
THE TEN

TAKE TWO TABLETS DAILY

A 10 WEEK STUDY GUIDE

“THE TEN” HOST GUIDE

Thank you so much for making yourself available to HOST a Connect Group at theChapel! You are creating an atmosphere for people to connect, and making a huge difference in the lives of people. We’ve created this resource to help you facilitate discussions within your Group.

The Ten Commandments are the foundation of God’s law given to Moses as he led God’s people through the desert to the Promised Land. They were on a journey from SLAVERY to FREEDOM, just like the people in your group. These Ten simple statements describe what types of behaviors keep us aligned with God’s plan. This study accompanies a message series presented at theChapel. We’ll take one commandment each week, reflecting on the meaning and application of it. We know you’re going to enjoy exploring the depth of each commandment through discussion with your Group.

It helps us to remember the context in which these commandments were given. We’re talking nearly 2000 years before Jesus’ birth, life, death and resurrection, and we’re talking about a people, although chosen by God, living without the benefit

of God's Spirit on the inside of them. The Law is described in Scripture as a shadow of what was to come. While we don't follow God any longer by a set of rules, we still nurture a heart of obedience. God reveals His character and His value system through all of Biblical history. Jesus didn't come to do away with the Law, He came to fulfill it. That means the function of these Ten Commandments in our lives is to reveal to us the nature of God so that we can follow it, and live the way we were created to live.

At the end of each week's guide, you'll see a section called "DEEPER DIVE." If your Group is still in it, and hungry for more, these additional questions can extend the conversation a bit. Share the PRAYER POINT & NEXT STEPS sections with your Group to help them follow through on applying what they learned. We know you'll enjoy this time together, and thanks again for being a good HOST!

COMMANDMENT 1

You must not have any other god but me.

Start by having someone in your group read Exodus 20:1-17 NLT

Then God gave the people all these instructions.

“I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery.”

“You must not have any other god but me.”

“You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations of those who reject me. But I lavish unfailing love for a thousand generations on those who love me and obey my commands.”

“You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God. The Lord will not let you go unpunished if you misuse his name.”

“Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath day of rest dedicated to the Lord your God. On that day no one in your household may do any work. This includes you, your sons and daughters, your male and female servants, your livestock, and any foreigners living among you. For in six days the Lord made the heavens, the earth, the sea, and everything in them; but on the seventh day he rested. That is why the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and set it apart as holy.”

“Honor your father and mother. Then you will live a long, full life in the land the Lord your God is giving you.”

“You must not murder.”

“You must not commit adultery.”

“You must not steal.”

“You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.”

“You must not covet your neighbor’s house. You must not covet your neighbor’s wife, male or female servant, ox or donkey, or anything else that

belongs to your neighbor.”

Pray that through our time together, God would open our ears to hear God’s voice in the 10 Commandments. Thank Him for loving us enough to provide clear instruction, and for revealing his character through His Word. Ask Him to be present throughout the discussion. Amen!

(play the video here)

The Ten Commandments is a list of rules. It’s hard to get around that. It’s do’s and don’ts that represent a level of limitations or restrictions. Now, our goal together is to Find Freedom, so doesn’t it seem strange that we would select a list of rules to help us get there?

- How do you feel about rules in general?
- In your experience, how have rules limited your freedom?
- In your experience, how have rules enhanced your freedom?

Our first commandment is “You must not have any other god, but me”. We heard Ps. Q talk about some of the things that make a god a god. Let’s

take a few moments now and brainstorm together some of the things that may be showing up as a type of god in our lives.

- What things came to mind that we see as a source of provision or knowledge?
- What things tend to have too much of our attention or affection?
- What are some other ways that you can tell if something in your life is starting to become a god?

We've identified a few areas in our lives that may be competing for God's rightful place. We need to downgrade those things, and replace them with more of God. Let's shift into some strategies for helping us to reorient our lives to point at just one true God.

- What are the specific things in your life that need to be downgraded in priority and replaced with more of God?
- How will you go about reducing the influence of those things?
- How will you go about increasing the influence of God in those areas?

DEEPER DIVE

Read Acts 17:22-31 aloud:

So Paul, standing before the council, addressed them as follows: “Men of Athens, I notice that you are very religious in every way, for as I was walking along I saw your many shrines. And one of your altars had this inscription on it: ‘To an Unknown God.’ This God, whom you worship without knowing, is the one I’m telling you about.”

“He is the God who made the world and everything in it. Since he is Lord of heaven and earth, he doesn’t live in man-made temples, and human hands can’t serve his needs—for he has no needs. He himself gives life and breath to everything, and he satisfies every need. From one man he created all the nations throughout the whole earth. He decided beforehand when they should rise and fall, and he determined their boundaries.”

“His purpose was for the nations to seek after God and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him—though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and exist. As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’ And

since this is true, we shouldn't think of God as an idol designed by craftsmen from gold or silver or stone."

"God overlooked people's ignorance about these things in earlier times, but now he commands everyone everywhere to repent of their sins and turn to him. For he has set a day for judging the world with justice by the man he has appointed, and he proved to everyone who this is by raising him from the dead."

This amazing passage of Scripture from Paul standing in a culture of multiple gods, and pointing directly at the one true God is inspiring.

