

Carved in Stone, Etched in Lives  

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*A STUDY OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS*

Adult Curriculum

Written by Jason Hubbert



**Carved in Stone**  
*Embracing God's Value System*

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## Adult Teacher Introduction

Hello!! Thanks for choosing *Carved in Stone, Etched in Lives* for your foundational study of the Ten Commandments. We are proud to present you with this study, believing that it can change the lives of the people in your class. Not only have we worked to provide excellent biblical scholarship and insight, we've incorporated an easy to follow format designed just for the hectic-life-pace of today's teachers!!

### Why another series on the Ten Commandments?

We believe that the Ten Commandments are more than just an ancient list of do's and don'ts for kids to learn at Vacation Bible School. They are the formative assumptions of a moral and Christian life. Laying out plainly and clearly a road map for navigating this life as the Creator designed us, the Ten Commandments are the keys to happiness and fulfillment, not just for Israelites 2500 years ago, but for every person alive today! Because this is bedrock in our belief, we have attempted to create an exciting, inventive study to convey this importance to your class. This was done focusing on three areas:

**1. A variety of learning techniques designed to keep the learning process fresh and exciting!** Every lesson is designed to move through four or five sections with almost every section having its own activity, worksheet, or drama (with a focus on ease of use for you!). We have tried to present a lesson that can be taught straight through, while still allowing you, the teacher, the freedom to pick and choose sections and activities to fit your class. So if you think that the introduction and conclusion are great, but don't have the fifty minutes for which the lesson is designed, "cherry-pick" the best of what's left! Most sections should work fine solo with a short set-up.

**2. A contemporary edge for people trying to make sense of the twenty-first century!** Although historical information is always given, the primary emphasis has been placed on the relevance of the teaching for people today. This series is designed to challenge our assumptions and cause us to re-think how we live our lives.

**3. A focus on Jesus' own teaching regarding these Commandments!** Jesus also viewed the Ten Commandments as foundational and spoke about them frequently. Whenever possible we have incorporated Jesus' teaching into our lessons, remembering that he was the Master Teacher. This functions to bring the New and Old Testaments together-highlighting their compatibility while demonstrating the ongoing importance of these commandments for Christians.

Just a word or two more about format. Each week's lesson is designed to last approximately fifty minutes. If you will not have that much time to teach, you will want to trim accordingly. For your convenience we have provided everything needed for a week's lesson under the heading What You Need in the introduction for that lesson. We have concentrated on keeping the list short and the materials inexpensive. The worksheets, dramas, and activities are printed at the end of each week's lesson and are numbered for ease of use. We assume that you or your church has access to a copy machine. If you do not, you will need to alter several lessons.

Now that you know our passion, we hope you're as excited about this sojourn as we are to offer it to you!

—Jason Hubbert

### Adult Lesson One

## Bedtime Stories and Other Important Stuff

*Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise (Deuteronomy 6:6-7, NRSV).*

**A**s we begin this trip together through the Ten Commandments, one of the first objectives will be to gain a proper understanding of how these commandments are to function in our lives. In our 21st century context, a certain legalistic understanding of truth has come to dominate our understanding of right and wrong. "If the law says it's wrong, it's wrong, but if you can get around it, well, all the better." This is completely foreign to the ancient Hebrew understanding employed in the Ten Commandments.



These commandments, like the stories of the exodus and the wilderness wondering, were what defined the Hebrews as a people. They answered the deep questions of identity: Who are we? and What type of people are we suppose to be in this world? They found the answer to these questions in these stories. They were a people loved by God, rescued from slavery by God, and dependant upon God for everything they had. What type of people were they to be? They were to be a people who revered their parents, loved their neighbors enough not to sleep with their neighbor's spouse, steal their neighbor's land, or lie about their neighbor in court. And why were they to live this way? Because they loved and served the God who rescued them. The deliverance of these people from bondage accurately reflected the type of God He was.

### OBJECTIVES

- Determine the stories that shape our modern situation.
- Understand the importance of stories and words in determining right and wrong.
- Commit to telling our stories to our children.
- Decide to allow the Ten Commandments to shape us.

### SCRIPTURE

- Deuteronomy 6:20-24
- Deuteronomy 6:1-12

### WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of Handout #1.1 for everyone in the class
- One copy of Handout #1.2
- Copies of Handout #1.3 for everyone in the class
- Chalk/chalkboard; marker/dry erase board; or something else to write on
- Pencils/pens

## Part 1 - Make me, mold me

Distribute copies of Handout #1.1 to every person in your class. You may wish to give them an example such as "Rocky—to teach my children the importance of perseverance and self-discipline." Give them five minutes or so to come up with their answers. When the majority of people have finished writing, begin to make a list of their answers on the chalkboard in two columns, one for books or films, the other for their reasons. Say, **We are making a list of the stories that shape us and we hope will shape our children.** Ask for volunteers to explain what they chose and why they chose them. After you have finished, say, **The stories a religion or society chooses to tell its children are very important. If done correctly, they are the primary way a society molds and teaches a child about the kind of person he/ she is to be. In our society we often use books or films to portray these stories for our kids, but in ancient Israel, they told the stories out loud and carried symbols with them to help remind them of where they had come from.**

For the next three months we will examine the Ten Commandments along with the story of the Jewish people. Today we will peer through a window into that world in order to see exactly how the commandments functioned for them.

## Part 2 - "I cannot tell a lie..."

Explain **About fifteen or twenty years ago, there was an explosion of work on our country's forefathers, such as George Washington and Thomas Jefferson, that shot holes in the saintly vision most people had of them. Many were womanizers who drank excessively. They were far from exemplary. This truth upset many people who were raised with the stories such as young George and the cherry tree. Come to find out, he could tell a lie after all.** Ask **Do you remember when these stories came out?** Allow a few moments for an answer, then ask **Why do you think people were so upset by these?** (Because much of their identity as Americans, that is to say, what it means to be an ideal American citizen, was formed by these stories. It wasn't so important the George didn't chop down a cherry tree. The story stood for what it meant to be an American. People feared our ideals were eroding.)

Explain **In a similar way, the stories of the Exodus and the giving of the Ten Commandments defined for the people of Israel who they were. When a young George Washington says "I cannot tell a lie," it means a great deal more to children than just, "If I cut down a tree, and someone asks me about it, I have to tell the truth." It means, "As an American, I am to be honest in all that I do, just like the 'Father of our Country' was honest." In the exact same way, when an Israelite heard, "You shall have no other gods before me," it meant more than, "Don't worship other gods." It meant, "The LORD is to be the most important thing in my life at all times. Never will I let anything interfere with my devotion to the LORD." These commandments were not laws to get around, they were statements to shape a community.**

Have someone read Deuteronomy 6:20-25. Ask these questions. **To whom and when**

**are you to tell these things, according to the passage?** (To your children, when they ask you, "What is the meaning of these laws?") **What are you to tell them?** (God took us out of Egypt and did mighty deeds for us. He gave us the promised land. In return, he gave us rules, these commandments, so we would prosper.) Say **Basically, God is telling the people to tell their children the stories of what he has done for them, so that they will be willing to follow the commandments. Ask Do you think that we, as a church, are doing a good job of telling to our children the stories of what God has done for us? If the answer is no, should we be surprised so many of our teens are ignoring the commands of the Bible?**

### Part 3 - Bedtime stories

Before the class session give Handout #1.2 to someone to read. Ask for the handout to be read now. Ask **When has God done "mighty deeds" for you?** (Allow a time for your class to answer this question. They don't have to be physical miracles. They can be things like comfort after the death of a loved one, or the greatest miracle, salvation.) Then ask, Those of you with children, have you told these stories to them? Tell us about an occasion.

### Part #4 - Are you with me?

Explain **It is good that we tell our children our stories and teach them the commandments, but this class isn't for our children. Our purpose is to re-examine the Ten Commandments and to see if we have allowed them to shape us.**

Have someone read Deuteronomy 6:1-9. Ask **According to these verses, who is suppose to keep the commandments?** (The adults, the children, and the children's children.) Where are we to keep these words? (In our hearts.) **How are we to memorize these commandments?** (We are to recite them when we are at home, before going to bed, and when we get up. We are to carry them with us at all times.)

Explain **God knew if we didn't know the commandments, if we didn't make them a regular part of our lives, we would never be able to follow them.** Distribute Handout #1.3. Give about 5 minutes for class members to work, then ask, **How many of you were able to get all ten?** (Very few people may be able to get all ten, and most probably will only get five or so.) Then say, **This is part of what we will be doing in this class. We will try to make the Ten Commandments a major part of how we see ourselves and define the kind of people we are to be. If we are going to do this, though, we have to be open to the commandments, and allow them to shape us.** Challenge the class by saying **I am going to do my best to listen to these Ten Commandments during the next 12 weeks and let them form the kind of person I am. Ask, Will you choose to change everything in violation of these commands?** This is a tough challenge, but it gives the class a time to commit to this study. This will move them from listeners to actual participants.

**Close in prayer.**



## Stories That Shape

If you and your family were shipwrecked on an island and could choose just three movies (apparently with a TV, a VCR or DVD player, and a generator), books, or stories to share with your children, what three would you choose and why?

<u>Movie, book, or story</u>	<u>Reason selected</u>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.



## No Gas, No Problem

This is a true story my parents told me (Jason, the writer of this curriculum). My father was in the military, stateside, during the Vietnam War. Because he was married with an 18-month-old daughter, he and my mother were unable to live on the barracks. Money was very tight, and, in a day without credit cards, sudden expenses could wreak havoc on their lives. My sister became sick and it was the end of the pay cycle. The medication had drained the last of their cash. They were truly broke. With one week before payday, the Plymouth was below empty with no hope of filling it up. But my father had to get to work, and doctor's appointments couldn't be missed. Sick with worry and after much prayer, finally my father said, "Well, we'll just drive her 'til she stops. I don't know what else we can do." So that's what they did. For one week that car ran without gas. They didn't take excursions to the mountains or the beach, but they got where they needed to go.

I've clung to this story many times. When my faith was shot and I couldn't think of a reason to believe, my parents had provided one. I got through. My parents had faithfully obeyed the teaching of Moses given some 3400 years before by telling me stories of their journey of faith. I keep the commands of God, in part, because I've been told the stories.



## Write the Ten Commandments

See if you can write out the Ten Commandments. Don't worry about writing them word for word or in biblical order, just see how many you can get "close" on.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.



### 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.



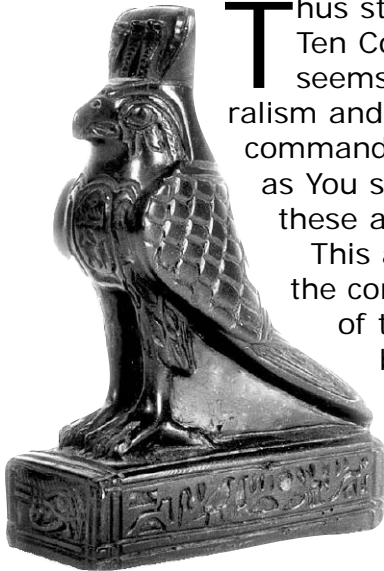
## Carved in Stone

Embracing God's Value System

### Adult Lesson Three

# No Other Gods!

*"I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me" (Exodus 20:2-3, NRSV).*



**T**hus starts one of the most recognizable portions of the Old Testament—the Ten Commandments. "You shall have no other gods before me." It almost seems simplistic in our 21st century world. Although there is increased pluralism and acceptance of other religions in all parts of the U.S., this particular commandment doesn't seem nearly as problematic as some of the others, such as You shall not commit adultery; You shall not covet; You shall not lie. Surely these are the sticky commandments, the ones we see broken daily.

