

08

SESSION EIGHT

The Commandments (Part II)

SESSION SUMMARY

In this session, we examine the six commandments that focus on honoring God in our relationships. We will see that God calls us to honor Him by honoring our father and mother, by loving our neighbors as ourselves, and by cultivating a heart of contentment. One of the primary ways we show our love for God is by loving others who are made in His image.

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 20:12-17

THE POINT

The remaining six commandments reflect God’s desire for how people should relate to one another.

INTRO/STARTER 5-10 MINUTES

Option 1

In 2014, a reality TV series called “Utopia” premiered on Fox. The show’s premise was simple: Put fifteen diverse individuals in a rustic setting and watch them live together with, as the slogan said, “no leaders, no rules, no plumbing.” The show was a \$50 million failure, and that shouldn’t come as a surprise. Civil society cannot exist without rules and laws. We are created by God to need structure. We crave order because order is a reflection of God’s character. His orderly nature is seen in everything from the order of creation to His prescriptions for order in worship.

God’s orderly nature and how it applies to our lives is often misunderstood. Too many times, Christians see a contrast between the Old and New Testaments as if the Old is only law and the New is only grace. As we saw in the previous session, this is not the case. Exodus 19 shows that Israel was a delivered people living in covenant with God. God was not telling them to earn His favor through their obedience; He had already chosen and delivered them. In His commands, God was showing the people what it means to live in grace.

- **Imagine a society without leaders and rules. What would it be like? What would you like about it? What would be wrong with it?**
- **Would you want to live in a world where there are no rules or standards? Why or why not?**

Option 2

Divide students into groups. Provide each group with a sheet of paper and markers. Instruct them to create a list of all the rules their parents, teachers, and coaches have given them over the years. Examples include: treat others the way you want to be treated, chew with your mouth closed, keep your eyes on your own paper, don’t text and drive, respect your elders, be home by curfew, etc. After several minutes, invite one volunteer from each group to read their list aloud. As they read, instruct the other groups to cross off any of the rules on their list that have already been shared. Give the group with the most rules that no other group named a prize.

- **Read aloud Exodus 20:12-17. What shift in focus do you see between the first four commandments and the last six?**

Point out that the last six of the Ten Commandments relate directly to how we treat other people.

- **Why are these last six commandments especially important for Christians?**

Being faithful, trustworthy, and living a life of integrity by following these commandments allows those around us to see Jesus Christ in our lives.

HIS STORY

15-20 MINUTES

THE POINT

The remaining six commandments reflect God's desire for how people should relate to one another.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Moses:** biblical patriarch; chosen by God to lead His people out of captivity and to the promised land

PLOT

People have often noticed a distinct line of division among the Ten Commandments. The first four commandments lay out a loving response to God for His deliverance and grace. The final six focus on our treatment of other people. God desires that His grace bring about not only a reconciled, intimate relationship with Him but also vibrant, healthy relationships with others.

In this session, we examine the six commandments that focus on honoring God in our relationships. We will see that God calls us to honor Him by honoring our father and mother, by loving our neighbors as ourselves, and by cultivating a heart of contentment. One of the primary ways we show our love for God is by loving others who are made in His image.

TIMELINE

THE COMMANDMENTS (PART II)

God gives Israel instructions on how to relate to others.

THE TABERNACLE

The tabernacle is built so that God may dwell among His people.

ATONEMENT SACRIFICES (PART I)

The burnt, grain, and fellowship offerings are explained.

WE HONOR GOD BY HONORING OUR PARENTS

God created the family as the center of human relationships. The Fifth Commandment focuses on these relationships and helps us understand why they are so important.

Honor your father and your mother so that you may have a long life in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. (Ex. 20:12)

God calls us to honor our parents in response to His redeeming love for us. The Hebrew word translated *honor* means to make weighty and carries a positive sense of giving respect in abundance. Because all human parents are sinful, they may be “worthy” of honor in varying degrees. But God does not call us to weigh our parents’ worthiness and then decide whether or not to honor them. He calls us to honor them as a way of honoring Him, of recognizing His authority in our lives.

How we relate to our parents also provides a foundation for all of our other relationships, especially our interactions with those in authority. Authority brings order to society, and God’s command to honor our father and mother sets a model for how we are to respond to other authorities in life.

- **Do you struggle to honor your parents? In what ways?** (p. 54, PSG)
- **How would your family life be different if you made the Fifth Commandment more of a priority?** (p. 54, PSG)

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Authority of Scripture

Since the Bible is the inspired Word of God, containing God’s special revelation to humanity, it is the ultimate standard of authority for those who follow Christ. Because it is truthful in everything it teaches, Scripture is humanity’s source for wisdom, instructing us on how to live life well to the glory of God. Submitting to the authority of Scripture means that we are to believe and obey God by believing and obeying His Word.

