

Such an heart

O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!
Deuteronomy 5:29

In this chapter, Moses repeats the ten commandments to the generation of Israel remaining at the end of the forty years of wilderness wanderings. That forty-year chastisement of their parents' generation came as a result of unbelieving refusal to enter into Canaan and take the land, in spite of God's promise of victory over their enemies. Now that generation had died in the wilderness, and Moses was preparing the next generation to inherit what their parents had refused. As he recounts the experience of God bringing the commandments to Israel at Sinai through the sound of His voice, there is no doubt that a large number of those listening to Moses now were present as youngsters at that initial experience. Although the basic ten commandments are obviously the same here as the original record in Exodus chapter 20, here Moses provides to this next generation some additional details that reveal further insight into the desire of God for His people.

While recalcitrant hearts may view God's law as a prohibition of their personal pleasure, this statement that the Lord made to Moses revealed His purpose in it. The previous generation had heard God's voice and seen His consuming fire upon the mount as they listened to the decalogue, and in response they begged Moses to no longer be subjected to this ominous experience, lest they die. Instead they desired Moses to be their mediator and pass along God's word to them. This response of the Lord to their request reveals that His purpose was "that it might be well with them, and with their children." And this was followed with that special qualification – "forever." This blessed state comes as a result of fearing the Lord and, therefore, desiring to keep His commandments. This is the heart of the heavenly Father for His own. He knows what brings the best for those He created. Yet how much they misunderstood His holy love for them.

May we instead learn from this that the commandments and purposes of God for us are motivated by His eternal and holy love and desire for our very best. While we know that our keeping of the commandments cannot save our souls, we understand that they will benefit our lives. With this knowledge we can say with David, as he prefigured the coming Messiah, "I delight to do thy will, O my God: yea, thy law is within my heart" (Psalm 40:8).