This attitude of "of course, the LORD is the only god I serve; let's get on to the commandments that still mean something" stems from a misunderstanding of the nature of this commandment. It is not the first of ten commands, but *the* command with the next nine delineating aspects of what it means to have no other gods before YHWH. In other words, as Jesus points out some 1400 years later, all the law and the prophets are summed up in this command. So when we covet, murder, or lie, we break this commandment as well. Those who faithfully serve this God do not lie. They do not commit adultery. They do not make graven images.

Every person must answer whether or not the LORD is placed first.

With this in mind, studying the first commandment becomes valuable to those who wish to make God Lord. The main thrust of this lesson will be to take a close look at what exactly God is demanding in this first commandment and asking the class members to decide whether or not they will place the LORD first in their lives.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Identify what God has done for class members.
- Identify what class members value.
- Identify how they are tempted to act on these values.
- Decide if the LORD will be first in their lives.

#### SCRIPTURE

- Exodus 20:2-3
- Luke 4:5-7
- Mark 12:28-34

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of Handout #3.1 for everyone in the class
- Three copies of Handout #3.2
- Chalk/chalkboard; marker/dry erase board; or something else to write on
- Pencils/pens

## Part 1 - Does he deserve it?

Ask these questions: **What has God done for you in your life? What has he given to you? When has he proven faithful to you?** Write these answers on the chalkboard. Encourage the class to think in broad categories such as happiness, peace, love, and safety. Then ask this follow-up question: **What does God expect in return for these gifts?** Take a few answers to this question.

**People in our society commonly think that God simply loves them and expects nothing in return. We're tempted to believe God's gifts, such as life and salvation, are unqualified, but this is not what the scriptures tell us. God gave the Ten Commandments precisely because of all that he had done for the Children of Israel. The first commandment reads, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery; you shall have no other gods before me." Because of what he had done for the Israelites-leading them out of Egypt and slavery-he demanded that they serve him. He loves us, and expects us to put him first. He makes an exclusive demand-he is not to be one of many gods. He will be our ONLY God. Ask: Do you think he has the right to demand we put our faith completely and only in him? If so, why?** (Yes. Just as he was the only God that could rescue the Israelites, giving him the right to demand their loyalty, he is the only God that offers salvation and life. Since he is the only true God, he is right to expect that we recognize His redemption and serve him only.)

## Part 2 - What matters most?

Divide the class into groups of four or five. If the class is smaller than six or seven, do this exercise individually. Distribute Handout #3.1. First, ask the groups to **Write down the five things that are important to you.** (For example, family, the future, retirement, church, recreation.) Give them three or four minutes to work on this. Ask them **Write down how you plan for these things.** Again, give them three or four minutes to do this. Encourage them to share what they have written. Write their answers on a chalkboard. Place what was most important on the left side and how they planned for it on the right.

**These things probably aren't that different from the concerns in Moses' day. They, too, wanted to provide for their families. They wanted to have something for when they were older. They wanted to have some leisure time to enjoy life. We know the name of Ba'al, the primary god the Israelites were tempted to serve. What types of god was this?** (Fertility.) **Why do you suppose the Israelites were tempted to serve this god?** (Because they lived in an agrarian society. They had not been farmers in Egypt-they were servants and brick makers-so, when they got to Canaan, they learned how to farm from those who were already there. Key to the Canaanites understanding of farming, however, was the worship of fertility gods and goddesses. The Canaanites had survived by farming for hundreds of years. So in drought years there was a natural tendency for the Israelites to try what the Canaanites were doing.)

**These fertility gods and goddesses were believed to control plant life as well as the ability of humans to conceive. In a society in which children took care of their parents in old age, lots of kids (especially boys) were the only retirement plan. So these deities were believed to be responsible for putting food on the table, creating families, and sustaining people into old age. Is it any wonder that there might be a tendency to put faith in these gods and the LORD? It wasn't that the Israelites were tempted to quit serving the LORD, they were just hedging their bets a bit. In a time when a year of famine or crop failure meant certain death for children, they just wanted to make sure they, and those they cared about, were taken care of. The question for us becomes, in what do we ultimately put our trust?**

**In America we have the same problem the Israelites had. Over 90% of**

**Americans claim to "believe in God"-but are the majority merely hedging their bets? If we aren't careful might these things (motion to the list on the left side of the chalk-board) come before God? Ask your class these questions: If it came down to it, which do we act like we have faith in the most-the LORD or the stock market or economy? The church or our jobs? Where do we entrust our money? Where do we entrust our families? Where do we entrust our time?**

### **Part 3 - What are they offering?**

Read or ask someone to read Luke 4:5-7. **What is the devil offering Jesus?** (To be the ruler of all the world.) **Is this a bad thing?** (No. In fact, it was the traditional understanding of what the Messiah was to be-a ruler for all nations. The Devil was basically offering to let Jesus be exactly what he thought God wanted him to be.) **What is Jesus response to the devil?** ("It is written, 'Worship the Lord your God and serve only him'.") This is basically a rewording of the first two commandments.

**What does this world offer us if we bow down to its systems (economics, politics, etc.)?** (Money, power, prestige, health, power, comfort, happiness, respect.) **Are these things bad?** (No, but there is something wrong with putting the world's means of gaining these things before God.) **The basic question we must ask ourselves is, "In light of what God has done for us, can we trust him to provide these things for us? Are we going to hedge our bets with these other systems?"**

### **Part #4 - Jesus says...**

Prior to class, give three people Handout #3.2, assigning each one a part. Have them stand and read this choral reading of Mark 12:28-34. After they are done, ask this question, **How does Jesus re-interpret the first commandment?** (He moves from a negative, "have no other gods before me," to a positive, "love God.")

Divide into the same groups you had earlier. Have them discuss and come up with answers to these two questions: **What does it mean to love God with all of your heart, soul, mind, and strength?** Suggest they answer these four aspects separately: "What does it mean to love God with all you strength? Heart? Mind? Strength?" **In light of the other commandments and what we know from the Bible, What would change in our church and our personal lives if we all truly followed this command?** Give them about seven or eight minutes to answer these questions, then have one member of each group share what they came up with.

**Complete love for God is the apex of spiritual life and the aim of biblical religion. Beyond the scribe's realization that Jesus had answered correctly, we don't know how the scribe responded to the commandment. The question for us is, how will we respond? Will we love God with all that we are? Has what he has done for us in the past been enough for us to trust him and place him before any other "god" that we might be tempted to serve?**


End in prayer. During the prayer time, include a minute or two of quiet meditation in which the class members are given an opportunity to put God first, with all that means for their lives. The prayer might sound something like this, **Our Heavenly Father, we want to thank you for all you have done for us. We have been challenged today by the first of your Ten Commandments. We each must come to a place of deciding whether to put you first in our lives. We choose to love you with all of our hearts, souls, minds, and strength. (Let's each confirm with God our personal commitment. Deal with any other issues related to this commitment in the next minute or two to silent prayer.)** End the prayer with any other particular needs you want to address.

## Planning for Life

**What are five important life issues for which you plan?** (Family, recreation, retirement, the future, the church, etc.)

**How do you plan for these things, that is, what do you do to make them come about?** (For instance, use a 401(k) to plan for retirement, etc.)

<u>IMPORTANT LIFE ISSUE</u>	<u>PLAN</u>
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	



## The Greatest Commandment? Mark 12:28-34

### CHARACTERS

- Narrator
- Jesus
- Scribe

Narrator: One of the scribes came near and heard them disputing with one another, and seeing that Jesus answered them well, he asked him:

Scribe: Which commandment is first of all?

Jesus: The first is, "Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength." The second is this, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." There is no other commandment greater than these.

Scribe: You are right, Teacher; you have truly said that "He is one, and besides him there is no other"; and "to love him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the strength." This is much more important than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

Jesus: I see that you answer wisely. You are not far from the kingdom of God.

Narrator: After that no one dared to ask him any questions.

### Adult Lesson Four

# Do You Idolize?

*You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments (Exodus 20:4-6, NRSV).*

**T**he second commandment is one of the toughest for most Christians in the 21st century to relate to. Not only do we not make graven images for ourselves, the thought of doing so is foreign to us. What's more, the second commandment reads like a retelling of the first. For this reason both Catholics and Jews consider this to be part of the first commandment. (To have ten commandments, they divide the tenth commandment—you shall not covet—into two distinct commandments: you shall not covet your neighbors wife and you shall not covet your neighbors property.) Nevertheless, there is a distinction between the first and the second commandments. Whereas the first commandment deals with the issue of other gods, the second deals with the appropriate way to worship Yahweh.

Israel's neighbors did not believe the idols they made were actually gods, only symbols of gods. However, confusion often set in and the symbol became mistaken for a god. The LORD is very clear that the created is never to be confused with the Creator. When this happens we tend to believe that God only governs us when we are near the arena in which we worship him. God becomes localized and is not the God of all creation, but only aspects of it. We are tempted to make God as we would like him to be. We make him in our image in order to legitimize our activities. These are temptations we face as Christians today, and they will be the focus of this lesson. Worshipers of the LORD are called to a different way of living than those around them.



#### OBJECTIVES

- Identify idols, images, and other created things that serve as gods in our culture.
- Establish that Scripture teaches that God is to be Lord of every area of life.
- Critique the idea that all religions lead to "God" in light of the second commandment.

#### SCRIPTURE

- Exodus 20:4-6
- John 4:16-26

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of Handout #4.1 for everyone in the class
- Chalk/chalkboard; marker/dry erase board; or something else to write on
- Pencils/pens

## Part 1 - Incensed over incense

Began the class by saying **We've been talking about the Ten Commandments. Today we will consider the one that seems to have the least bearing on us in our culture—"Thou shall not make for yourself a graven image."** Then ask the class to **Name some idols or graven images from the ancient world.** Write the answers that they give on the board. Possibilities include Zeus, Greek statues, Ba'al, Buddha, and the golden calf. Next, tell of the first time you can remember coming face-to-face with idol worship. I remember going into an oriental food restaurant and seeing a Buddha. They owners had put incense and some food around it. I think it was the food that made me realize that they took this god seriously.

Next ask **What are some other idols or graven images that we see people worship today?** (Hindu gods, Buddhas, crystals, other New Age symbols.) Again, write the answers on the board.

## Part 2 - God of Everywhere

Ask **Do you think the ancient people believed their idols were actually gods?** (Answer: No, they just used them to symbolize their gods and give them something tangible to worship and a place to worship.) Have someone read Exodus 20:4-6. Ask **What is the importance of not worshipping anything above, on, or under the earth?** (This is the three-tiered Hebrew understanding of creation. In short, the second commandment is an order not to worship anything created.) Say **What the commandment is really saying is "Do not make an idol in the shape of a created thing to symbolize the Creator."** Ask **Why wouldn't God want us to do this?** (If we do this we tend to think that God's presence is limited and God works only in certain spheres. This would have the effect of prompting obedience at church, but maybe not at home nor the office.) Explain **Part of what this commandment is dealing with is a tendency to localize God. The people of Israel worshipped the LORD in the temple, but worshiped Ba'al and other gods in the mountains or fields. God demands lordship of every aspect and place in our lives. Let's look at some other gods that fight for a place alongside of our God.**

Distribute Handout #4.1. Allow five minutes for the class to do the worksheet. Go over the worksheet out loud. Write on the board the created things that our culture worships. These may include money, beauty, art, talent, science, sex, and the environment. Circle the ones that class members suggest might be a problem area for them (for instance, nature might be worshipped by some if they could only "feel close" to God in nature. This is idolizing an aspect of who God is.)