WE HONOR GOD BY HONORING OUR NEIGHBORS

Living in a way that honors God begins in the home, but it extends to other relationships as well. In fact, when Jesus was asked which commandment is the

greatest, He summed up the law by calling people to love God with all their heart, soul, and mind, and then to love their neighbors as themselves. Paul later spoke of the prohibitions against adultery, murder, stealing, and coveting as summed up by the command to love our neighbors as ourselves (Rom. 13:9-10).

But what does loving our neighbor look like? How do we relate to the people around us? In giving the law, God addressed particular ways that we are to respect and value His likeness reflected in every human being.

Do not murder.

Do not commit adultery.

Do not steal.

Do not give false testimony against your neighbor.

Do not covet your neighbor's house. Do not covet your neighbor's wife, his male or female slave, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. (Ex. 20:13-17)

Let's take a look at each of these commandments in turn:

Do Not Murder

This commandment is clear and concise. Murder is condemned as a sin because of the motive behind it and the way it disregards the inherent value of human life.

God prohibits murder because we are to love and value Him as the Creator of life and then recognize the worth of each life as a reflection of His glory. When we judge a person's worth by our own assessment of their intellect or lack of ability, we judge them by what they are worth to us instead of by their inherent value as a reflection of the Creator. We make our own estimation of them superior to the value placed on them by God.

GOING FURTHER WITH THE STORY

Though a generic term for killing is used here, the intent clearly is to speak of premeditated murder. Manslaughter as accidental homicide has already been considered (Deut. 4:42), and killing by government and other constituted authority was permitted as capital punishment (Deut. 13:5,9; Ex. 21:12,14-17) and in times of war (Deut. 7:2; 20:13,17). Murder is heinous because human beings are created in the image of God, and their murder, in effect, is a direct offense against God Himself (Gen. 9:5-6).

Do Not Commit Adultery

This is rooted in God's original design for marriage. From the beginning, God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, and He created woman. Adam and Eve together reflected the image of God in their relationship of trust and love.

Adultery is the severing of the marriage bond through sexual immorality. It damages the family and destroys the sacred refuge God intends for homes to be.

Do Not Steal

The Eighth Commandment forbids stealing—taking something that does not belong to us. This command covers a wide range of dishonest practices birthed in a heart gripped by possessions instead of a heart that trusts in the One from whom all good things come.

Why are we prone to steal? Because we do not trust the provision of God. At its core, theft is a form self-worship. We steal because we prefer self-reliance rather than trusting in God.

Do Not Lie

The Ninth Commandment forbids us to bear false witness against our neighbors. Throughout the Old Testament, God expressed His hatred for lying and declared truthfulness to be a requirement for His people. Because He is a God who tells the truth, His people must also tell the truth—always.

We ought to be the kind of people who put away any sort of falsehood. Lying is manipulation for the purpose of exalting, protecting, or getting things for ourselves that we are not entitled to have. When we use lies to exalt ourselves, our lies fail to imitate God and His holy character.

Do Not Covet

The Tenth Commandment gets right to the heart of our chase for satisfaction. From the garden of Eden, we've seen the human trait of wanting what we cannot have and placing hope for ultimate satisfaction in people and things. If we are honest, we see it in our own lives too.

Coveting is not just an obsessive desire to have something. It is being convinced that we can truly delight in someone or something more than God and be fulfilled. It is self-worship by believing that placating our desires will satisfy us.

GOING FURTHER WITH THE STORY

An important passage that reveals the uniqueness of the Tenth Commandment is Romans 7:9-10. Here the apostle Paul alludes to the perfection of the law and the imperfection in himself. Apart from the Tenth Commandment, all the other commandments can be obeyed ostensibly, outwardly. But the Tenth Commandment applies to the heart, a matter of attitude. This commandment thoroughly convinced Paul that he was a sinner.

TIMELINE

ATONEMENT SACRIFICES (PART II)

The sin and restitution offerings are explained.

MOSES' FAREWELL ADDRESS

Moses' final instructions to the children of Israel.

- **What commandment do students tend to ignore the most when it comes to relating to other people?** (*p. 56, PSG*)
- **How would the world be different if more Christians lived according to the last six commandments?** (*p. 56, PSG*)

CHRIST CONNECTION

So what does Jesus have to do with these commandments? In short, a lot. Consider the following:

When we are fulfilling the command to honor and obey our parents, we are imitating Jesus. If Jesus could set aside His glory and make Himself subject to authority, who are we to not? Obedience to parents displays Christlike humility and love.

When it comes to the command to not murder, Jesus takes it a step further by addressing the heart behind murder—hatred. He was concerned with how we feel about others, knowing that a heinous act such as murder is overflow from a heart that is harboring hate and anger against someone.

