

A BLUEPRINT FOR FREEDOM

When we think of *freedom*, we often picture doing what we want, without restrictions. But the story of the Bible offers a deeper, more surprising vision. In **Exodus 20**, God gives the Ten Commandments *after* rescuing His people from slavery in Egypt. He doesn't give these rules to limit them – but to form them into a free people who can live well together and flourish.

This passage shows us that freedom isn't just about what we are liberated *from*; it's about learning to live for something greater – in relationship with God and others. True freedom includes structure, purpose, and love.

Context and Structure

Read verse 2.

- 1. What does God remind the Israelites of before giving the commandments? Why is this significant?**
- 2. How does the order of God's actions (*rescue first, then commands*) shape the way we understand the purpose of the commandments?**

Understanding the Commands

Read the first 4 commandments (v.3-11).

- 3. What do they teach about how Israel is to relate to God?**
- 4. What kind of freedom is found in having no other gods?**

When God gave the Ten Commandments to Israel, He was doing more than just handing out rules – He was helping a group of ex-slaves become a new kind of nation. In Egypt, they had seen power abused, people treated like objects, and gods who demanded a lot but gave nothing back. Now that God had rescued them, they needed a new identity – one built on love, justice, trust, and worship of the one true God. The Ten Commandments gave them that foundation. They weren't just rules, but a roadmap for living in the freedom of discovering right relationships with God and with each other.

Look at the rest of the commandments (v.12-17).

5. What do each of these commands protect the Israelites from? What aspects of a fallen human nature are being identified and guarded against?

e.g. Keep the Sabbath	<i>Guards against the Israelites becoming self-reliant, reminding them that God meets each need. Also highlights the human tendency to exploit and abuse the powerless (and creation).</i>
Honour your parents	
Don't murder	
Don't commit adultery	
Don't steal	
Don't give false testimony	
Don't covet	

6. How would these shape the new society of Israel? How might these help a community flourish?

Applying it to Real Life

7. Which of these commandments is the hardest for you to obey?

8. How do these commandments challenge modern views of freedom and personal autonomy?

9. Why do we need constraints on our behaviour?