Ask **When you are making a financial decision (buying a home or a car, for instance), what god dominates your thinking, the god of money or the LORD your God?** (Often money.) **Suppose you know someone who really needs cash and is forced to sell a car. Do you bid much lower than the car's value when you can afford more? Which god are you serving at that time? When listening to music, which god decides what you will hear, the god of beauty or talent or the LORD your God?** Allow a few minutes to discuss these issues. Some other areas you may wish to explore: **Who is your god when you choose entertainment?** (Sex, violence or the LORD.) **Who is your god when you are shopping for clothes or cars?** (Materialism, pride, or the LORD.) **God demands complete lordship, no matter the area of life.**

## Part 3 - Nature is my temple?

Ask **Are there any places or things that we have allowed to symbolize God so that we feel like we must go there to worship or pray.** (The sanctuary, an altar, the grave of a loved one, or a special place in nature.) Explain **When we start allowing locations or things to symbolize God for us, we are dangerously close to breaking the second commandment. God is making it clear-"I'm not like the gods of the Canaanites. An animal or monster cannot symbolize me." In the same way, an altar, a church building, a natural location, or a crucifix cannot symbolize him.**

Have someone read John 4:16-20. Explain **On Mt. Gerizim the Samaritans had built a temple because the Jews wouldn't allow them to worship in Jerusalem.** Ask **What is Jesus saying here?** (That the place of worship is not important. In fact, he is condemning the Israelite idea that you must go to the temple in Jerusalem to worship.)

## Part 4 - Does gods equal God?

Say **In our pluralistic society, there is a common understanding that every form of worship connects with God, an "all roads lead to Rome" theology. For instance, Hindus have some 3,306 gods and goddesses, but they believe that all are simply aspects of Brahman. Their idols only help them to worship Brahman. In much the same way, many people understand all forms of worship-Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist, etc.-to be legitimate and to be worshipping the same God. Ask What do you think of this idea?** (Allow time for answers.) **What does the second commandment have to say about this?** (It clearly states that we are to worship the LORD only. We must not worship an image which represents only one aspect of God, or be limited by the location of a particular shrine. We must worship God in Spirit and in His entirety.)

Say **Some theologians and others disregard this commandment as being dated. They believe that any religion which promotes peace and goodwill towards others honors God, even those that worship many gods or idols. How do you feel about this?** Allow time for a debate here. Some of the answers to this question may surprise you. **For instance, do you like the idea that Ghandi, a man who promoted peace and saved literally thousands of lives, did not make it to heaven because he was a Hindu?** Again, allow for discussion. Explain **This issue goes back to the first commandment. Who will we allow to tell us what is right and wrong? Because the God of the Bible led the Israelites out of Egypt, he demanded certain things from them. Because he has saved us, he demands we keep his Ten Commandments as well. This commandment is very clear on this issue. We may choose to believe something else, but if we do so, we have denied that the God who saved us has the right to tell us what is right and wrong.**

For a final activity, have the class reword this commandment to fit our contemporary setting. Write the final draft on the board. This exercise is recommended at the end of several lessons to come, but you may want to do it every lesson. If you choose to do this, have a class secretary record the commandment paraphrase every lesson and review them often.

Close in prayer.

## Idols, Idols Everywhere

When the Canaanites made idols for their gods, they carved them to look like a creature or person that they respected, feared, or desired to be like. List some created things worshiped by people in our culture.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.



Have any of these become an idol for you?

Which of these might you be tempted to worship as an aspect of God?

## Carved in Stone

Embracing God's Value System

### Adult Lesson Five

# What's In A Name?

*You shall not make wrongful use of the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not acquit anyone who misuses his name (Exodus 20:7, NRSV).*

The third commandment continues outlining the regulations for relationship with the LORD, the God of Israel, this time dealing with the use of his name. There is no end to the teaching and preaching on what constitutes misusing God's name: using his name as a curse word, swearing falsely by his name, attempting to manipulate God by invoking his name during magic or incantations, and using God's name casually, without fully considering the implications. The commandment probably alludes to all these things and more.

God gave a great gift to the Israelites when he disclosed his name, Yahweh, to them. This name, translated the LORD in most modern translations, means "I am" or "the one who always is." Taking his name lightly shows disrespect for this gift, underestimates his power, scorns his presence, and misrepresents who he is to the family of humans.

Misrepresenting God to others may be the commandment we hear the least about. It comes up repeatedly, however, in the Old Testament. In Exodus 9:16 God declared that his central concern was the declaration of his name to the earth. He entrusted his name and the task of its declaration to the Hebrews. If they failed in this trust punishment would be certain. In light of this it becomes evident why all of the traditional teachings on the third commandment listed above are correct. To use God's name as a curse word, a manipulative tool, casually, or to cover lie—all these things misrepresent who the LORD is to the world.



#### OBJECTIVES

- Identify the importance of names both today and in biblical times.
- Establish that God is concerned how His people represent him to others.
- Examine to see if class members are misusing God's name in their lives.
- Determine to make changes as necessary in the use of God's name.

#### SCRIPTURE

- Exodus 20:7
- Exodus 9:16
- Ezekiel 36:22-23

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of Handout #5.1 for everyone in the class
- A copy of Handout #5.2 for one reader
- Chalk/chalkboard; marker/dry erase board; or something else to write on
- Pencils/pens

## Part 1 - What's in a Name?

Begin the class by distributing Handout #5.1. Allow four or five minutes for everyone to finish. Take a few minutes to go over what the class members wrote. Say **Today we're talking about the importance of names. All the names on this sheet have become stereotypes or what writers call "stock characters." Their names now only symbolize small aspects of the real people (and in some cases, not even that). They don't represent real people to us anymore. Can you name any other people's names that have become stereotypes?** Write these names on the board. After several names are on the board, write "GOD?" Ask **Do you think that God's name has lost its meaning for us?**

Ask someone to read Exodus 20:7. Ask **What is the importance of a name in our society?** (Reputation. "A person is only as good as his or her name.") **What are some important reasons to keep a good reputation?** (Leads to better interpersonal relationships, important in business transactions, etc.) Say **In the time of Exodus names were even more important. The name told you something about that person, sometimes even defining what he or she was to become. Names were so important that when persons changed sharply, they often changed their name as well.** Ask for some examples. If no one can come up with any, say **For instance after making the covenant with God, Abram changed his name to Abraham which means "Father of many nations."**

Explain **When God gave his name Yahwah to his people it was more than just a name to pray to or a way to address him. When he gave his name, which means "I am" or "the one who always," he was giving his people the essence of who he was. But just like us today, God was concerned with the reputation his name got from those who used it.**

## Part 2 - Thank God!

There are a variety of teachings on the actual meaning of the third commandment. Ask the following question and write the answers you get on the board. Be sure to cover at least the four possibilities that are listed here. Ask **What have you heard or what do you think that this third commandment means?** 1) Not to use his name as an obscenity. This is one of the most common in our society. 2) Not to falsely swear by God's name, such as in a court of law. 3) Not to use God's name in incantations or magic. At the time of the Exodus it was believed that if you called on a spirit or god to do certain things with just the right words, they would be forced to do it. Today the "name it and claim it" theology of some Christians comes dangerously close to this. 4) Not to use his name flippantly as in "Well, praise the Lord!" or "Thank God!" There is nothing wrong with saying either of these, so long as they aren't empty words. Take a few minutes to go over these.

Now ask **What are some times when you are tempted to misuse the name of the LORD?** (Possible answers include times of high stress, in humor or jokes, using slang terms or words, and moments of surprise and pain.)

### Part #3 -Representative of God

Have someone read Exodus 9:16. Explain **A major goal of God in the book of Exodus (and the rest of the Old Testament) was to make his name known to all the earth. Ask In light of this, why would it be important for the Hebrews to use God's name properly?** (One of their primary functions is to proclaim God through his name.)

Have someone read Ezekiel 36:22-23. Ask **According to this scripture, why is God going to act?** (For the sake of his holy name.) **What had the Hebrews done?** (Profaned his name to the nations.) **Had they kept the third commandment?** (No.)

Explain **God's name became associated with an unholy people. They had betrayed the trust that God had given them when He revealed His name. Through words and deeds, they misrepresented God to the world. Ask Can you name any modern day leaders that have misrepresented God to the world?** (Jim and Tammy Faye Baker, Jimmy Swaggert, Bill Clinton, others.) Then ask **How about us? If we claim to be Christians, we have taken the name of Christ upon ourselves. How are we portraying that name to the world?**

### Part #4 - Jesus understands, or does he?

Read or have someone read Handout #5.2. After reading it ask **What are some expressions that we use that can be misusing God's name?** (Thank God, good God, thank the Lord, God forbid.)

Close the lesson with prayer. Be certain to thank God for the gift of his name.



## What's in a name?

What do you think of when you hear these names? Jot down the first few words that come to your mind.

1. Don Juan

2. Benedict Arnold

3. Goliath

4. St. Valentine

5. Hercules

6. Casanova

7. St. Patrick

## Jesus Understands

**B**ible quizzing was my life in the eighth grade. Quiz studying, practices, and competitions dominated my calendar and my time. During one quiz meet something prompted the quizmaster to ease the distress of one anguished youth with the soothing words of "Jesus understands." Although the quizmaster spoke these words with the purest intentions, my friends and I found the statement hilarious and began invoking it in every situation we faced or mistake we made. Projecting a certain "Mister Rogers" quality in our voice, we would proclaim our mantra. Miss a question? Jesus understands. Stay out too late? Jesus understands. Cheat on a girlfriend? Watch a "questionable" movie? Forget your car keys? Jesus always understood.

I thought nothing of it at the time. Surely it was one of the great theological truths of Christianity that in the life of Jesus we can honestly say that God does understand the trials and temptations that we face. However, we broke the third commandment blatantly in those days. We invoked the name of God without considering it. "Jesus understands" wasn't a statement of faith, it was merely verbal graffiti. We reduced the Crucified One to a punch line, and in so doing we misused the name of the LORD every bit as much as if we'd attached profanities to it.

*"Jesus understands"  
wasn't a statement of  
faith, it was merely  
verbal graffiti.*

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### Adult Lesson Six

# A Day Of Rest?

*Remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and consecrated it*  
(Exodus 20:8-11, NRSV).



Scholars tell us that the longer a commandment is, the harder it was for the Hebrew people to keep. The length indicates the work of priests and scribes in explaining the original command. If this is correct, the Israelites must have had a particularly hard time with commandment four. Four verses long, it is easily the lengthiest of the commandments, dealing not only with the people, but their children, slaves, and alien residents. It also examines the reason for the Sabbath rest in the creation narratives of Genesis.

If the Hebrew people had a hard time with this commandment, it was no more so then we do today. Setting a full day aside for rest and worshipping God is a foreign concept in our culture. Many see the Sabbath as a day to catch up on work at the office, to do chores around the house, or go grocery shopping. And this doesn't even touch on the second part of the verse which commands that nothing be done that would cause others to work. What does this do to eating out after church? Getting in a round of golf? Catching a late movie? What are we to do with this commandment? Do we ignore it? Explain it away? Or allow it to shape us and how we view our time and our week? It may even force us to realize that God has a claim on all our time.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Explain the importance of Sabbath keeping.
- Examine our lives to see if we are keeping the Sabbath.
- Consider what it means to keep the Sabbath today.

