

## Exodus 20 (1-17) – Finding Your Blind Spot

You're driving in traffic. Your car has the power, the lane looks open, but you are in danger. You don't check your blind spot. You don't see the other car, and you hear the horn blast, or maybe you crash. In life, many people fail to check their blind spot because they don't know they even have one. Or they realize they have one but they don't know how to find it. Now some folks never even look at their blind spot because they think their car is faster and they can just charge through it and avoid hitting anything. They tell themselves it has worked before, but they are still driving dangerously, and it is only a matter of time. You better learn to check your blind spot.

Have you ever found it to be that way in your life, with your relationships, with your job, or money, or perhaps in your spiritual life? Things seem to be going smooth, and you feel like you might finally be able to get somewhere. But then, somehow, you seem to get sabotaged. You feel like you're back to the beginning, like you just can't seem to make any real progress beyond a certain point. It happens over and over again, it seems. Or maybe you're doing very well as you see it, and yet other people keep trying to warn you of something that you don't think is even a problem because you don't see it as a problem. In any case, you need to find your blind spot.

I have had many people over the years ask me to tell them what they think their "problem is"; in other words, what is their blind spot. I want to help them, and sometimes I do. Now some may ask me but they don't really want to know what I think. And really, now, what I think isn't as important as what God thinks. And there is a way that God can show you where your blind spots are. You can be asking God like David did in Psalm 139:23-24, "*Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts! And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!*" And you can get some answers. Are you interested?

Today, we are going to look at how the 10 Commandments can help you find your blind spots. And by seeing them you can ask God to help you with them. Now as soon as some people hear the phrase, "the Ten Commandments", or "the Law", in relation to the Christian life, their discernment antennas go up. And this is rightly so. After all, we know what the scriptures say about the law. As Romans 10:4 says, "*Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.*" Galatians 3:24 says *the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.* And 1 Timothy 1:8-11 – *Now we know that the law is good, if one uses it lawfully, understanding this, that the law is not laid down for the just but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and sinners.*

So before we move on I want to explain to you how the law relates to you. There are three uses of the law. First, the law condemns us so that we will flee to Christ. We cannot meet the standard of the law, therefore we appeal to God through Christ for mercy and grace. Second, the law serves to restrain sin in society. The law cannot change human hearts. It can, however, serve as a limited measure of justice on this earth, until the final judgment is realized. Third, the law shows us how redeemed people should behave. It serves as an instrument for the people of God to learn to live holy lives, giving him honor and glory.

It is this third use of the law that we are talking about today. Now once again, the law in itself gives no inward power to fulfil it. But it can be used as a tool. The law can lead you to

justification, as you cling to Christ for the forgiveness of sin. But the law can also lead you to sanctification, as you cling to Christ for the forsaking of sin.

The opposite of this is what we call antinomianism, which means “against the law”, or living as if God somehow wants you to ignore holiness. Now hear me clearly; Christians are not under the Old Testament Law. Jesus fulfilled the OT law for us. But Christians are called to live by the law of Christ. The law of Christ is not an extensive list of legal codes. It is a law of love (cf. Matthew 22:37-40). You can’t do that perfectly, but you can do it purposefully, and the Ten Commandments can help you see where your blind spots are. And then you can confess, repent, and grow in grace.

You see, the Ten Commandments represent the whole family of sins. They mean much more than they actually say. Psalm 119:96 says, “*your commandment is exceedingly broad.*” The commandments are categories, not just simple rules. They do give direct orders (the Eighth commandment, you shall not steal, is literal), but each commandment has sweeping implications (stealing includes cheating, etc.). You shall not steal means that, but also much more than that.

It is in this way that we will look at each commandment, and with God’s help you will see where you may be missing the mark. You can allow the Holy Spirit to use the Ten Commandments to reveal your heart. And ask him to change you.

You shouldn’t look at this as an exercise to be fearful of. Don’t look at it in fear, look at it in faith. 1 John 1:9 says, “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” You see, even for someone who is already forgiven, the first step in conversion from sin is confession of sin, and it leads to refreshing and reinvigorating your life. So this can be an exciting time, even if it is a very convicting time.

