



The Ten Commandments

Exodus 19, 20:1-21

"Dude, this totally rocks!" Cody yelled to no one in particular as he spun the great ship's captain's wheel hard to the starboard side. His uncle, Captain Billy Ocean, had put him in charge of steering the ship for a few hours. Captain Billy had instructed him to "maintain an even keel," and Cody was trying hard to obey; even though he was not quite sure what that meant. Cody's smile grew even bigger as he saw the Captain striding across the deck towards him.

"Cody! Cody!" Captain Billy Ocean's deep voice called out.

Cody gave his best sailor salute to his uncle. **"Aye, aye, Uncle Captain Billy!"**

The captain was not smiling. **"Cody what have you been doing up here?"** he asked as he stopped directly in front of his nephew.

"Driving the boat, Uncle Captain Billy." Cody proudly replied.

"Do you realize we've been sailing in circles?" Captain Billy asked calmly. **"I'm getting dizzy."**

Cody's smile disappeared. **"That's not possible. Remember you told me to focus on an island in the distance and steer towards that?"**

"Aye, that's true." Captain Billy agreed.

"Well, I've been focusing on that big, icy island over there!" Cody pointed towards a large, jagged mountain of bright blue ice.

The Captain shook his head. **"Cody, that's an iceberg. Icebergs float and move!"**

"Oops, my bad, dude!" Cody apologized.

"Listen closely, son," Captain Billy instructed. **"You have to always steer your ship towards something that's solid as a rock."**

Cody was confused. **"So, what am I s'posed to follow?"** he asked.

"Well, you could start by following God like the Israelites did." The Captain replied.

"You mean the dudes that were with Moses?" Cody asked.

Captain Billy nodded. "Aye, the Israelites kept their eyes on something solid as a rock. They followed the Ten Commandments."

"The Ten Commandments?" Cody asked. "You mean, all those 'Thou shalt not' rules?"

"Oh, they are so much more than rules. They was a great traysure that God sent us. Let me get out the Traysure map and show ya, right now!" Captain Billy removed his Bible from the Treasure Chest and quickly turned to Exodus 19. "All righty, where did we leave the Israelites?" He quizzed Cody.

"In the desert eating manna and quail!" Cody exclaimed.

"Very good!" Captain Billy congratulated. "God was sending them all that they needed. Then Moses went up to meet with God and God said to him, 'Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession.'

"Awesome! What's a covenant?" Cody asked.

"It's a promise between God and man," the captain explained. "God was going to give Moses the Ten Commandments. They were the very important laws that God wanted His people to follow. He told Moses to tell them to take a bath and wash their clothes, behave purely and be ready on the third day."

"What happened on the third day?" Cody wondered.

"They got ready and on the morning of the third day suddenly there was all kinds of thunder and lightning, like a huge rainstorm without the rain!" Captain Billy answered. "And then this thick cloud covered the top of the mountain! Next, thar came a loud trumpet blast! Then Moses led God's people out of the camp and they lined up in front of Mt. Sinai, being careful not to touch the mountain."

"Why couldn't they touch it?" Cody asked.

"Because God had said to keep it holy!" Captain Billy answered. He continued reading. "Smoke covered Mount Sinai, because the Lord came down on it in fire. The smoke rose up from it like smoke from a furnace. The whole mountain trembled and shook. The sound of the trumpet got louder and louder. Then Moses spoke. And the voice of God answered him."

"And God gave them the Ten Commandments!" Cody finished. "Those must have been real special if God went to all that trouble to give them to us!"

"Aye, God made those rules to help us love Him and love each other well." Captain Billy replied.

"So how do we show our love to God?" Cody asked.

"Well, for starters, we follow rule one, 'You shall have no other gods before Me.' Rule two is like it, 'You shall not bow down to idols or worship them.'"

Cody thought for a moment. "Idols are things that we treat as more important than God...like surfing!"

"Aye," the captain agreed. "Then there's number three, 'You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.' That means to always speak respectfully about God. Number four is 'Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.'"

"You mean, by like going to church and resting and thinking of God?" Cody asked.

"Exactly!" said the Captain. "Then there's rule five, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and rule 6, 'You shall not murder.' Rule seven is 'You shall not commit adultery.'" The Captain paused. "Cody, do you know what that means?"

"Yes, never become a grown up!" Cody exclaimed. "I like that one!"

"No!" Captain Billy replied. "It means stay faithful to your husband or wife."

"Oh, that's a lot better!" Cody agreed. "What's number eight?"

"You shall not steal," Captain Billy answered. "And number nine is, 'You shall not give false testimony.'"

"That's like when you lie and stuff!" Cody explained.

Captain Billy nodded. "Aye, and of course, number ten, 'You shall not covet.' That means to not want something that belongs to someone else."

"Those rules God sent *are* important!" Cody stated seriously.

"Aye, and the Israelites honored God's rules by putting the stone tablets that the Ten Commandments were written on in a gold box, called the golden ark. The people took it wherever they went." said Captain Billy.

Cody smiled broadly, "They kept their eyes on the solid rock! I think I get it! We should always put God first because His rules are rock solid!"

Captain Billy patted Cody on the shoulder and carefully laid his Bible back in the Treasure Chest. "I think you might have learned something today! Now slide over and let me show you how to look for islands of real rocks so that we can stop going in circles!" Cody scooted over and let Captain Billy Ocean take the wheel.