book (scroll) (2 Chronicles 35:12)

f. Placed beside the Ark of God's Covenant (Deuteronomy 31:26)

g. Points to Jesus, the solution for sin (John 1:29)

h. Ended at the Cross (Ephesians 2:15; Colossians 2:14)



15 I am weak and sinful. Is it even possible for me to love and obey God's Law?

2 Corinthians 12:9 "And He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness.' ..."

Ephesians 2:10 "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

Yes, it is possible. "... with God all things are possible" (Mark 10:27). This is why Jesus said to the woman caught in sin, "Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more" (John 8:11). You were designed by God for good works—for obedience, not disobedience. Don't dwell on your weakness; instead, look to God's power and His love for you. What God commands, He gives us power to do through His grace, so "that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man" (Ephesians 3:16).

16 How does God make it possible for sinful people like me to love and obey His Law?

Jeremiah 31:33 "... I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people."

Romans 8:3-4 "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

The Holy Spirit within us imprints a love for God's Law in our very thoughts, so that obedience flows naturally from love because we know how much "He first loved us" (1 John 4:19). This is what the Bible calls the "New Covenant" (Jeremiah 31:31). In God's new covenant, His people change because they are motivated by God's love. But the Law does not change. It is right there in our heart, keeping us walking closely with God. "The law of his God is in his heart; none of his steps shall slide" (Psalm 37:31).

17 Do I need to follow God's Law if I have already been saved?

Psalms 119:44 "So shall I keep Your law continually, forever and ever."

We not only find grace to pardon our sins, but also "find grace to help in time of need" (Hebrews 4:16). God's grace gives power to continue walking with Him in obedience today and every day. When final decisions of loyalty have been made right before Jesus returns, God's people are described as "those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus" (Revelation 14:12). This is reason to praise Him!

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR MY LIFE TODAY?



1. God's Law is like a spiritual check-up. No one thinks they need a doctor if they don't feel any symptoms. What symptoms of sin does God's Law show you in your life? James 2:10–11 reminds us that one sinful choice makes us 100 percent guilty. So don't be fooled by thinking, "I'm not as bad as that person." God invites you to compare yourself to Him.

2. What prayer will you pray in your own words to accept your loving Heavenly Father's gift of forgiveness through Jesus? As you pray, claim God's promise in Leviticus 20:7–8: "Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am the Lord your God. And you shall keep My statutes, and perform them: I am the Lord who sanctifies you."

3. Jesus says, "My yoke is easy, and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:30). Will you ask God to help you take pleasure in obeying Him and loving His Law? Then Psalm 1:2 will be a description of your life: "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and in His law he meditates day and night."

4. Satan is enraged that there are still people "who keep the commandments of God and have the testimony of Jesus Christ" (Revelation 12:17). He attacked God's instructions in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3:1–4), and still devises all sorts of objections to God's Law that distort the Word of God. Will you ask God to give you a discerning mind to recognize every attack against His Law? Then you can say, "the commandment is a lamp, and the law a light; reproofs of instruction are the way of life" (Proverbs 6:23).

5. Who do you know that needs to hear what you have learned?

"How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news ..."
(Isaiah 52:7).

Additional Notes:

WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS FOR ME IN THE LAW OF GOD?



1. God's Law is Good News. Loving obedience is part of the gospel. "But they have not all obeyed the gospel ..." (Romans 10:16).

2. Human laws are imperfect and selfish, but God's Law is only for our good. "You came down also on Mount Sinai, and spoke with them from heaven, and gave them just ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments" (Nehemiah 9:13).

3. Loving obedience strengthens your friendship with Jesus. He said, "I and My Father are one" (John 10:30). The Law of God is Jesus' Law, and He instructs us as His friends to "observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20).

4. God's Law is love. "Love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:10).

5. By the power of God's grace, you can obey His Law, even though you are weak. "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

6. God's Law keeps us from evil. "The wicked have laid a snare for me, Yet I have not strayed from Your precepts" (Psalm 119:110).

7. God's Law gives true wisdom that will not fail. "You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For they are ever with me" (Psalm 119:98).

LESSON SUMMARY

1. God wants each of us to be happy and to be like Him. He gives His perfect Law as a blessing.

2. In the Ten Commandments, we see both God's character and God's plan for our lives.

3. No one, regardless of where or when they live, is excluded from the blessing of following God's Law.

4. You can depend on God's Law to never change or be set aside.

5. God's Law opens our eyes to see our sin, so we can look to God's amazing love in Jesus, who saves us from sin.

6. When we love and trust God, we will want to obey Him, because it is a joy, with great reward.

7. The strength to obey God's Law, even when it is not easy, comes from the power of God's grace in us.

Additional Notes:

TRUTH LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN IT!



5

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Looking Higher

THE POWER TO CHANGE



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STUDY GUIDE

4