When it comes to the command to not commit adultery, once again Jesus addresses the heart behind the act—lust. Jesus opposes adultery and the lustful heart because the marriage covenant is an earthly picture of Jesus' relationship with His church. Jesus is the faithful, loving Bridegroom who has entered into an intimate bond with the people He has redeemed, and when a man and a woman enter into the covenant relationship of marriage, they are to visually represent the faithfulness that Christ has to His people.

When it comes to the command to not steal, Jesus puts possessions in their proper place by reminding us what really matters (Matt. 6:19-24).

When it comes to the command to not lie, Jesus reminds us that through the power of the gospel we can be remade to love truth more than we love ourselves.

And when it comes to the command to not covet, Jesus teaches us that through the power of the Spirit, contentment can be ours. Only through Christ can we put our selfishness to death and be content with God's plan and provision for our lives.

As always, Christ has everything to do with the Ten Commandments. Instead of thinking about the commands as a list of don'ts, we are encouraged to think about them as an expression of how Christ transforms us to live as citizens of His kingdom.

YOUR STORY 10-15 MINUTES

GROUP QUESTIONS

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- **How is honoring your parents' authority more than merely obeying them?** *Obedience with a poor attitude is not true honor. One can show disrespectful obedience, but that is not what God desires. God doesn't just want our actions to be right, but our hearts as well. We should show an attitude of respect to those who have authority over us.*
- **Why does Jesus connect murder to a hateful heart? What are some ways we express hatefulness with our words?** *Hate and anger, taking place within a heart, are what lead to the sinful act of murder. Hate and anger are the root, where murder is the fruit of that. However, there are other ways we express hatefulness without committing murder. Sometimes we express it by tearing others down, calling them names, shaming them on social media, and so forth.*
- **What are some examples of stealing non-monetary items that seem commonplace today? How should a Christian respond to these things?** *Answers might include things like homework, music, video games, etc.*
- **What types of lies are seen as being acceptable today? How should Christians think about lying?** *Stretching the truth, white lies, participating in gossip, etc. Christians should take what the Bible has to say about lying seriously. Honesty and truth-telling is a primary indicator of the heart change that has taken place in Christians. Because Christians have the truth of the gospel and a new identity in Christ, they should be truthful with everyone.*

HIS STORY

God's Story of Redemption through His Son, Jesus Christ.

YOUR STORY

Where your story meets His.

YOUR MISSION 10-15 MINUTES



HEAD

Stealing is not just robbing a bank or shoplifting in a store. There are many forms of theft, and all of them are a sin before God. All of them, of course, come from a covetous heart. What begins as a simple desire within our hearts and minds turns into something we demand and can't live without. James 4:1-3 shows us the process of temptation and sin, telling us that each man is drawn by his own renegade desires.

- **What is the connection between stealing and coveting? How is idolatry at work in the heart of the person who steals?** *When a simple desire turns rogue and into a demand, a heart idol is born within us. Thus, if someone plagiarizes a paper, stealing content and claiming that it is his or her own, then that person evidently idolizes a good grade or the praise of others more than they care about truth and honesty.*
- **Do you agree that it is more blessed to give than to receive? Why or why not?** *Answers to this question will vary.*



HEART

Unlike many of the other commandments, the nature of coveting is one that cannot be seen on the outside. Much like the First Commandment, which commands us to worship God, coveting is something primarily in the heart. However, you can see the fruits of this sin within people's lives, often being the source that leads to other sins.

- **How does a coveting heart reveal discontentment with God?** *God is the One who provides for us and supplies all of our needs. Knowing that everything we have comes from His hand, it would reveal discontentment with Him to covet things He has not given us.*
- **What are some comparable modern day objects from the ones mentioned in Exodus 20:17 that tempt us to covet today?** *Answers to this question will vary.*



HANDS

How we relate to others impacts our witness to those around us. If we treat others poorly and with disrespect while claiming to be Christians, our witness to them will likely be a negative one. If our relationships, instead, are characterized by love and respect, then our witness will likely be better received. Our Christian beliefs ought to positively impact our relationships, and our relationships should positively contribute to our witness to those around us.

- **How might our mission as Christ's ambassadors be hindered by dishonoring our parents, stealing, coveting, and so forth?** *Answers to this question will vary.*
- **What might your friends conclude about your walk with Christ if they observe a heart that is content within you?** *Answers to this question will vary.*

► ADDITIONAL INFO

LEADER PACK

For this session, point out item #9 to the students, which contains an artistic poster of Moses holding the Ten Commandments and casting a shadow of the cross, which symbolizes the Christ Connection made in the sessions.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Check out the following additional resources:

- **Leader Training Videos**
- **One Conversations**
- **Midweek Studies (to access your Midweek Study, go to lifeway.com/storystart15)**
- **Circular Timeline Poster**
- **App (for both leader and student)**



Additional suggestions for specific groups are available at

GospelProject.com/AdditionalResources

And for ***free online training*** on how to lead a group visit

MinistryGrid.com/web/TheGospelProject