

# The 10 Commandments

## Session #8: The Now Generation

### 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)

Items needed for this session: Handouts of Session #8.

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

### LOVE: ENGAGE GOD AND OTHERS (10 minutes)

#### WELCOME

This is the last session of our Ten Commandments Grow Group Session!

Prayer: Begin with a prayer asking the Holy Spirit to lead the session, to inspire the understanding of the Scripture read and to help you apply the session to your daily discipleship.

Say the week's memory verse: "Whatever you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks to God the Father because of Him." -Colossians 3:17

#### ICE BREAKER.

Think back to when you were in high school. What has struck you about what has changed and what has stayed the same, as you consider school and church. Share your list with other group participants.

What has stayed the same:

What has changed:

School:

Church:

### SERVE: ENGAGE THE WIDER COMMUNITY

#### SERVICE PROJECT:

Your group is encouraged to find a creative way to still do a service project of some sort!

### GROW: ENGAGE GOD'S WORD (50 minutes)

#### INTRODUCTION

Read: Mark 12:28-34

Read: Luke 10:25-37

*Volunteer reader:*

This session we think a lot about change and think through what changes in our relationship with God have been initiated because of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The aim of this

final study is to set the Ten Commandments in the context of the whole Bible and to examine the way in which the New Testament looks at the issues involved. There are a lot more Bible passages that pertain to this study than we are able to read.

We start with our understanding of the Law in general. There are some folks who think that all Christians should keep the whole Old Testament Law. Some of these are known as Messianic Jews. There were those in Paul's day who suggested the same thing. In the book of Galatians, Paul shows why this view is wrong. Legalism—that is, treating the Law as if it were completely fixed and rigid rather than part of God's living Word, and being more concerned with the letter than the spirit of what has been said—has been a problem throughout the Christian era. It's always easier to identify how this comes out in other people than to recognize it in ourselves, so we need to be careful—and specific!—in our self-criticism.

We need to think through specifically about our behaviors in how we honor God, particularly about how our understanding of who God is affects what we see as right and good to do. In every time and culture there have been things that the Bible clearly sees as offensive to God (often related to injustice of one kind or another) and yet Christians have accepted or even affirmed these things with the excuse of not wanting to be legalistic. Similarly, at every time and culture Christians have condemned certain things (often related to cultural preferences such as dress or music) with the excuse of wanting to be obedient to God.

Also, this session would be a good time to make some notes about what you have learned from all of these sessions overall and then share some of your insights with others.

#### **CONTEXT:**

**Video:** The Three Uses of God's Law (In 90 Seconds)

We return again to understand the Three Uses of God's Law. Ryan M. Reeves is Assistant Professor of Historical Theology at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CjzS6EAgug> (2:52 minutes)

Notes: 1<sup>st</sup> Use: Civil Use: A Bridle, restraining sin

2<sup>nd</sup> Use: Gospel Use: A Mirror that shows us our sin, pointing us to Christ

3<sup>rd</sup> Use: Christian Living Use: A flashlight, used by Christians to know the path ahead

Discuss: Do you see a viable "Third Use" of God's Law? Why?

#### **OPENING OUR EYES**

Read: Matt. 19:16-25

Read: Romans 7:1-6

Read: Romans 13:8-11

#### *Volunteer reader:*

The New Testament says far too much about the Ten Commandments for us to consider in just one study. Many who came to question Jesus wanted to discuss the Law, and sometimes He introduces the topic. Paul's writings constantly expound on the relationship between Law and faith in relation to salvation, and James could be seen as the extended discussion of how the Ten Commandments relate to Christians. So let us consider only three areas:

1. The Heart of the Law

Both Jesus (Mark 12:30) and the legal expert (Luke 10:27) gave the same answer as to the most important commandment. They didn't mention the Ten Commandments, but combined

Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18 as summarizing it all. In order to live, one must love God totally with every aspect of your being and love your neighbor as yourself. This is seen to adequately summarize all the Ten Commandments (Matthew 19:16-19, Romans 13:9). Note that they are quoting from the Old Testament. This is how the Law was always meant to be understood: if you love God and love your neighbor, then keeping the other commandments follows automatically. The Ten Commandments were specific illustrations of what loving God and neighbor meant for Israel.

