

The 10 Commandments

Session #2: Who Do You Think I Am?

OVERVIEW

Sunday Message Series: The 10 Commandments: Set Free to Live Free, Love God, Love Others

Resource: *The Ten Commandments: Living God's Way* by Mary Evans (CWR 2011)

Homework: Participants are asked to read the Scripture passages ahead of time in order to allow the Holy Spirit to inspire the understanding of their meaning.

Items needed for this session:

Handouts of Session #1, Service Project, and Map of the Exodus

A way to show the videos (laptop, screen, etc.)

Flip chart (easel) paper and marker.

LOVE: ENGAGE GOD AND OTHERS (20 minutes)

WELCOME

Prayer: Host prays asking for the Holy Spirit to lead the session, to inspire the understanding of the Scripture read, and to help participants apply the session to their daily discipleship.

Purpose: All grow groups during this series follow the same study on the 10 Commandments. These sessions are intended to help us grasp both what the 10 Commandments meant in their original context and also what they can mean for us today as a dynamic and profoundly relevant section of God's living Word. Further, we will explore why they are still relevant today, even though Jesus has come to put us "not under law but under grace" (Romans 6:15). Participants who take this study seriously will find it challenging and possibly even life-changing!

Calendar: 9 Sessions

NOTE: If the group chooses to spend a regular session time doing a service project, it could omit Session #9 and adjust the dates so you still end on May 20. (May 27 is all church game night.)

March 11: Session #1: Introductions, Orientation and Overview

March 18: Session #2: Who Do You Think I Am?

March 25: No session (Spring Break)

April 1: Session #3 Exclusive Rights

April 8: No session (Holy Week)

April 15: Session #4 Misrepresentation

April 22: Session #5 Respect!

April 29: Session #6 Sex and Violence

May 6: Session #7 Who Are You Kidding?

May 13: Session #8 The New Generation

May 20: Session #9 Wrap Up and Review

Covenant: Participants agree to love each other by

- Attending as many of the nine sessions as possible
- Participating in a service project
- Making room for everyone to share: be okay with silence and resist over responding
- Creating a safe space where people can be heard and feel loved: no quick answers, snap judgments, or simple fixes
- Keeping anything that is shared strictly confidential and within the group
- Avoiding gossip and immediately resolving any concerns by following the principles of Matthew 18:15-17
- Giving group members permission to speak into my life and help me live a healthy, balanced spiritual life that is pleasing to God
- Inviting friends who might benefit from this study and warmly welcome newcomers
- Getting to know the other members of the group and pray for them regularly.

ICE BREAKER.

Each person shares three things (other than what you shared last week) that you think would help other people to understand who you are as a person: this may be a physical characteristic, a character trait, something that has happened to you or anything else you think relevant.

SERVE: ENGAGE THE WIDER COMMUNITY (10 minutes)

SERVICE PROJECT (*see separate sheet*)

If the group has not yet made plans, decide on a service project idea and date.

GROW: ENGAGE GOD'S WORD (40 minutes)

INTRODUCTION (*By volunteer reader.*)

The aim of this session is to get across the point that the Ten Commandments start with God, not with us. They tell us about who God is, how God relates to us and what God wants and expects from us. Yes, they are about our behavior, but only in the context of our relationship with God as He really is, rather than as we might imagine Him to be. Unless we grasp this point we won't understand the actual requirements and we certainly won't be able to keep them.

The discussion is to help people think about how God speaks to us, how we speak to Him and how knowing more of who God is helps us to relate to Him. God speaks in different ways: through other people, through creation, through ideas that come to us, but most commonly through Scripture. Scripture portrays God speaking in different ways. As long as it is clear that what is heard is really from God (a key test of that is that it is fully in accord with Scripture), all the ways are valid.

One insight may be that misunderstandings of God come from focusing too much on certain aspects of God's nature (e.g. His loving-kindness, His judgement) and neglecting others (His holiness, His mercy or His passion for justice). The closing prayer time encourages people to use insights from this session to guide your prayer time.

CONTEXT:**Video:** Introduction to the Ten Commandments<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PBrkcu056NU> (4:45 minutes)

Notes: Pastor Pete Jurchen explains that the purpose of the Ten Commandments is they reveal godly love. The two main parts (he calls them “tables”) are:

1. Love God (the first three commandments) and
2. Love others (the last six commandments—he says seven, but Pastor David puts Sabbath in the first “table”).

The Law (including the Ten Commandments) show this two-fold purpose of love in three ways: First Use of Law: To convict us of our sin and failure in following God’s plan.

Second Use of Law: To restrain us from committing these sins.

Third Use of Law: To guide us in the way of life that God wants us to follow.

Discuss one or two of the following:

1. What are the different ways that the world uses the word “love”?

2. How are these similar to and different from the love that Jesus is talking about here?

3. What is so amazing about the love that Jesus has for you? Why is that? Say it in your own words.

OPENING OUR EYES

Read: Exodus 3:13-15

Read: Exodus 20:1-2

Volunteer reader:

The “Ten Words” begin not with an instruction but with an introduction. How many times have we as children, when told by parents or teachers to do something, asked: “Why should I?” Perhaps there were many reasons for how good it was for us, or how it would help other people. In the end, however, the one that really worked was, “Because I say so!” Instructions given by bossy siblings or “interfering” strangers didn’t have the same weight. Rules must always be seen in context. We keep laws because we belong to a community; we follow customs because of the pressures and expectations of our culture; we obey the rules of a club, society or game because we’ve signed up to them.