#### SCRIPTURE

- Exodus 20:8-11
- Exodus 16:22-27
- Amos 8:4-8
- Mark 2:23-28

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Five copies each of Handouts #6.1, #6.2, and #6.3 (or more if your class is larger than 15 people)
- Chalk/chalkboard; marker/dry erase board; or something else to write on
- Pencils/pens

## Part 1 - Rest?!? Are you kidding me?

For the opening you will lead the class members in mapping out their schedules for an average Sunday. On the chalkboard write down a timeline, starting when the first person got up and continuing until the last person goes to sleep. The finished product might start something like this.

7:00 Got up, started coffee  
7:30 Iron clothes for the family  
8:00 Get the kids up  
8:15 Make breakfast  
8:30 Get the kids ready  
9:00 Go to church  
12:15 Eat at Chili's  
1:00 Mow the yard  
1:30 Tee off

Example schedule

When finished, read or have someone read Exodus 20:8-11. Ask **Do you think, according to this schedule, we are resting on the Sabbath?** Give a few minutes for response, then ask **Let's take a closer look at this.** Have the class members mark beside those things that may require other people to work, such as eating out, shopping, and buying groceries.

## Part 2 - By design

Ask again **What do you think? Are we keeping this commandment?** Follow this up with **If we aren't, does it even matter?** This is a difficult question, but it gets to the heart of the matter. This will force the class to decide the place of the Ten Commandments in their value systems.

Read the following or put it in your own words. **What is often lost in the Ten Commandments is that they are not just ten rules to keep in mind, but they are the way God created us to live. Scientific studies have proven that the human body and mind operate on a seven-day system with one day needed for rest. Although as people of faith we don't need scientific proof to guide us, it powerfully illustrates that the Sabbath rest, as well as the other comandments, aren't "extras." They are built into creation. When God created us he built spiritual needs and physical needs into our being. Physically, we need a day of rest from work every seven days. Spiritually, we need to have a time of worship and renewal in God. This is the heart of the fourth commandment. If we ignore it, we impair both our physical and spiritual well-being. If we cause others to miss their Sabbath rest, we do the same to them.**

**Scientific studies have proven that the human body and mind operate on a seven-day system with one day needed for rest.**

## Part #3 - When in doubt, read the Bible

Divide the class into three groups. The groups can be as small as two people or as large as five. If you have more than fifteen people in your class, assign some scriptures twice. Distribute Handouts #6.1, #6.2, and #6.3, one to each group. Give the groups eight to ten minutes to read their scriptures and come up with answers. Bring the class back together and have each group read its scripture out loud and then discuss its answer to the question. If they do not make the points listed below, make sure that you mention them.

Group #1, Exodus 16:22-27. **This occurred before the Ten Commandments were given. What does this tell us about the Sabbath?** Answer: This wasn't an arbitrary "worship day" just for the Israelites. God's plan included a Sabbath from the beginning. All people need a Sabbath.

Group #2, Amos 8:4-8. **What is wrong with the understanding of the Sabbath reflected in this passage? Had these people allowed the Ten Commandments to shape who they were?** Answer: The rules of God had become something to be worked around. They were seen as obstacles to keep the people from their true motivation-making money. No, the people weren't shaped by the commandments. They shaped the commandments to meet their ends.

Group #3, Mark 2:23-28. **Why was it okay for Jesus to pick wheat and eat on the Sabbath? What does it mean that, "The Sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the Sabbath?"** Answer: God didn't create people because he had a need for someone to observe his Sabbath. He knows that people need rest from work and to be with him, so he created a time for renewal. He built it into his creation.

## Part #4 - Anybody up for pizza?

To end class, explain **This commandment is the longest of the ten. Most scholars believe that the longer commandments reflect areas with which the Hebrew people had problems. We no longer have "slaves," but sometimes we participate in activities that deny other people rest on the Sabbath. What are some of these activities? (Eating out, grocery shopping, going to the mall, going to ballgames.) Are these a problem? (They certainly need to be considered.) From another perspective, does our church offer a time when those that we force to work on Sunday can come and worship? If not, what is our responsibility to them?** This is not a cut-and-dried issue. Let the debate go without necessarily searching for a final answer.

Have the class members re-write this commandment in contemporary language to relate better to our situation today. Remind them to keep in mind these three aspects of the command:

- 1) It is to be kept holy, set aside for God.
- 2) It is to be a cessation of work
- 3) We are to allow everyone else this same privilege of not working and worshiping God.

## Group #1

**Scripture:** Exodus 16:22-27

**D**iscuss the following and be prepared to share your answer and reasons with the class. Read Exodus 16:22-27. This scripture takes place before the Ten Commandments were given. Which was first, the importance to God of keeping the Sabbath or the giving of the Ten Commandments? What does this tell us about keeping the Sabbath?

## Group #2

**Scripture:** Amos 8:4-8

**D**iscuss the following and be prepared to share your answer and reasons with the class. Read Amos 8:4-8. What is wrong with the understanding of the Sabbath reflected in this passage? Does it appear that these people allowed the Ten Commandments to shape who they were?

## Group #3

**Scripture:** Mark 8:22-28

**D**iscuss the following and be prepared to share your answer and reasons with the class. Read Mark 8:22-28. Why was it okay for Jesus to pick grain and eat on the Sabbath? What does it mean that "The Sabbath was made for humankind and not humankind for the Sabbath?"

### Adult Lesson Seven

# A Mom And Pop Operation

*Honor your father and your mother, so that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you (Exodus 20:12, NRSV).*

Commandment five marks the beginning of the commandments dealing with our relationships with other humans. In many ways this commandment serves as the bedrock for commandments six through ten in a similar way that the first commandment is foundational to all the others. Among the commandments that seek to answer the question "What kind of society does God want?" the first answer is "One that puts the family unit first." During a time when most societies around them viewed the elderly with contempt because they could no longer produce, the Israelites were told that their worth was not based on their ability to produce. Their worth was based on their relationship with the LORD. This point is driven home in the last six commandments, but most clearly in this one. Commandment five places the responsibility to make sure that all people are treated with respect squarely within the most basic structure of all societies, the family.



When teaching this lesson keep in mind that there are some men and women who have endured unbelievable pain and suffering at the hands of their parents. Stress that this is not what God intended. Be sensitive to these individuals' particular needs and frustrations. The biblical truth concerning the importance of honoring one's mother and father is not nullified by their bad experiences. A strict interpretation that this commandment refers only to biological parents is not necessary. You may suggest that class members consider adults who guided them or filled parental roles in their lives, then use these persons in some of the exercises.

Some class members may use the class discussion to sort through their needs in relation to their biological parents. Allow them to do so without dominating the entire class. At some point forgiveness may be necessary if they are to move on with their lives. If the issue threatens to overshadow the class session, you may wish to offer to speak with the individual after class or later in the week while firmly expressing the need to move on with the lesson.

#### OBJECTIVES

- To determine the importance of family in God's society.
- To examine on what basis we value people.
- To commit to change our lives to reflect the place of family in God's commandments.

#### SCRIPTURE

- Exodus 20:12
- Luke 2:41-52
- Matthew 15:3-9
- Ephesians 6:1-3

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of Handout #7.1 for everyone in the class
- Chalk/chalkboard; marker/dry erase board; or something else to write on
- Pencils/pens

## Part 1 - Who's your daddy?

Say **Today we're moving away from the commandments that shape the kind of people we are to be in relationship to God and moving to those commandments that shape the kind of people we are in relationship to each other. The second half of the Ten Commandments deal with the type of society that God envisioned for his people. Today we're starting with the basics.** Distribute Handout #7.1 and give the class four or five minutes to complete it. When they are done, go over the worksheet together, allowing those who wish to share what they have written. Many, if not most, of these answers will deal with mothers and fathers. Be careful also to notice such phrases as "she was like a mother to me" or "he was closer than a brother."

Then say **For most people, their first significant relationship is with their parents, either adopted or biological. Science has proven that people need a family structure if they are to mature and become productive members of society. This is how God created us, and it is on this foundation that the commandments begin dealing with social issues.**

## Part 2 - Focus on the family

Have someone read Exodus 20:12, then ask **Why do you think it was necessary for God to make a commandment dealing with honoring parents?** (In the cultures surrounding the Israelites, old people were often viewed as insignificant and were left to die when they could no longer produce. Sometimes we think that our newer ideas and concepts are better than our parent's. We often need reminders that those who have gone before us have a great deal of wisdom to share with us.) Ask **What is wrong with viewing people as unimportant once they cannot support themselves? If we don't base someone's worth on what he or she can give to us or society, what should we base it on?** (People's worth is based on being created in the image God and their ability to be in relationship with him. In the time Exodus was written this was most clearly understood within the covenant community.)

Explain **The theme of commandments five through ten is "take care of each other." This was in contrast to the societies already in Canaan, and in many ways is in direct contradiction to what we teach in our own society. What are some sayings that we have that are in contradiction to the idea that we must care for each other?** (Look out for number one. Do what you have to do. The end justifies the means. In the end, you have to do what's right for you.)

Bring the focus back to commandment five by saying **The first place we are to look out for each other is within the family. This commandment is often quoted to kids and teens, but it is really aimed at the adults and how they interact with their elderly parents. How does our society deal with the elderly? Is there a marked difference between how the well-to-do and the poor elderly are treated?** (Yes. Those that can afford it have nice retirement communities with attendants to assist when help is needed. The poor are often placed where they are not cared for properly.) It may be necessary at this point to revisit the earlier issue of what gives people value.

## Part #3 - WWJD?

Say **Let's look at two New Testament passages.** Have someone read Luke 2:41-52. Ask **What do you think it was like to be Jesus' parents?** Allow discussion after each question. **How would you have felt if your child was lost in a big city for three days? What would you have said when you found him?**

Ask **Do you think that it's important that Jesus was obedient to his parents?** (Yes. As a human, Jesus was subject to and shaped by the same commandments and rules that shape all of us.) **Do you think that Jesus would have increased in wisdom or in favor with God and people if he hadn't been obedient to his parents?** (No.)

## Part #4 - Children or church?

Have someone read Matthew 15:3-9. Explain **It had become customary for some Pharisees to make a sacred vow to give all that they had to the temple. However, the gift was not actually claimed until the death of the person that had made the vow. But, because the vow was considered binding, it would have been inappropriate, they argued, to then give some of this money to support their parents. This allowed the children to use of all their money until their death without caring for the elderly parents, a direct violation of commandment five. As Jesus points out, they were violating a commandment of God in order to honor a human custom.**

Ask **What do verses 8 and 9 say about people who worship God but do not honor their parents?** (Their hearts are far from God. They worship God in vain.) Now explain that **In the United States we have the luxury of rarely truly being in need. The honor and respect we owe our families, however, is more than just a monetary issue. While being relatively secure financially, we often leave ourselves emotionally and spiritually impoverished. Ask Are there things we do today that violate our responsibilities to our families in the name of God or our traditions?** Write these things on the board. Some of these things might include getting so caught up with church activities that there is no time left for your family. Allowing no time to spend with our parents as they get older. (Remember, the needs are often more than just financial.) Getting so caught up "providing" for our children that we don't provide the attention and love our parents crave.

Draw a line on the chalkboard and ask **If we are to allow this commandment to shape the kinds of people and families we are, what things do we need to change in our lives?** Allow the class to come up with answers.

In closing, read Ephesians 6:1-3. Offer a prayer of thanks for families and people who have guided and shaped the members of the class. Encourage the class to pray individually that God will help them to honor their parents and place emphasis on their families by changing the aspects of their lives that were talked about in class.

