

“Then the Lord told Moses, “Go back down and warn the people not to break through the boundaries to see the Lord, or they will die. Even the priests who regularly come near to the Lord must purify themselves so that the Lord does not break out and destroy them.” Exodus 19:21-22 NLT

## lectio // Exodus 19:7-25

So much mystery, so much fear. Was God using fear to his advantage? There are so many passages that talk about God's holiness and not being able to even look on his face, or there would be instant death. There was obviously a huge barrier between God and man when it came to any kind of physical contact. It is heartbreaking to think of Adam and Even walking with God everyday in the cool of the evening. Or Jesus outright saying, “if you've seen me, you've seen the Father.” Here, there was no margin for error. God commands, then reminds Moses about the boundaries. Moses even gets annoyed because he's already set up the protection that God commanded. Did God want to make sure Moses understood? Was there an reason God told him three times? Did anyone even attempt to approach after the barriers were set up? God describes what to do to people IF they cross the boundary - stone them, shoot them with arrows! God uses the strangest phrase here as well, “so that the Lord doesn't BREAK OUT and destroy them.” It's like he's wild and unpredictable, like God won't be able to stop himself! Don't let that happen - Moses!!! I don't see God giving veiled threats or bluffs. What is this all about? Maybe it's so hard to even fathom because we live in an age of grace, where Jesus took the wrath and punishment for our sin and repaired the violent breach between us and God. To the point that we call him Abba Father, Daddy God. This scene out of Exodus is not a grace-filled, full-hug from Dad kind of scene. And this takes place just before God speaks the commandments to the people of Israel. God speaks through Moses but it is quite obvious that it is a frightful event. You know what's interesting, all the intense fear, thunderous commands with smoke, earthquakes and lightning and it still could not keep Israel from keeping their end of the deal nor being able to keep ANY of the commandments given. They (we) have broken all of them. Even if it was just in private.

Dad,

What a hard story to read, the backstory to you giving the ten commandments. The fear, separation and threats of instantaneous death, it leaves me so sad to think it was the only way humans (we) would listen and maybe the only way we would understand how far apart we were from you and the price it would take to restore what had been broken. It took your son, your only son, it took you yourself to make it right. What a costly grace!