Just hearing this today will not accomplish the goal. You’ll have to take this framework and use it for your own extended time of self-examination. You won’t be able to just have some thoughts, say some prayers, make some decisions, and be done with it. Oh if you will hear this message as it is intended, if you will repent, and not resist or rebel, it will be a great start. But it won’t be a finish. As we go through this message today ideas will be popping up in your mind and heart. But you’ll need to follow through on this, and go through the process with just you and God together. And you’ll probably want to do it more than once in the course of your life. This can really help you, but you can’t just go through some process without your heart in it and expect that it will work automatically. It is unfortunate how many good ideas become idols in the hands of people looking for a magic bullet.

This will be the law leading to the gospel, for the believer. We have talked about how this works before. Here is the standard, you don’t meet the standard, Jesus meets the standard for you, in him you meet the standard, and you are justified. Now as an act of worship, an act of faith, you follow the standard, not perfectly, but purposefully, and you become more like him. Your following is not what saves you, Jesus does, but you follow him because you are saved. This will produce thanksgiving in your life.

But I want to illustrate thankfulness a little more.

There are two children and both receive a bike for Christmas. One child tells their father how thankful they are for the bike. They are sincere, and as time goes by, they always make sure to tell the father how thankful they are. This is good. But this child never rides the bike. They never adorn it; they don't really make it their own. They never really enjoy the bike. It doesn't really make a difference in what they do. It just sits there and gathers dust and rusts away. This child never really learns to ride the bike, and as they grow up, they never really want to ride a bike.

The other child also tells their father how thankful they are for the bike. But this child rides the bike, often. This child decorates the bike, maintains the bike, tells other people about the bike. They get a lot of enjoyment out of the bike. It makes a difference in what they do, and when they grow up, they still love to ride bikes. And they ride with their father, and they pass this love for bike riding on to their own children.

Now having heard this story, tell me, which child was most thankful for the bike? It is obvious, isn't it? The child who used the bike is the one who was most thankful for it. Now both children had their father's love. The one who used the bike didn't earn any more love from their father than the other child did. But the experience was deeper and fuller for the second child. They lived in the experience of that loving gift.

It is the same with God's grace. In terms of your sanctification, grace is not opposed to effort, it is opposed to merit. And going through this effort can help you to grow in grace.

I am going to use something I saw by Pastor Colin Smith. The internet link is in the notes ([unlockingthebible.org/10-questions-for-examining-your-life/](http://unlockingthebible.org/10-questions-for-examining-your-life/)). Pastor Smith takes the Ten Commandments and gives us helpful categories and questions, by which you can examine your life. You will want the notes, because I am going to go through the questions rather quickly. We could say a lot more, but time won't allow that right now. This is just to whet your appetite and get you to do this on your own time, you and God alone. And so you will want the notes so that you can use this after you leave the service. That is if you want to find your blind spots.

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Examining your life is essential to your growth as a Christian believer. Seeing your own sins and failings will make it possible for you to confess, repent, find forgiveness, and grow in grace. These are the steps by which we move forward in the Christian life. If you can't see your own failings, you can't make progress. Self-examination is also a dangerous business. Satan will try to sabotage your self-examination by pulling you down into self-condemnation and despair. So be careful. While you have one eye focused on your sin and failure, keep the other eye focused on God's grace given to you in Jesus Christ. God has given two gifts to help you examine yourself successfully. These are his Word and his Spirit. The Word will show you sins and failings. The Spirit will open your eyes to see them. Self-examination, rightly pursued, will bring great benefits to your Christian life.

### **Three Guidelines for Self-Examination**

1. **Be intentional.** Set aside a specific time and a place where you can be alone. Bring your Bible, a pen, and some paper. Expect God to show you things that need to be confessed and changed. You may choose to tell a friend that you have set aside time to examine your life. You might ask them to pray for you, and commit to share what God has shown you.

2. Be specific. Ask the Holy Spirit to open your eyes to see what is going on in your life. Read the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17). They point to ten areas where we stumble and where we can grow. Work through the ten questions that follow, noting what God brings to your mind.

3. Be a believer. Bring what God shows you to him in confession *as a believer*. Pray, believing in the shed blood of Jesus Christ, so that the sins you are confessing should be forgiven. Pray, believing in the power of the Holy Spirit, who will enable you to change. Pray, with confidence that God is gracious and loving towards you, and that he is working in your life.

## 10 Questions for Examining Your Life

1. First Commandment: God. *You shall have no other gods before me* (Ex 20:3). What disappointments has God allowed in your life? How have these affected your love for him? Pain and disappointment often reveal the degree to which we love and desire God's gifts more than we love and desire him. Your confession will begin here.

