

### Adult Lesson Two

# All You Need is Love!

*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might (Deuteronomy 6:5, NRSV).*

Intrinsic to the Ten Commandments is the understanding that our relationship with others is a mirror of our relationship with God. It is common in the church today to speak about the strength of someone's "spiritual life" as if it is not related to the rest of his or her existence. This is foreign to a biblical understanding of life. There is no distinction for the Jew or the first century Christian between the sacred and the secular aspects of life. How you acted at the temple or at church or while you were praying was not your "spiritual life," rather, it was your life. Neither, when you were at work or play, was there a "secular life." This, too, was your life. Formative to all this was your relationship with God. This relationship determined how you behaved in all aspects of life. It is for this reason that the first commandment is to have no gods before the LORD. Why? Because a relationship with another god would alter how one acted. The primary relationship was with the LORD. This shaped every other relationship in which one was involved. The focus of this lesson is this understanding: Who we are defines how we act, and who we are is defined by the God we serve. We are one person, not a schizophrenic collection of "lives." This truth moves the Ten Commandments out of their "spiritual corner" and allows them to interact with and affect every part of us.



#### OBJECTIVES

- Establish that what you do is determined by who you are.
- Consider the implications of a relationship defined by God.
- Determine to be defined by God and your love for him.

#### SCRIPTURE

- Deuteronomy 6:4-6
- Matthew 7:15-18

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Three copies of Handout #2.1
- Copies of Handout #2.2 for everyone in the class
- Chalk/chalkboard; marker/dry erase board; or something else to write on
- Pencils/pens

## Part 1 - The ballad of Brenda and John

Begin class by saying **Today, we are going to look at the basis or causes for the things that we do and don't do. We'll begin with a skit to help get you thinking.** Before class begins, ask three people to do the drama on Handout #2.1. Have them perform the skit now.

After they're done ask **Do you think that Brenda and John really do love each other?** (No.) **Why or Why not?** (Because they only keep their vows because they've promised to do so. If you really are in love with someone you wouldn't cheat on them or leave them if they were sick, even if you didn't have the vows to tell you that.) Explain **In a marriage relationship, you don't love someone because you keep the vows, you keep the vows because you love them. The fact is, if you love someone, there are certain things that you won't do, with or without promises. Although there may be some honor in keeping marriage vows out of duty, if love is no longer there the relationship is dead.**

Ask **Do you think that we ever behave like Brenda or John in our relationship with God, trying to prove that we are in a relationship with him because we keep the rules?** (Allow a few minutes to answer this question.)

## Part 2 - All you need is love

Have someone read Deuteronomy 6:4-6. We will look at each of these verses individually. Say **Deuteronomy 6:4 is one of the most quoted and important verses in the Old Testament. Does anyone know why?** (The Israelites are affirming that the LORD (Yahwah) is their God, and they will serve him only. In a polytheistic setting both of these are important statements. Most Canaanites had a primary deity they worshiped. They also kept many smaller gods, such as a war god or a sun god, that they worshiped when they needed what that particular god had to offer. The Israelites are affirming that the LORD is their primary God, and they will not worship any secondary gods.) Explain **The problem of worshipping secondary gods would plague the people throughout their existence in the promised land. Do you think we have any secondary gods** (money, power, etc.)?

**Deuteronomy 6:5 is also an extremely important verse. Where else have we heard this verse quoted?** (Jesus, when they asked him to identify the most important commandment.) **Why do you think Jesus said that all the Law and the Prophets were summed up in this verse?** (Because this verse deals with the inclination and direction of the heart. If you love God with all your heart, soul, and might, you will naturally keep the law and do as the prophets say. This is similar to John and Brenda. If the love is not there, the relationship is dead.)

**Deuteronomy 6:6 is working from the foundation built in 6:4 and 6:5. Where are they to keep the commandments God is giving them?** (In their hearts.) **And what else are they suppose to be doing with their hearts?** (Loving God.) **These three verses work together. The first establishes that the LORD alone will be their God. The second one describes that relationship, a relationship of complete love in every aspect-intellectual, spiritual, and actions. Only after this love is established are the commandments mentioned. It is this relationship with God that is formative for every other aspect of the Israelites' lives. We hear a lot about being Christlike. This means that the person is**

allowing his or her relationship with God to determine how he or she acts towards others. Ask **Have you ever tried to live a Christian life without a relationship with God? Do you think that it is possible to do it?** (No, because Jesus' teaching always starts from the heart and works outward. The orientation of the heart towards God is the focus.)