The first words of Exodus 20 are not incidental. The context they provide is vital to our understanding of the whole passage. One of their functions is to remind us that this is not just a collection of varying instructions but a unified whole. But, perhaps more significantly these Ten “Words” are God’s words; if we forget then we’ll never be able to understand the meaning of the commandments themselves. Or, to put it another way, if we are to understand God’s words, we must first know who God is and recognize our relationship to Him. Therefore God begins by introducing Himself. He does this many times throughout the Old Testament. When reading Old Testament passages look out for it. We often hear of “I am” statements in the New Testament but they are also very significant in the Old. Different

forms of statements such as “I am the Lord,” “I am your God,” “I am your shield,” “I am your inheritance,” etc. come more than 200 times. Here in the Ten Commandments we have, “I am the Lord your God...”

When English versions spell LORD in capitals like this, it translates the name God gives Himself, Yahweh, in Exodus 3:14. (Sometimes “Jehovah” is used, but this is a later formation taking the consonants of YHWH and then combining them with vowels from another word meaning Lord.) God is not just an impersonal force. He is a Person with a name and He refers to Himself constantly by that name. English versions since the King James Version (1611) have translated Yahweh by the title LORD, but we must never allow that tradition to stop us from grasping that God is a Person to whom we can relate and who relates to us. He is Yahweh, Israel’s own God, the One who brought them “out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.”

God is saying to Israel: “Listen folks, it really is Me speaking here. We have a history together. You used to be slaves in Egypt but I rescued you. You have signed up to the covenant with Me, so I am “Your God.” We belong together. Because of that I am giving you these Ten “Words” as the foundational basis for how life should be lived in the new land I am giving you. It is Me who is giving you these words and ‘because I say so’ you must keep them.” The reason for obeying the Ten Commandments is that they come from our God and tell us something of the kind of things this God of ours requires.

INTO THE BIBLE

Read Deuteronomy 4:1-6

Read Isaiah 44:6, 24-28

Read Jeremiah 24:1-7

Read John 15:1-8

1. Exodus 20:1 says, “And God spoke all these words” Have you heard from God recently either in Scripture or otherwise? If so how did He speak and what did you hear?

2. What difference, if any, does it make when we call people by their name or by a title? (In some cultures similar differences might apply if we use the first name or the family name.)

3. Some modern English translations use Yahweh instead of replacing it with LORD. Is this a good or a bad thing.

4. In general, when you speak to God what do you call Him? Does what you call Him make any difference to your relationship with Him? If you begin, for example, with “Loving heavenly Father,” how might the prayer following that differ from a prayer beginning “Great Creator and Lord of the whole universe?”

5. God uses different aspects of His character or blessings when He speaks of Himself to Israel. Here it is redemption from Egypt; sometimes (e.g. Jeremiah 34:13) it is as the Giver of the covenant, or as the God of their ancestors. What things do you think God might mention if He were introducing Himself to:

a) Your country?

b) Your church?

c) You?

6. How does our understanding of who God is affect our understanding of what we think it means for us to serve Him?

SEEING JESUS IN THE SCRIPTURES

Volunteer reader: Jesus said, “I and the Father are one” (John 10:30) and “Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father” (John 14:9). When we look at Jesus we also learn things about the Father. We must realize, however, that when God speaks about Himself in the Old Testament, we also learn more about Jesus. Relationship with God and relationship with Jesus are not two completely separate things but are linked together.

Discuss: How does seeing Yahweh as Israel’s Redeemer in Exodus 20:2 help you understand more of the New Testament’s presentation of Christ as Redeemer, and vice versa?

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

Volunteer reader: Any meaningful relationship always involves both behavior and knowledge. Of course love must be evidenced by loving behavior, but how many relationships flounder because they are based on a mirage? Love based on what we think the other person should be like, rather than the reality, does not usually last long. God knows all about us and loves us anyway, but do we really take time to discover who God is, to listen to what He says about Himself in His Word? In the following studies we will discuss our attitudes and actions in relation to God. But if that is to have any relevance we must first know to whom we are relating.

Work in Groups (if time, or do separately at home): Write down some things you know about God and make a note of Scripture verses providing evidence that what you “know” is correct.

God is:

Scripture Verses:

LOVE: ENGAGE GOD (5 minutes)

LOOKING AHEAD:

Invite someone new to come next week! I will invite:

Do we need to call/text/email and remind one another? I will remind:

Homework:

Read Exodus 20:1-6

Commit: Try using a different name or title for God each time you pray this week and see how this affects the way you think about Him.

Snacks/sweets for next time:

CLOSING PRAYER:

Go around the group and each person prayers a line prayer of thanksgiving, using a different name or aspect of God. Each person uses the following formula:

1. Dear [fill in a different name for God],
2. Thank you for [some character relating to the name you chose].
3. [Insert any other prayers, if any.]
4. Amen.

For example:

Dear God of Healing, Thank you that my coworker is feeling better after her accident. I pray for her continued recovery. Amen.