

4. Read Matthew 19:1-12. Why do the disciples conclude it's better not to marry after hearing Jesus' teaching on divorce?

5. How does Jesus explain the certificate of divorce commanded by Moses (i.e., commanded by God)? (Remember, the command was not to divorce but to give a certificate of divorce whenever a man divorces a woman, thus giving her the right to remarry.)

6. How does the fact that God accommodates our brokenness in his commands help you to love God's commands? (There are more facts we will cover next week, but how does this one fact begin to open up new avenues of understanding God's laws?)

7. If we really understood that God's commands are lovely, how might this help us obey his commands?

Good & Beautiful Life (The Sermon on the Mount) - Part 5
"How Can I Obey Jesus When Jesus Commands the Impossible?" (Part 1)
Matthew 5:19-48

How Can I Obey Jesus When Jesus Commands the Impossible?

1. L_____ God's commands.

Psalm 119: ⁹⁷ Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long.

Deuteronomy 21: ¹⁰ When you go to war against your enemies and the Lord your God delivers them into your hands and you take captives, ¹¹ if you notice among the captives a beautiful woman and are attracted to her, you may take her as your wife. ¹² Bring her into your home and have her shave her head, trim her nails ¹³ and put aside the clothes she was wearing when captured. After she has lived in your house and mourned her father and mother for a full month, then you may go to her and be her husband and she shall be your wife. ¹⁴ If you are not pleased with her, let her go wherever she wishes. You must not sell her or treat her as a slave, since you have dishonored her.

Can you love that law? I think you can begin to love it, if you know how God's laws and commands _____.

What do I need to know about God's commands in order to love them?

- God's individual commands are often accommodations of his ideals to our _____.

Matthew 19: ³ Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?"⁴ "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,'⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'?"⁶ So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate."⁷ "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?"⁸ Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning.⁹ I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another woman commits adultery."

God is not just accommodating their brokenness in Deuteronomy 21, he's _____ the usual practices of their culture. Deuteronomy 21 is profoundly counter-cultural.

- God's commands are based on his ideals.
- God's ideals reflect his character.
- God commands because he wants what's best for us (i.e., he commands because he loves).
- A day is coming when there will be no more need to accommodate our brokenness.

2. Hold tightly to God's grace.

3. Practice the rhythms of joyful obedience.

Resources:

- Impossible Commands: How to Obey God When It Seems That You Can't by Jonty Allcock.
- The Bible Project Podcast (not the videos), How to Read the Bible Series, five episodes on Law beginning April 29, 2019.

Personal Reflection & Small Group Questions

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking back over your notes from this week's sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Read Matthew 5:19-48. List Jesus' impossible commands from this passage.
3. Reflect on the following passages in light of the following question: Why is it be hard (or even impossible) to keep God's commands if we don't love God's commands?
Deuteronomy 6: ⁶ These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts.
Psalm 1: ¹ Blessed is the one... ² ...whose delight is in the law of the Lord, and who meditates on his law day and night.
Psalm 119: ¹⁶⁷ I obey your statutes, for I love them greatly.