

"I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery." Exodus 20:2 NLT

## lectio // Exodus 20:1-21

These words open the way for the greatest set of laws known to man - the ten commandments! Wow. After the LAW is given, Moses records what the people say: "And they said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will listen. But don't let God speak directly to us, or we will die!" "Don't be afraid," Moses answered them, "for God has come in this way to test you, and so that your fear of him will keep you from sinning!" They are afraid because they had heard thunder and saw lightning and smoke coming from the mountain. Now, these were very intelligent people, but knew very little about the natural or the supernatural. I'm sure it was terrifying. Moses said something interesting, "God came that way to test them and their fear of him would keep them from sinning." Did fear work temporarily? Yes. Did it work permanently? No. Does fear work today? Maybe the same way, enough to get repentance and promises of good behavior. But does it work towards lasting change? Not really. I think it causes an immediate response of both "sorry I got caught" and "I'll never do it again" out of the human heart. However, eventually (fairly soon after), we move to hide or cover our sin from God and others just like Adam and Eve. They knew - they hid. Or, "Cain, where's your brother?" Cain: "why ask me, I'm not his boss," with extraordinary contempt and sassiness. The apostle Paul later tells us that Moses tried to keep this "control" mechanism up when he covered his head longer than necessary because he wanted the people to think God's presence was still powerfully on him.

## oratio

pray as responding to the words, phrase, sentence that God has stirred within you

Dad,

I wish fear worked, well at least more permanent than it does. It is painfully embarrassing that it doesn't work effectively. All we have is true repentance and a willingness to face our shame, have you remove it and get moving forward again. It is hard to get up from falling in the gutter of bad decisions. Some might get up quicker than others, but we all fall and eventually we all have to get up and trust you with our sin and failure. It's humiliating for us! And none of us want to fail, want to be exposed, want to anger you or disappoint you. But, WE DO. And, we do it regularly. Anyone that has lived with shame and guilt know how destructive it is to our relationship with you as well as others. Love pushes us on toward you, NOT away from you.

## contemplatio

rest in the presence of God, allowing the words revealed to take root