## Who Am I?

This exercise will help you think back to your early childhood and sort through old memories. Answer the questions as best you can.

1. What were the first words that you ever spoke? Do you remember saying them or has someone told you what you said? If someone has told you, who was it?

2. What is the earliest happy memory that you can recall? What people does it involve?

3. Who were the most formative people in your life before the age of ten?

Between ten and twenty?

Today?



4. What sort of things do you and your family do that is special or unique?

5. The fifth commandment says to "honor your father and mother." What sorts of things do you do to honor your parents?

### Adult Lesson Eight

# Murder, Inc.

*You shall not murder (Exodus 20:13, NRSV).*

**W**ith the sixth commandment we enter into the shorter commandments. If scholars are correct that the longer commandments show a problem of the Israelites keeping or understanding the commandments, these are noteworthy for their difficulty in being misunderstood. "You shall not murder." There wouldn't seem to be a lot of misinterpretation here. In Hebrew the word that we translate murder applies to any act of violence committed against a person out of anger that results in that person's death. Our legal understanding of murder having a pre-meditated component does not apply to this commandment in Hebrew thought. Whether or not a person planned to kill another when they struck him or her, stabbed him or her, etc., is inconsequential. If anger was the cause and death the result, murder was committed.

To fully understand the reasoning behind this command, we need only go back to the first commandment, to have no other gods before Yahweh. When taking a human life, a person is acting in the stead of God. All life belongs to God, and it is not to be controlled by humans. If a human life is taken in anger, the killer has elevated him- or herself above God.

In the New Testament Jesus comments on this commandment, but moves it back the next logical step. If the heart is angry and full of hatred, murder is more likely to occur. If anger can lead to the taking of life, then the anger must be resolved before it escalates. Jesus said that to hate is as wrong as to murder. Jesus sought to change the heart and in doing so to help the person fulfill the sixth commandment.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Establish that murder is wrong because only God has the right to take or give life.
- Establish that anger is the precursor to murder.
- Consider that Jesus changes the commandment to include both a person's own anger and the anger others have for him or her.
- Allow the class to commit to God to deal with both their anger and the anger others feel towards them.

#### SCRIPTURE

- Exodus 20:13
- Genesis 4:1-11
- Matthew 5:21-24
- Matthew 5:43-45

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of Handout #8.1 for everyone in the class
- Three copies of Handout #8.2, one for each group
- Pencils/pens



## Part 1 - But everybody's doin' it

Distribute Handout #8.1. Explain that they have a few minutes to work through the questions. This worksheet is purposefully ridiculous, but it will provide a good launch into the lesson. You may receive questioning glances from members of the class. Ignore these for a while, encouraging them to fill out the questionnaire so that you can move on with the class. Finally, if no one has actually come out and said anything, ask them what the problem is with the worksheet. The probable answer is that it seems to trivialize murder and implies that the class members kill people all the time. Say **You can see that this commandment is a little different from the ones we have studied so far. Although it makes perfect sense to ask "When was the last time you lied?" or "When was the last time you failed to put God first?" it seems odd to ask these same questions about killing someone.** Have the class put away the worksheet, then continue.

## Part 2 - Murder in the first (family)

Explain **The word we translate murder from the Hebrew actually refers to any act of violence committed by a person out of anger, malice, or for personal gain that results in death, whether or not death was the intention. It does not apply to killing in war or killing as the punishment for a transgression of the Law. This may seem like an odd question, but why does the Bible say that it's wrong to murder?** (Because we are made in God's image, and life is sacred to God. God gives life, and all life belongs to God. When we kill someone, we are doing something that only God has the right to do.)

Ask **Does anyone remember the first murder committed in the Bible?** (Cain and Abel.) Say **The first story in the Bible after Adam and Eve are kicked out of the Garden is this story. What does that tell us?** (That this is an extremely dangerous and horrible part of the fall.) Divide the class into three groups and assign each group two questions from Handout #8.2. Give the groups five or six minutes to discuss its questions, then have the designated person share with the rest of the class. During the answers be sure that the following points are made.

- That God is given credit for the creation of life.
- Cain becomes angry, and the anger leads to murder.
- God warns Cain that this sin of anger can consume him if he's not careful.
- The nature of murder is such that it cries out to God to make it right.
- The LORD marked Cain so that he would not be murdered even though he had murdered. A murder does not "fix" another murder.

Say **As you can see, in the story of Cain and Abel anger is the first step toward murder. The same is true in our society today. The FBI reports that in 1999, of the murders committed between people that knew each other (in contrast to drive-by shootings, bombings, etc.), two-thirds resulted directly from arguments. The arguments led to anger, and anger to killing. It is this area that Jesus dealt with in The Sermon on the Mount.**

## Part #3 - Stop praying and DO something

Read or ask someone to read Matthew 5:21-24. Ask **How does Jesus change the emphasis in this passage?** (He moves the cause for judgment from the action to the state of the heart from which the action comes. Not only is murder wrong, but the anger that leads to murder is wrong as well.) Explain **Jesus knows that the real problem is in the heart of the person, so this is where he concentrates. In the Jewish religion, offering a sacrifice was the way of praying and worshipping. What does Jesus say you are to do if you remember that someone is angry with you as you enter worship?** (Leave your sacrifice and go to reconcile yourself to the other person.) **In doing this, are you being your brother's or sister's keeper?** (Yes. They are the ones who are angry and therefore are in danger of judgment. The life you save, however, may be your own. Every person is so important to God that he charges each of us to look out for each other. Not only are we to refrain from hate, we are to take care of the problem if we know someone is angry with us.) **We don't sacrifice today. What would be a contemporary reading of this teaching of Jesus?** (If you are doing your devotions and you remember that someone is angry with you, quit praying and give him or her a call. After you have made up, go back to your prayer time.) **This bitterness of heart can destroy us. Although it may not lead us to kill someone else, it could kill us.**

## Part #4 - Am I my brother's keeper?

Jesus brings this idea of being your brother's or sister's keeper to completion later in **The Sermon on the Mount**. Have someone read Matthew 5:43-45. Ask **What is this verse asking of us?** (That we love all people, even those who hate us.) **How hard is this?** (It is impossible without God's help.) **Do you think that this is possible even with God's help?** (Yes. We know we serve a loving God. A loving God would not ask us to do that which was impossible.) **Why do you think that God asks us to love all people?** (Because he loves all, no matter what we have done to him. We are to reflect God to our world, so we should love those he loves.)

Have your class bring out Handout #8.1 that was distributed at the beginning of class. Say **We have learned that God equates hatred or anger with murder. In light of this, read over the questions, but substituting hate or anger for murder. The questions may not be quite as clear, but it will be easy to catch the jest of the issue. If these two things are the same to God, why do these questions suddenly seem to be appropriate to us when they seemed so inappropriate when we were talking about murder?** As a final exercise, have the people examine question six which asks who they would like to kill. Instead have them consider if there is anyone that they hate or that hates them. Encourage them to write down the names that come to mind. Ask **In light of this lesson, how will you respond to this list and these people?** Ask them to make a commitment to God to take care of these areas before meeting for the next class period and to write what they are going to do on the back of the paper.

Close in prayer, being careful to allow a time for personal prayer in which the people can consider how they will respond to the people on their lists.

# Murderer Profile

The FBI estimates that in 1999 there were 15,533 murders committed in the U.S. In light of this, answer the following questions.

- 1) When was the last time you killed someone?
  - a) Last week
  - b) Last month
  - c) Last year
  - d) I don't recall the last time that I killed someone!
  
- 2) When I have committed a murder I generally...
  - a) ... pray about it right then.
  - b) ... go and talk to my pastor about what I should do.
  - c) ... start by reading scripture. That's always a good place to start.
  - d) ... I can't recall what I usually do, but I'm sure I do something.
  
- 3) If I knew that my husband or wife regularly committed murder, I would...
  - a) ... confront them about it. Some things are too important to let go.
  - b) ... pray that God would convict them about it, but say nothing.
  - c) ... talk to my minister for advice as to how to approach the subject.
  - d) ... do nothing. Some things are between a person and God.
  
- 4) When you heard that today we would be talking about murder, what is the first thing that came to mind?
  - a) Give me a break, not this subject again!!
  - b) When are we going to talk about a subject that matters to me?
  - c) Is this an adult class or did I stumble into VBS?!?
  - d) Finally, I kept wondering when we would deal with this!
  
- 5) When I take time to consider the sixth commandment (murder), I think...
  - a) ... I guess that's a good general rule to live by.
  - b) ... why can't the Bible be more realistic in its expectations?
  - c) ... what does an occasional murder really hurt?
  - d) ... I don't take time to consider this commandment.
  
- 6) Finally, list the five people that you would most like to kill right now and decide to pray for these people this week!!

# Genesis 4:1-16

## **Group #1**

After reading Genesis 4:1-16, answer the following two questions and choose someone to give your answers to the entire class.

- 1) To whom does Eve give credit for producing life?
  
- 2) How did Cain initially react to the rejection of his sacrifice?

## **Group #2**

After reading Genesis 4:1-16, answer the following two questions and choose someone to give your answers to the entire class.

- 1) When God saw that Cain was angry, how did he describe sin?
  
- 2) When God asked Cain where his brother was, what was Cain's response?

## **Group #3**

After reading Genesis 4:1-16, answer the following two questions and choose someone to give your answers to the entire class.

- 1) How did God say that he was aware of Abel's death?
  
- 2) Why did God put a mark on Cain? Was that necessary?

### Adult Lesson Nine

# Adultery

*You shall not commit adultery (Exodus 20: 14, NRSV).*

This commandment combined with "honor your father and mother" shapes the family unit as God intended it to function. Simply stated, it commands one not to enter into extra-marital sexual relationships with anyone. This preserves one's own marriage and the marriages of others. In our me-centered worldview, it is easy to understand adultery only in regards to the two people intimately involved, forgetting that the command implicitly relates to the spouses or eventual spouses of both adulterers as well. To answer the question "What type of society will we be?" this commandment responds "One that protects and nurtures marriages and families first and foremost."

Just as with the commandment against murder, Jesus examines this command in the Sermon on the Mount and re-defines it. Adultery starts in the heart and the mind, therefore Jesus moves the commandment back to address just this issue. Lust can lead to adultery, so if someone lusts after another person Jesus said that he or she has already committed adultery in his or her heart. In our entertainment-dominated society, lust is the rule of the day. It sells movies, books, TV programs, deodorants, and microwave dinners. The effect on our families and marriages is profound. Leading to unrealizable physical and sexual demands, it reduces both men and women to objects and prompts spouses to search outside of marriage for an idealized fulfillment that does not exist.



#### OBJECTIVES

- Establish God's position on the sanctity of marriage and the family.
- Identify the current outlook toward adultery.
- Examine Jesus' teaching on adultery and lust.
- Create an opportunity for class members to rid their lives of adultery and lust for the sake of their current or future marriages and families.

#### SCRIPTURE

- Exodus 20: 14
- Genesis 2:24
- Matthew 5:27-32

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Three copies of Handout #9.1
- Copies of Handout #9.2 for everyone in the class
- Chalk/chalkboard; marker/dry erase board; or something else to write on

## Part 1 - Cleave to one another

Begin the class period by saying **We have already discussed the importance of the family unit to God as shown in honoring mothers and fathers. Today we will look at the importance of marital faithfulness in keeping this family unit intact. But before we look at what the Bible has to say on this subject, what are some of the reasons that marital faithfulness is important in families?** Let the class answer this question, then ask **What are the consequences of adultery on families?** You will want to write these answers on a chalkboard or dry erase board. Be sure to steer the conversation to cover both one's own family (the effects on the spouse, children, etc.) and the effects on other families.