### 2. Jesus Interprets the Law

In The Sermon on the Mount, particularly Matthew 5, Jesus seems to go beyond the Law. He explains that it isn't just murder or adultery that breaks God's Commandments (and at the same time breaks God's heart), but anger and lust as well. It really is the thought that counts! The religious leaders had worked out exactly what actions did and did not break the Law, sometimes including how they could get around the obvious meaning (Mark 7:8-13). But for Jesus, keeping the Law was not about how little we must do to satisfy God but how much we can do to please Him. Jesus did not so much change the Law itself (although He did change the accepted interpretation of the Law), but expressed what it was always meant to be. In the story of the adulterous woman (John 7:53-8:11, which was added later to John's gospel but is still authentic) shows Jesus recognizing that adultery was wrong, but asserting that showing mercy was not alien to the spirit of the Law (see Psalm 51 where God shows mercy to David even though he had broken the Law).

### 3. Freedom from the Law

In Romans 7, Paul explains that because Christ has fulfilled the Law, those who trust in Him have been freed from it. This freedom does not mean that Christians can do what they like; rather they are free to bear fruit for God (v.4) and to serve in the new way of the spirit (v.6). We should behave in godly ways not because the Law says so but because it is right and pleases God. The Law was given to explain how the nation of Israel should function. Some rules only apply in that context. However, the Ten Commandments in principle illustrate the kind of things that do and do not please God. It is interesting that each of the Commandments except the call to Sabbath is specifically reaffirmed within the New Testament. Jesus does discuss the Sabbath, however, in Mark 2:27.

## **INTO THE BIBLE**

Read: Read: Matt. 5:17-48

Discuss the following as time allows:

1. What is the same and what is different between the view of the Law in the Old and New Testaments?
2. Jesus said that He came to fulfill the Law (Matt. 5:17-20), but Paul says that Christ came to abolish the Law (Ephesians 2:14-15). How do you resolve this apparent contradiction in terms?
3. Religious leaders of Jesus' day had turned legalism into an art form. Talk about areas where we might be in danger doing the same thing today.
4. Why do you think that the Sabbath Laws are not specifically emphasized in the New Testament when all the other nine Commandments are? Does this mean that we can ignore this requirement to rest?
5. Spend some time thinking about how each of the Ten Commandments fits in with wholeheartedly loving God and neighbor.

6. Is there anything in your church life or your family life which, although not strictly breaking one of the Ten Commandments, could be seen as not evidencing wholehearted love?

7. Make a list of specific illustrations as to how wholeheartedly loving God and your neighbor might apply in your society (“commandments for today”). How different might the list be if it were directed to young people, old people, or those in between?

### **SEEING JESUS IN THE SCRIPTURES**

*Volunteer reader:*

Looking at the way in which Jesus affirms the Ten Commandments but clearly sees them as reflecting a living truth and relationship (rather than the context of a dry legalism) may perhaps provide a way forward for us, too. His death and resurrection bring us freedom from the Law. Maybe we should also see His life of obedience to God bringing us freedom in the Law.

### **PERSONAL APPLICATION:**

*Volunteer reader:*

It is not always easy to get the balance right between, on the one hand making sure that everything I do is right and brings glory to God, and on the other hand, really understanding what is meant for me to have freedom from the Law. We know that keeping the commandments will in no way bring us salvation. We also know that keeping what James calls “the royal Law” (James 2:8), (that is, loving our neighbor as ourselves with all that and that includes) provides important evidence that we have received salvation. Legalism is out, but fruitful loving service is in! It seems to be as much a matter of attitude as anything else. When I do the right thing, is it because I have a wonderful sense of freedom and a deep desire to serve God out of thankfulness and love? Or rather, is it because I feel a sense of burden and guilt? Maybe we should ask God each day to help us know joy and freedom as we seek to bear fruit for Him.

Discuss: How will you apply what you learned in this lesson to your life this next week?

### **LOVE: ENGAGE GOD (5 minutes)**

#### **LOOKING AHEAD:**

Consider ways your group may want to “check in” with each other in the weeks ahead.

We will not be hosting grow groups in the summer.

If anyone is interested in joining a longer-term (1-2 years) Life Group, feel free to invite some folks to join with you and start one (resources are on our church website), or let Pastor David know and he will connect you with a group.

We will have a massive BBQ event in August!

Then, the next grow group session will be in the fall.

Evaluation: Please fill out the evaluation on this grow group experience, attached.

#### **CLOSING PRAYER:**

Pray for each participant of your group by name, asking the Holy Spirit to help them live a life of faithful obedience in legal freedom and to grow in disciplined discipleship. Write out your prayer and then send it to each participant so they can see what you have prayed for them.