### Part 3 - Bad fruit, good tree?

Have someone read Matthew 7:15-18. Ask **How does Jesus tell us that we can recognize false prophets?** (How they act.) **What is Jesus saying when he says that good trees bear good fruit and bad trees bear bad fruit?** (That what we do is an extension of who we are. We can know someone's relationship with God by how they act in this world.) Be prepared to write the answers to the following questions on the board. Have them **List some "fruit" or characteristics of a godly person that can be seen as he or she interacts with others.** (This obviously includes the fruit of the Spirit: patience, kindness, self-control, etc. Other possibilities might include humbleness, meekness, and generosity to name a few.) **Now list some "fruit" evident in the lives of those that don't have a love for God in their hearts.** (Greed, anger, hatred, malicious, deceitful, uncaring, etc.) Say **It's easy to talk about one's Christianity in terms of faith or a conversion experience. When we talk about the tangible fruit of that life, however, it becomes much more difficult. For a moment, take a look at both of these lists (the good fruit and the bad fruit) and ask yourself this question. There is no need to answer it aloud. "If someone else examined my life based on this fruit that we've talked about, what conclusion would they reach about me?"** Allow a few moments to reflect on this question. Explain **If you aren't pretty sure that they would find you to be a good tree, it is time to examine the orientation of your heart. Do you love God with all that you are? If you do, the Bible assures us, this will be evident in how you live.**

### Part #4 - Moments of dedication

Distribute Handout #2.2. Say **Part of the purpose of this study of the Ten Commandments is to get a better understanding of what it means to be the people of God. As we've been working on this lesson, you may have realized that there are places where you already know you may need some work. Take a few moments to prayerfully consider if you have any of these and what they might be.** (Allow five minutes or so for the class members to fill out the worksheets.) Now say **It is tempting to make a list of things we need to work on and then set out to fix ourselves. However, what this lesson teaches us is that the answer to our problems isn't a matter of fixing ourselves. It's a matter of aligning ourselves properly with God and then working together with him to change certain aspects of our lives. Otherwise, we will be like Brenda and John, trying to keep the commandments only for their sake.**

Close with a time of prayer. Include a time of silent prayer for class members to commit to working on the issues that they wrote down. Encourage the class members to use the handout as a bookmark in their Bibles for the next couple of weeks to serve as a reminder of the areas they want to work on.

## Handout #2.1

### **CHARACTERS**

- John
- Brenda
- Counselor

### **SETTING**

This couple is having marital problems. They both suspect that the other doesn't truly "love" them. The counselor doesn't provide much help.

Counselor: John, let's start with you. Your wife thinks that you don't love her. Do you ever consider cheating on her?

John: Oh yeah, all the time. But I never have.

Counselor: Why not?

John: Well, we kept a copy of our vows. I was thinking there was something about being faithful in there, so I looked it up. Sure enough. I figured it was part of the agreement, so I don't cheat on her.

Counselor: Is that the only reason?

John: I can't think of another one, but I don't know why it would matter anyway. The point is that I haven't done it, and I won't. Besides, why don't you get on to her. I know last year when I had the flu she considered leaving me.

Counselor: Brenda, is that true?

Brenda: Yep, it sure is. You should have heard him moaning and groaning about his fever and his stomach and on and on. It was about more than a body could do to sit there and listen to it.

Counselor: Well, Brenda, why didn't you leave him?

Brenda: As John said, we keep a copy of our vows. I figured I oughta check and see if I could leave before I up and did. Sure enough. Apparently somebody stuck in something about sickness and health. Once I knew that it was part of the contract, I knew I couldn't leave. I didn't think about it again.

Counselor: I see. So neither one of you have ever broken any of your vows?

Brenda/John: That's right/yep.

Counselor: Honestly, I don't know why you guys are even here. Of course you love each other. You're keeping your vows, aren't you? What else is there?



## In Pursuit Of Good Fruit

Take a few minutes and prayerfully consider some areas in your life where you may not be allowing your relationship with God to determine how you behave towards others. Write these below.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