Then say **We've looked at some reasons marital faithfulness is important. Now let's look at God's original intention for marriage.** Have someone read Genesis 2:24-25. Say **Notice there is no talk here of superiority of one spouse over the other. Parents are left and the husband and wife cleave to one another. Then the two become one flesh. Although the meaning here is more than sexual, it is definitely sexual imagery. The two get married and become one. They are naked before each other, hiding nothing, and not ashamed of who they are. This was God's original plan for human marriage. It is a beautiful picture. With this picture in mind, the concept of adultery seems completely foreign and ugly.**

## Part 2 - Play it again, Sam

Have someone read Exodus 20:14. Say **We see what the Bible says about adultery. What is our own society and culture telling us about adultery?** Form three groups to examine how our society views adultery in television, films, and literature. Allow the class members to choose the group in which they participate, while encouraging a fairly even spread of people. Give each group a copy of Handout #9.1. Allow the groups five to seven minutes to complete their activity, then have them come back together as a class and share what they have discussed.

After they are done ask **Overall, does our society do a good job of respecting the sacredness of the marriage bond?** (No, probably not.) **Do these mediums (TV, films, books) do a good job of showing the pain and brokenness in the families of those touched by adultery?**

## Part 3 - Let's start at the very beginning

Say **Not only do these means of entertainment give us a poor understanding of the biblical concept of marriage, they also contribute to the problem by encouraging dissatisfaction with one's spouse and encouraging lust. It is this longing for someone else that often leads to adultery which Jesus speaks about in the Sermon on the Mount.** Have someone read Matthew 5:27-32. **We see Jesus' concern here for the stable-ness of the family unit as he redefines how and when divorce is appropriate. We also see his**

concern for the beginning of adultery, which is often lust. Ask **Do you think that lust is a major problem in our society?** (Yes, the pornography business is thriving, television continues to push the boundaries of sex and nudity, movies are increasingly graphic, and popular music describes and encourages sexual promiscuity.)

Say **Men generally receive the lion's share of the attention in the area of lust, but women are as susceptible to lust as men, though sometimes from a different source. Romance novels, movies, and soap operas can feed a woman's romantic and emotional lust. They paint pictures of men that are as unfair and problem-causing as the picture of women painted in pornography and movies. Any type of medium that is designed to feed the sexual or relational needs of men or women outside the bounds of marriage is lust and causes problems within a marriage or family.**

*Any type of medium that is designed to feed the sexual or relational needs of men or women outside the bounds of marriage is lust and causes problems within a marriage or family.*

## Part 4 - Oh, cut it out

Although in the passage we just read Jesus was not speaking literally about gouging out one's eyes, he was pointing out the need for getting rid of lust-feeding objects and habits in our lives before they began to tear apart our families. Distribute Handout #9.2. Allow a few minutes for the class members to look over the worksheet. There is no need for them to actually mark the problem areas, but encourage them to pick one or more that they may need to work on. Ask **Can you think of other areas in which lust is a problem in our society.** Allow only a few minutes to this part of the discussion. You want to look at the areas of problem without glorifying any one area. Read Matthew 5:29-30 again. Say **We've looked at some areas that destroy marriages and families. God defines these as sin in the Ten Commandments and through Jesus' teaching. This passage clearly challenges us to cut from our lives these sinful areas instead of allowing them to control our destinies. Some of you may feel like lust has become a controlling part of your life.** Now is a time to cut it out of your life. Lead from here into a prayer time. Allow a time of silent prayer for class members to talk with God about lust-producing areas in their lives.

# Media and Adultery

## Group #1 - Television



As a group consider television episodes and shows that have dealt with the subject of adultery. How has this subject been presented? What is the general attitude that television displays towards adultery? Is it biblical or tolerant? Be sure to consider different genres such as soap operas, comedies, and dramas. Can you remember a show that portrayed the devastation adultery brings? Can you remember a time when adultery was presented in light of biblical principles? Select someone from the group to summarize your discussion with to the class.

## Group #2 - Films



Adultery has been portrayed thousands of times in movies. Sometimes it is seen as tragically romantic (*The Horse Whisperer*, *Casablanca*), sometimes as a way of life (*Dangerous Liaisons*), and sometimes as a decision with horrible consequences (*The Ice Storm*). Overall, how would you define the Hollywood attitude towards adultery? Identify the movie (or two or three) that best illustrates this attitude. Select someone from your group to present to the class the Hollywood attitude towards adultery and the films that best illustrate it.

## Group #3 - Literature



There is no end to the amount of literature and novels on the subject of adultery. From classics (*Lady Chatterley's Lover*, *The Great Gatsby*), to Harlequin Romances (take your pick), to popular books (*The Bridges of Madison County*, *The Firm*), every literary genre has dealt with adultery. How is adultery generally conveyed in these works? Are they biblical in their approach? Is adultery seen as "wrong" or just unfortunate? Choose one classic and one contemporary novel that best illustrate how literature tends to look at adultery and choose someone to share these with the class.

## For Men!!

### **Do you have a problem with any of these lust-producing areas?**

1. An attractive or caring woman with whom you work?
2. Online pornography?
3. Movies?
4. Advertisements in your favorite magazine?
5. Men's magazines such as *Maxim*, *Gear*, *Playboy*, or *GQ*?
6. A particular character in a TV show?
7. A woman or girl in the neighborhood with whom you have become friends?
8. Books that have heavy sexual themes?

Is it time you took some steps to cut some of these things out of your life? What do you need to do?

## For Women!!

### **Do you have a problem with any of these lust-producing areas?**

1. Harlequin romance novels?
2. Soap operas or other shows with idealized male characters?
3. Movies?
4. Pornography?
5. A man at work who you find caring and considerate?
6. A male friend who offers support and understanding?
7. Memories of a past relationship in which it seemed that more of your needs were being met?

Is it time that you took some steps to cut some of these things out of your life? What do you need to do?

### Adult Lesson Ten

# Posted: No Thieving!!

*You shall not steal (Exodus 20:15, NRSV).*



**G**rand theft auto. Pick-pocketing. Grand larceny. Income-tax evasion. Pilfering. Plagiarism. We've sub-divided, cross-referenced, and narrowed this eighth commandment to literally hundreds of smaller terms, both felonies and misdemeanors. What we consider in classes ranging from income-tax law to ethics, God covers in just one line-"You shall not steal." A study of the Hebrew word translated here as "steal" shows the full range of applications of this law. It is used for devious business practices, well-planned robberies, pilfering of small items, and heists of large ones. There is no narrowing of the topic. If we are to stand in relationship with God in a community of faith, we are not to steal. Period.

Today a false dichotomy between private and public thievery springs up. We consider it horrible to break into a house and take the owner's property. To steal from public institutions-the IRS, an employer, etc.-is at least understandable if not "okay." "They haven't paid me what I'm worth to them for years." "They have no right to take 35% of what I make to give to some deadbeat who doesn't even look for a job." "Tithe? That pastor has to make more than I do." And so it becomes easy to rationalize stealing from the job, the government, and God. The problem is that there is no addendum, asterisk, or exception tacked onto the end of this commandment. If we live in relationship with God, we don't steal.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Examine the biblical mandate against stealing.
- Establish that stealing reflects on the type of person you are.
- Challenge class members to consider if they are stealing.
- Outline how to make retribution for stealing.

#### SCRIPTURE

- Exodus 20:15
- Matthew 15:16-19
- Luke 19:1-10

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of Handout #10.1 for everyone in the class
- Copies of Handout #10.2 for everyone in the class
- Chalk/chalkboard; marker/dry erase board; or something else to write on

## Part 1 - For the mouths of babes...

Begin class by telling a story about stealing something when you were a kid. If you don't have any, feel free to use mine. **(When I was five I was in the grocery store with my parents. We walked by the health food section where they had a display of dried fruit and other health-mix items in bulk that you could scoop out and pay for by the pound. I reached into the dried banana bin and grabbed a couple to shove into my mouth. My dad saw me, and I received perhaps the longest lecture of my childhood. I learned a big lesson that day. Stealing, either large or small, is wrong.)** After telling your own story, ask the class members if they have any "stealing" stories from when they were kids. Be sure to examine the consequences of stealing.

## Part 2 - Seedy CD?

Have someone read Exodus 20:15. Then distribute Handout #10.1. The answer to the question on the worksheet is, of course, that every one of the items on this list is forbidden. Use this list as a springboard to discuss some of the more current ethical issues the internet raises. Be sure and discuss music and movie swapping programs (which is the ability to download music and films to a local computer from the Internet). Ask **How many of you have used these swapping programs? Do you think that they are wrong?** The answers will probably vary widely. Younger classes will almost certainly have used both programs. Some members in older classes will probably not even be aware of their existence. The Internet now makes it possible for users to "pirate" music and movies in electronic format—thus, depriving (or at least inhibiting) the "owners" of the material (music and film companies) an opportunity to receive an income for retail sales.

Explain **The word that we translate "steal" in this verse is used throughout the Old Testament for someone taking anything that is not his or hers. Intellectual and artistic property is some of the hardest to deal with, but if it is someone else's ideas, music, or other form of artwork, it belongs to them or whomever they have sold it to (music contracts, movie companies, etc.) To take it without paying is stealing from them every bit as much as breaking into their businesses or homes and taking their belongings. Music companies deal in sounds. To take their sounds without paying is stealing.** You may have to adapt this example for your class, but the same is true of copying sheet music without permission, copying software, "taking" someone else's idea at work, or making an extra copy of a movie when it is rented.

## Part 3 - Stealing from the heart

Read or ask someone to read Matthew 15:16-19. Ask **According to this verse, where does the desire to steal come from?** (From the heart.) **What does this do to a person?** (Defiles him or her.) Ask **Do you think it tells you anything about a person if you see him or her stealing? Have you ever witnessed someone stealing that shocked or surprised you?**

Allow them to answer these questions and then tell this true story.

**I paid my way through seminary waiting tables at a barbecue restaurant. All employees got a fifty percent discount on food. One day a fellow seminary employee and I were ordering at the same time. I got a sandwich with fries and potato salad. He looked at me like I was crazy and said, "Hey, man, all you have to do is order the sandwich and then ask the guys in the back to put fries and potato salad with it." After he walked away a fellow waitress looked at me and said, "And he's going to be a minister. Scary." Was she that concerned about the fifty cents this cost the restaurant? Probably not. Then what was the issue? (Just as Jesus points out in the verses above, stealing, in small or large amounts, says something about the heart of the person that does it. If someone is willing to steal small amounts from their employer, chances are they would steal more if they thought they could get away with it. As Christians we must also be aware that what we do represents Christ to others.)**



**Say Chances are all of us have taken part in some form of theft at some time in our lives. Some of you may not have even considered some of the things that you were doing as stealing until this lesson. The question becomes, how do we make it right?**

## **Part 4 - Zacchaeus was a wee little man**

**Say There is one story in the Bible about a person who made restitution for stealing, a story we tell our children but sometimes forget about ourselves. Zacchaeus.** Ask if anyone can remember the story of Zacchaeus, then have someone read Luke 19:1-10. Explain that tax collectors were allowed to collect as much money as possible from the people in their area. Whatever they collected over the prescribed tax was theirs to keep. Zacchaeus apparently had collected too much, but he was willing to pay back four times what he had stolen. **Say We are not told in this verse that we must pay back four times what we owe. The point seems to be that once we are accepted by Christ, we do have to make restitution for that which we've done wrong, including stealing.**

Divide the class into three groups and give each group a situation from Handout #10.2. Give the groups five to seven minutes to review the situations, than have someone in each group explain the options and benefits they discussed for each scenario. After they have done this say **What constitutes stealing is not as black and white as it once was, but the call of the Ten Commandments is still on our lives. If we are to be a people of God, we cannot take anything that does not belong to us. Not only are there negatives attached to stealing, but there are positives to living honestly and making up for past mistakes.**

Close in prayer. Be sure to allow for a time of commitment to make restitution for what was taken in the past.