2. Second Commandment: Worship. *You shall not make for yourselves an idol* (Ex 20:4). In what ways would you want God to be different from who he is? The desire for God to be different is idolatry. It shows discontent or dissatisfaction with who he is or what he does. This is sin and will be part of your confession.

3. Third Commandment: False Religion. *You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God* (Ex 20:7). In what ways do you least reflect the image and likeness of God? Being a Christian means that you bear the name of Christ. People make judgments about Christ by what they see in those who bear his name. Use this part of your confession to ask God for growth in areas where you need to better reflect his character.

4. Fourth Commandment: Time, Work, and Rest. *Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work* (Ex 20:8-9). How could you improve what you offer in your working life? How can you better order your life so that you complete your work and preserve time for God and for other relationships God has entrusted to you? God has set a pattern for your work and rest in the way that he created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. The pattern of God's work gives us a template for work, reminding us that God calls us to be productive and to find joy in the work that he has given us to do. Take a careful look at the vigor of your work and the balance of your life.

5. Fifth Commandment: Authority. *Honor your father and your mother* (Ex 20:12). Who has God placed in a position of authority in your life? What are they saying to you? How are you responding? Parents are the first authority figures God places in your life. Difficulty in submitting to others often indicates difficulties in submitting to God's authority over your life. Examine yourself carefully here.

6. Sixth Commandment: Peace. *You shall not murder* (Ex 20:13). With whom are you most angry and frustrated at this time? Is there someone with whom you are looking to get even? Are you harboring resentment in your heart? Our Lord traced murder back to its roots in anger (Matt

5:22). You may not be able to bring healing to every relationship, but you can guard your own heart. Confess any bitterness in your heart to God. Ask him to cleanse it from your soul.

7. Seventh Commandment: Purity. *You shall not commit adultery* (Ex 20:14). In what ways have you given expression to lust? Jesus traced adultery back to lust in the heart (Matt 5:28). Lust will destroy your soul if you feed it and allow it to grow in your life. Your thoughts reveal who you are in your heart. Make an honest confession to God as you examine this area of your life.

8. Eighth Commandment: Integrity. *You shall not steal* (Ex 20:15). How can I take less and give more? God gives. Satan steals. The essence of stealing is that you take what God has trusted to someone else, but do not give what God has entrusted to you. Use this part of your self-examination to look at what you are taking from others and what you are giving back. Look especially at what you are receiving from God and what you are giving back to him.

9. Ninth Commandment: Truth. *You shall not give false testimony* (Ex 20:16). What has God trusted to me? In the ninth commandment God calls you to be a person who can be trusted. Make a list of what God has entrusted to you. Take an honest look at how you are being faithful or unfaithful with that trust. Ask God to prepare you for what he will entrust to you in the future.

10. Tenth Commandment: Contentment. *You shall not covet* (Ex 20:17). What are the greatest desires of your heart right now? How do these relate to God's purpose in your life? All of our sins flow from the root problem of sin that lies in the human heart. Being a sinner, you desire the wrong things. You don't find joy or satisfaction in the right things. That is why God gives you his Spirit to change and renew your heart. Use this final part of your self-examination to look beyond sins you have committed to sins that may be growing undetected in your heart. Ask God to cleanse your heart of wrong desires and to keep you from future sins.

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Now I went through that quickly, and I'm sure you realize that you need to do this on your own. But you should do it. As a believer, you can look into the eyes of God without having to fear that he will abandon you. This is looking into the eyes of God with the eyes of faith. He already knows you, better than you know yourself. You're asking him to help you see how things really are with you. You know that you can't see eye to eye with God unless he reaches down and takes you up into his arms. He is too high, too lofty, too holy, but even though you know you don't measure up, because of Jesus, he looks at you with love. And as you look at him with desire, trusting that he loves you and can change you, you are changed to be more like him.

It is a fearful thing to see how holy God is, but it is a faithful thing to rejoice in that. You don't look at how great you are, or how far you have come. You continue to see how great he is, and how far you still have to go, but also how far he will bring you. The gospel means God will bring you all the way home, but it also means you are excited about the journey, as you continue to realize that the gospel also means that you are already home, in Christ.

If you don't know him, you have the ultimate blind spot.