# What Counts?!?

**Take a moment to consider which of these things the eighth commandment forbids.**

1. Grand theft auto.
2. Cheating on an exam.
3. Breaking into a house.
4. Using various software to "pirate" or trade music or movies.
5. Buying one ticket but going to two movies.
6. Taking supplies from work for the kids to use at school.
7. "Under-estimating" on your tax returns.
8. Plagiarizing a paper or report.
9. Stealing a colleague's idea and turning it in as one's own.
10. A waiter not reporting all of his or her tips.
11. Downloading movies off the web.
12. "Fixing" the cable to get pay channels free.
13. Stock trading with inside information.
14. Installing software one hasn't purchased.



# Case Studies

## Situation 1 - The Repentant Roofer

John is a college student and works as a roofer for income. His boss, Chad, pays him in cash. Chad doesn't withhold for taxes, nor does he submit anything to the IRS. John has recently become a Christian and it is time for him to file his income tax return. He figures that he has probably made \$15,000 in the past year. John feels like he should file, but he doesn't know how he can without getting Chad in trouble. What should he do? What will be the positives for him if he pays the income tax?

## Situation 2 - Timmy the Tither

Tim is 40 years old and has been attending church with his wife and three children for ten years. Although he regularly drops something in the offering plate, he knows it is far less than 10%. Lately, through a series of sermons on stewardship and through his personal devotional time, Tim has felt convicted about not tithing. He wonders how much he owes from the past or does he even need to go back and pay tithe for his income in the last ten years? What do you think? What are his options? What are the positives with each option?

## Situation 3 - Pirate Paul

Paul is a huge music fan. His CD collection had been up to over 400 until he discovered an online music-swapping site. Able to download all of his collection off of the Internet, he sold his collection of CDs at a used CD store and no longer buys any new music. He thought this was a great situation until a recent Sunday school lesson prompted him to consider that he might be stealing from the artists and music companies. He feels like he owes them something, but he's not sure if he does or how he should go about repaying what he has stolen. What do you think? If he repays the artists in some way, what benefits will that give him?

### Adult Lesson Eleven

# Honesty

*You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor (Exodus 20:16, NRSV).*



**T**he power of the spoken word to build up or tear down is an awesome thing. Lies, half-truths, and gossip can destroy lives and communities every bit as much as can adultery, murder, and covetousness. In an earlier lesson we examined the power and responsibility intrinsic in knowing and taking the name of God. Likewise, a people entrusted with the duty of spreading his word must themselves be trustworthy. This commandment is set in a courtroom. If one is testifying about another member of the community, he or she must speak the truth so that justice may be served. But to stop at the courtroom door denies the thrust of the commandment. If a community is going to stay in a proper relationship with the LORD, they must speak the truth. Since God is truth, to be a proper reflection of God demands truthfulness.

#### OBJECTIVES

- Establish that it is God's will we live in an honest community because without trust there is no law and order.
- Examine the positives of living life in complete honesty.
- Consider the idea that our honesty or truthfulness in speech defines who we are.

#### SCRIPTURE

- Exodus 20:16
- Matthew 12:33-37
- Matthew 5:33-37

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of Handout #11.1 for everyone in class
- Chalk/chalkboard; marker/dry erase board; or something else to write on

## Part 1 - Liar, Liar

Handout #11.1 has two scenarios on it. Before the class session begins ask someone to be ready to read each one out loud. Open today's lesson by reading each scenario. Allow for the discussion of each question. Then ask **What are some other times when you've become aware that you or someone you knew who claimed to be a Christian was not being completely honest. How did you deal with it?** (Be very careful to emphasize that names should be changed and no stories from the current church should be used.)

## Part 2 - Only sticks and stones?

Say, **Today we're talking about the ninth commandment. Will someone read Exodus 20:16, please?** After it has been read, ask **What do you think "give false testimony" means?** (False testimony refers primarily to a courtroom setting, but the implication is much broader. God is trying to define his community as one where people speak the truth.) Explain **In the Hebrew mindset, the spoken word had great power. Does anyone remember how God created the world?** (He spoke everything into existence.) **Once God or man spoke a word it was considered to have a life of its own and the ability to actually do something. We see this in the blessing that Isaac gave Jacob instead of Esau. Once Jacob had been blessed, even though Isaac realized the mistake, it was too late. The blessing was understood to have already taken effect. So it was with a testimony and talking about others. When a Hebrew gave a testimony in court, he or she was "re-creating" the event and the court's decision would be based on the testimony. So, no matter what actually happened, the future of the "neighbor" would be based on the testimony. In a very real sense the past was altered and re-created falsely when testimonies were lies.**

**This is still true today. I recently saw a talk show about promiscuous teenagers. The host asked one sixteen-year-old girl why she had started having sex. Her answer was heartbreaking. She said, "I was a virgin, but some friends of mine got mad at me and started telling everyone that I slept around. Soon everyone was saying that I would sleep around. Finally I decided that it didn't matter whether or not I did because everyone thought I did. So I started having sex." The words spoken about her literally re-created who she was. Ask Can anyone think of times when lies were told about you which eventually might as well have been true, since everyone seemed to believe them?** Allow for some time to talk about this. You may want to have a story about yourself to facilitate this discussion.

## Part 3 - Honesty, a lonely word?

Read or ask someone to read Matthew 5:33-37. Say **We are tempted at times to think that it's okay to not tell the whole truth. What are some times when we may feel like it's okay to tell "little white lies"?** (Income tax time, using sick days at work when you are not ill, getting out of trouble with a spouse or traffic patrolman.) **The Jews of**

Jesus time had the same temptation, saying that an oath to God was binding, but other oaths weren't. What does Jesus say about that in this scripture? (Anything we say should be binding and true, not just in particular situations.)

Be ready to write the following list on the chalkboard. Say **Mark Twain said, "Tell the truth and you won't have to remember anything."** It's true that telling the truth takes a lot of pressure off us to remember exactly to whom we told what. What are some other positives to living in complete honesty with your family? (Complete trust of your mate, set an example for your kids, trust of your kids, etc.) **At work?** (Trusted employee, faith of your boss, set a good example for those below you, integrity never questioned, etc.) **With your friends?** (Their respect, maintain a good witness, be a trusted confidante.)

## Part 4 - Pants on fire

Say **So far we've talked about the importance of being honest. But what does it tell you about a person if he or she is honest?** Ask **Who knows someone who is unusually honest?** When someone volunteers, ask **What does their honesty tell you about them?** (They have integrity, they are a Christian, they are truly good, etc.) Ask **Do you think it is possible to be a Christian and to be a liar? Why or why not?**

Have someone read Matthew 12:33-38. Say **As we've seen before, when Jesus talks about truthfulness he moves to the problem of the heart. What does this verse tell us about people who lie?** (It is a reflection of who they are and what is in their hearts.) **Are words and sentences important in Jesus mind?** (Yes, so important that Jesus said that we will have to give an account one day of everything we say. Our words will justify or condemn us.) **According to the scripture passage, how do we get a tree to produce good fruit?** (We must first make the tree good, then the fruit will be good as well.) **If Jesus is right, if we are going to stop being dishonest, what will have to happen first?** (We will have to be changed. Our hearts will have to be made good.)

**Although we started with a seemingly simple problem, lying, Jesus said that the larger problem is the kind of people we are. If we want to be honest and good, we must be changed. Can we change ourselves? (No.) If not, who can change us and make our hearts good? (Only God can change us through Jesus Christ.) Explain God is still trying to do the same thing he was some 3400 years ago: form us into a community that is pleasing to him and brings glory to His name. We are to be a people of truth, whose words can be trusted. In this way we will be a reflection of Him to the world. If you are having a hard time with being truthful and you want to change, Jesus wishes to forgive you and to change you.**

**We are to be a people of truth, whose words can be trusted. In this way we will be a reflection of Him to the world.**

Close the class in prayer. Allow for a time of commitment to Christ and a request to be changed. You may want to lead in a prayer that they can repeat. If you know that you have some non-Christians in the class, you may even want to lead in the sinner's prayer. The key is to stress the role of God in changing who we are so that truthfulness natural behavior.

# Case Studies

## Scenario #1

Pam works with you in your office and attends your church. You have been friends since she began working there two years ago. Although you've never heard her tell a "big" lie, you do know that she called in sick three days last summer to take a mini-vacation with her kids. That left her several vacation days for the holidays. You also know that last week she told her boss that she'd finished a report, but left the computer disk at home, when she actually hadn't even started it.

### Questions

1. Do you consider Pam to be "honest"?
2. Would you confront Pam about these lies? If so, how or why?
3. You have been witnessing to a friend at work who has commented to you about Pam's lies for several months. Pam overhears your conversation one day and joins in. When Pam walks away your friend says, "She's supposed to be a Christian, too?" and subsequently ends the conversation about spiritual things. What do you say to Pam? What do you say to your friend in the future.

## Scenario #2

John, a Sunday School teacher and board member at your church, owns a farm and a hundred head of cattle. For tax purposes, if a calf dies that had been purchased that year, the purchase price can be written off as a loss, but if a calf that is born to one of John's own cows dies, it cannot be written off. John loves to tell this story with a grin and say, "You know I haven't lost one of my own yet!"

### Questions

1. Is John doing anything wrong by reporting the death of a calf born to one of his cows as a loss?
2. Would you consider John honest?
3. If you were positive that John was lying about this on his tax forms, would you question his placement on the ballot for the church board next year?

### Adult Lesson Twelve

# The Grass Is Always Greener

*You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his manservant, or his maidservant, nor his ox, or his donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor (Exodus 20:17, NRSV).*

The final commandment deals with the status of the heart. It is the capstone of the final six commandments dealing with interpersonal relationships. Covetousness, or desiring that which belongs to someone else, is a primary reason for the breaking of the four previous commandments. Murder, theft, adultery, and lying all flow from a covetous heart. After describing the actions that a community in relationship to God must not take part in, God described the orientation of the heart in regards to other people. We are not to desire what our neighbors have. Such desire leads to the destruction of community. This desire also belies an unhealthy preoccupation with worldly possessions. When importance is placed on material wealth and goods, it takes the emphasis off of God, which in turn leads to the breaking of the first commandment.



Jesus also dealt with a people that were focused on material possessions over a relationship with God. This was a recurring theme through many of his parables and much of his teaching. Material possessions are not inherently bad, but they often lead to wanting more and more things. "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." Today we live in a society driven by consumerism with its cornerstone that more is better. From movies to TV to advertisements, we are constantly barraged by the induced need for the latest gadget, the perfect car, a bigger house, and the perfect mate. Given the onslaught, we should not be surprised to find ourselves longing for these things. It is, however, a big problem.

#### OBJECTIVES

- To assess what we mean when we say "covet."
- To examine the biblical teaching on this subject.
- To understand the interaction between covetousness and materialism.
- To consider Jesus teaching on materialism.

#### SCRIPTURE

- Exodus 20:17
- Luke 12:13-21, 29-31

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of Handout #12.1 for everyone in the class
- Copies of Handout #12.2 for everyone in the class
- Blank paper for everyone in the class
- Chalk/chalkboard; marker/dry erase board; or something else to write on
- Dictionary

## Part 1 - Covet or love it?

Begin the class by saying **Today we are talking about the last commandment, "Thou shall not covet." Before we read the scripture, let's consider what we think of or mean when we use the word "covet."** Distribute Handout #12.1. Give the class four or five minutes to work through the exercise. Stress the fact that the emphasis is not on "right" or "wrong" answers, but to get them thinking about what it means to "covet." After they have filled in the sheet, discuss each scenario. Ask for a show of hands to see if people thought a scenario exhibited covetousness or not. Then take some time to define "covet" and write your definition on the chalk- or whiteboard. Ask **What do you think the word "covet" means? Write down each definition and then try to come up with one definition that everyone in the class can agree on. It might help to have at least one dictionary available, but be careful not to give the dictionary definition until after there has been a good discussion.**

## Part 2 - The heart of the matter

Have someone read Exodus 20:17. Ask **Do you see a difference between this commandment and the other nine?** (This commandment deals with inward sin, the orientation of the heart. The others deal primarily with sinful actions.) Ask **Why do you think God chose to put wanting things that don't belong to you on a list that contains such huge sins as murder, adultery, and stealing?** Allow them some time to answer this, but be sure to emphasize that these three things usually stem directly from covetousness. Ask **Do you think adultery or stealing is even possible if the person hasn't coveted first.** (No.) Ask **How often do you think that murder stems from covetousness?** (Often.)

Ask **Is it possible that coveting material possessions is a form of idolatry?** (Yes, money and possessions become our gods when we allow ourselves to lust after them. We are saying that God is not able to satisfy our needs and wants, and we must look elsewhere for them to be satisfied.) **Do you think we can say that covetousness is an outgrowth of being discontent with what God has given us?** (Yes.)



## Part #3 - One dollar more

Chances are everyone in the class is saving for or "wants" something right now. Ask

**What is one thing that you feel like you have to have in the near future?** Allow time for class members to answer this question. **Why do you want that item? Is it a physical need? Is it motivated by materialism? Is it motivated by covetousness?** To help facilitate the discussion, you may wish to ask **Are materialism and covetousness the same thing or are they different?**

Read Luke 12:13-21 to the class. Ask **Does Jesus say there is anything wrong with owning things or having possessions?** (No.) **Then what did the man in the parable do wrong?** (He wasn't rich towards God, which means that he put his possessions before God.) Read Luke 12:29-31. Ask **What are some things that we are tempted to worry about needing?** (New car, money for the kids' college education, the mortgage payment, new clothes, retirement.) **According to the scripture, who chases after these things?** (The nations of the world.) **What are we to seek?** (God's kingdom.) **If desiring other things before God is a form of coveting, how can we be more content with what we have?** (It will take a change of heart. We must shift our focus from worldly possessions to God's kingdom.)

## **Part #4 - Filling the void**

Explain **When we covet something, we are trying to fill a void that we don't think is being met.** Distribute Handout #12.2. Go over these areas orally. Say **If we are coveting other people's possessions, at some level we are not trusting that God will give us all that we need. In fact, we are raising ourselves to the level of God by saying "I will decide what my needs are and how they are best met." But what does Luke 12:29-13 tell us about this?** (That God knows what we need and he will meet our needs.)

***If we are coveting other people's possessions, at some level we are not trusting that God will give us all that we need.***

In closing, give everyone a blank sheet of paper. Have them write down the five most precious things in their lives. Say **Has God given anyone else these things? (No, not these specific things.) Why would we not choose to trust God with our needs and desires when the things that we most love and cherish have been God's gift to us?** Have your class put this list in their Bible and thank God everyday in their prayer times for all that he has given them, especially these five things. Then have them pray for the grace to be content with what God has given them.

Close in prayer.

# To Covet or Not to Covet

In each of the following scenarios, mark whether or not the person is coveting.

Scenario	Covet	Not Covet
<p><b>1</b> A couple down the street gets a new luxury car, something you could really use instead of the mini van that keeps breaking down.</p>		
<p><b>2</b> The woman next door goes jogging every morning and you notice how attractive she is.</p>		
<p><b>3</b> A fellow employee in your company gets the promotion that you were after. It doesn't seem like she's as knowledgeable or has worked as hard as you.</p>		
<p><b>4</b> Your brother, always the "winner" in the family, gets a new three-story house for his family of three while you and your family of six are crammed in a three bedroom fixer-upper.</p>		
<p><b>5</b> Your best friend's husband is always bringing her flowers, sending cards, and taking her to out-of-the-way places. Your spouse never does things like that and you find yourself wishing for someone "more like Sean."</p>		

# If I Only Had A Brain!!

For every item that we covet, we may be trying to fill a perceived need or void in our lives. These might include the need for excitement, intimacy, or worth. For every item below that some people may be tempted to covet, decide what need or void they might be trying to fill.

<u>Object Desired</u>	<u>Need or Void</u>
1. New car	
2. Position at work	
3. Attractiveness	
4. Someone else's spouse	
5. Family	
6. Good hair	
7. Happiness	
8. Mansion	
9. Manservant	
10. Intelligence	

Add some items with which you struggle.

## Carved in Stone

Embracing God's Value System

### Adult Lesson Thirteen

## Go!

*Then you shall say to your children, "We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt, but the LORD brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. The LORD displayed before our eyes great and awesome signs and wonders against Egypt, against Pharaoh and all his household. He brought us out from there in order to bring us in, to give us the land that he promised on oath to our ancestors. Then the LORD commanded us to observe all these statutes, to fear the LORD our God, for our lasting good, so as to keep us alive, as is now the case. If we diligently observe this entire commandment before the LORD our God, as he has commanded us, we will be in the right"* (Deuteronomy 6:22-25, NRSV).

This is the last week of this series on the Ten Commandments. The major focus of this lesson is a charge to go and be the people of God in our world. During this challenge we will answer the question of Deuteronomy 6:20, "What is the meaning of the decrees and the statutes that the LORD our God has commanded you?" Our answer will include that we once were slaves, but God freed us. Then he gave us commandments for our good. We allow these commandments to shape our relationship with God and with people because we are called to accurately show God to others. Our hope is that other slaves will want to be free.

You may wish to use this lesson to review certain issues or commandments that were problematic or particularly meaningful for your class. This lesson is designed in such a way that you can bring up particular commandments or areas for discussion without losing the major focus of the lesson. Please feel free to do this. In any case this session should help review the key elements of the Ten Commandments.



#### OBJECTIVES

- Review how the Ten Commandments shape our relationship with God.
- Review how our relationship with God shapes our relationship with others.
- Challenge the class to go forth and "live out" being the people of God.

#### SCRIPTURE

- Deuteronomy 6:20-25
- Exodus 20:3-17
- Jeremiah 18:1-6

#### WHAT YOU NEED

- Copies of Handout #13.1 for everyone in the class
- Copies of Handout #13.2 for everyone in the class
- Chalk/chalkboard; marker/dry erase board; or something else to write on
- Pencils/pens

## Part 1 - Ten again

Distribute Handout #13.1. Give these instructions: **As you may recall, the first week of this series we tried to write the Ten Commandments from memory. Try to list them again, using just a key word or phrase.** Give the class five minutes or so to work on this. When they are finished ask **How many of you knew more this time?** Congratulate them, then have them list them as you write them on the chalkboard. Leave space to the right to fill in the information for the second half of this activity. Say **Now, to the right of each of the commandments, briefly write about an area in your life where that commandment is shaping how you live. Remember to keep Jesus' teaching on the commandments in mind while doing this.** Give the class five minutes or so to write these out. After they are finished, begin with the first commandment and ask how each commandment plays out in life. On the chalk- or whiteboard, write down beside each commandment the answers that are given.

## Part 2 - What does it mean?

Have someone read Deuteronomy 6:20. Say **This is the question we want to deal with today. What is the meaning of these commandments that we've been studying for the past three months?** Give the class time to answer this question. It's likely that they will not have an answer immediately. If this is the case say **Remember, this is the question that the Israelite parents are supposed to be able to answer when their children ask. If your child or someone else's child asked you what the commandments mean, what would you tell them?** The answers may vary widely at this point. That's okay. The point is not to have a "right" answer, but to help your class think through and formulate this answer. It may help encourage the class to share if you write the answers on the board.

## Part 3 - The story of us

After this question has been answered, say **Let's see how Moses instructed the people of Israel to answer this question.** Have someone read Deuteronomy 6:21-25. Distribute Handout #13.2. Say **Moses' answer to the question of "What does it mean" was to tell the salvation story. Let's walk through this together.** On the chalk- or whiteboard write the headings "We were slaves," "Signs and wonders," "He brought us," "For our good." Say **Our story is different from their story, but our God and our commandments are the same. There was a time when each of us were slaves. To what were we enslaved?** (Sin, addictions, selfishness, poverty, etc.) **On the first section of your handout write down some things from which God delivered you.** If there are class members who don't mind sharing, write their answers below your first heading on the board. Allow some time for this.

Say **God performed many miracles to help the Israelites escape slavery: the parting of the Red Sea, the plagues, manna from heaven. What are some miracles**

**God has done in your life or those you love as you have escaped slavery?** (Answers here might include freedom from addiction, forgiveness of sin, or more "traditional" miracles of healings or unexplained events.) **Write down miracles you've seen in your life.** Again, if some don't mind sharing, write their answers on the board.

Say **We all have stories of the journey from deliverance to where we are today. However, for this part, let's look at the bigger journey of our church or families. Remember, Moses is speaking to people forty years after the Exodus. Their stories are the stories of their parents and grandparents. Part of our stories involve those who have come before us. Take some time to write the stories of those who helped you along the way: the stories of your church, your friends, and your family.** Again, write on the board the answers of those willing to share.

Say **If the Israelites kept the commandments, God promised that they would live long in the land. What are the promises to us if we do God's will?** (Some answers here include heaven, God's faithfulness, God's peace, He will never forsake us.) Write the answers on the board of those willing to share.

Now is the chance to tell the story of the class. Ask the question to the class **What is the meaning of the decrees and the statutes and the ordinances that the LORD our God has commanded you?** To answer this question, use the worksheets and/or what you have written on the board. One person could link together a line from each section of the worksheet, or four volunteers could each read a line from one section in consecutive order. The response will sound something like this: "We were once slaves to (alcohol), but God did great miracles among us and (freed us from addiction). He brought us out and led us by (the example of a godly grandmother.) If we allow his commandments to shape who we are, he promises to (never leave us or forsake us)."

*We all have stories of the journey from deliverance to where we are today.*

If you have been re-writing the commandments every week, this is a good time to read your completed list.

## Part 4 - Go!!

Say **Just like the Israelites, we are called to be God's people in this world. The Ten Commandments give us the over-arching view of the kind of community God uses to make his name known. As we go out into the real world of work, family, and relationships, the temptation to be molded and shaped by the world is everywhere. The only thing stopping us from adopting a worldly view is the memory of where we came from, where we are going, and the knowledge that the God that delivered us has a better plan for us than slavery.** Read Jeremiah 18:1-6 aloud. Say **The Holy Spirit continues to mold the people of God as long as we allow. How are we to keep from being like the world? By being God's people and keeping his commandments.**

Close in prayer.

# 10 AGAIN

See if you can write out the Ten Commandments using only a key word or phrase. In the right column write an area in your life which the commandment impacts.

<u>Commandment</u>	<u>Life Application</u>
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	

# Our Story

We were slaves...

Signs and wonders...

He brought us out...

Observe these for our good...