- Why do you think we tend to lose sight of such a perfect and powerful God, and instead, gravitate toward smaller, less powerful gods?
- What would it take for us to show the courage that Paul did, walking into a culture of multiple gods, and declaring the truth about the God we know?

PRAYER POINT

This week, ask God to help you see the little gods that are positioned in the various areas of our lives. Ask him to show you where He has been displaced in your home, at work, at school and in your relationships.

NEXT STEPS

Try something new:

- Go to God first in prayer before you go to a friend, a coworker or Google.
- Take a timeout from something that has too much of your attention or affection.
- Step up and tell someone about the one true God.

COMMANDMENT 2

You must not make for yourself an idol.

Start by having someone in your group read Romans 1:20-23 NLT

For ever since the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky. Through everything God made, they can clearly see his invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuse for not knowing God.

Yes, they knew God, but they wouldn't worship him as God or even give him thanks. And they began to think up foolish ideas of what God was like. As a result, their minds became dark and confused. Claiming to be wise, they instead became utter fools. And instead of worshiping the glorious, ever-living God, they worshiped idols made to look like mere people and birds and animals and reptiles.

Pray that our discussion today would help us to identify the idols that we have placed between us and God, and that God would help us with the courage we need to remove them from our lives;

replacing them with the truth of who God really is, and the way that He created us to live. Ask for His Spirit to take control of the atmosphere in the room. Amen!

We're on Commandment #2 of the 10 commandments today. This one is about idolatry. We might have a sense that idols are a thing of the past. We're not all gathered around a golden calf today, but idolatry is still a very real part of our lives. Let's lean in.

(play the video here)

So, we create idols when we take something that was meant to be spiritual (or unseen), and bring it into the physical world where we can touch it, taste it, experience it with our senses. It becomes an object of our worship, and it shrinks our image of God.

- What are some examples you've seen of idols in our lives?
- Why do you think those idols become so important to us?
- Have you noticed your worship (your attention and worth) shifting toward anything lately?

There's a famous story of God's people

worshiping a golden idol shaped like a calf. When their leader, Moses, discovered their unfaithfulness, the Bible says that he first burned the idol, then ground it to powder, then put it in the water and made the people drink it. That's a pretty aggressive action to remove the idol from their lives.

- Why do you think Moses had such an extreme response about destroying the idol?
- What does it look like for us to be extreme about removing the idols in our own lives?
- What keeps us from aggressively destroying the objects of our worship?

The Scripture we opened with from Romans talks about how we can know God, but still fail to give Him our gratitude and worship.

- Why is it so difficult to keep the focus of our worship on God?
- What needs to move in your own life to return God to His position as the only object of your worship?

DEEPER DIVE

Read John 4:18-24 aloud:

“Sir,” the woman said, (speaking to Jesus) “you must be a prophet. So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?”

Jesus replied, “Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship, while we Jews know all about him, for salvation comes through the Jews. But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth.”

Things that are spirit, by definition, are unseen. Jesus said that true worshippers worship in spirit and in truth.

- What does “spirit and truth” mean to you?

- Why do you think Jesus is focused on this aspect of spiritual worship?

Notice the reason for this part of the conversation between Jesus and the Samaritan Woman is the significance of the “place of worship.” Obviously, a place of worship is something that God always supplied for His people in the Old Testament. There are chapters upon chapters that define the place of worship and the things that go in it. Obviously, the “things” of worship had become more significant in the lives of these people than the God they were meant to be worshiping.

- In what ways have the “things” of worship become too significant in our lives?
- How can we ensure that we don't confuse the created things for the Creator of all things?
- Will you make any adjustments to your worship so that it is done in Spirit and in truth?

PRAYER POINT

This week, ask God to help you identify the created things that have become objects of worship. Ask for the courage to eliminate these things so that there is nothing standing between us and God other than the powerful blood of Jesus. Thank Him for being patient with us as we wrestle to keep the invisible God as the only object of our worship.

NEXT STEPS

Try something new:

- Spend a few minutes of worship in silence. Nothing for your senses to attach to. Just enjoy the unseen presence of God.
- Identify an idol in your life, and just aggressively remove it. Get it out of the way.
- When we worship on the weekend, make sure that it's really God that has your attention; not the singers, band, lights or video.

◀COMMANDMENT 3

You must not misuse the name of the Lord your God.

Start by having someone in your group read Hebrews 12:25-29 NLT

Be careful that you do not refuse to listen to the One who is speaking. For if the people of Israel did not escape when they refused to listen to Moses, the earthly messenger, we will certainly not escape if we reject the One who speaks to us from heaven!

When God spoke from Mount Sinai his voice shook the earth, but now he makes another promise: "Once again I will shake not only the earth but the heavens also." This means that all of creation will be shaken and removed, so that only unshakable things will remain.

Since we are receiving a Kingdom that is unshakable, let us be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe. For our God is a devouring fire.

Pray that through our experience and conversation today that our view of God would grow larger. Ask for the humility to see people the way He sees them, and to see God the way that He is. Thank Him that the Bible is so powerful and clear, and for the patience to wait while we strive to understand it. Ask the Holy Spirit to lead us. Amen!

We've been talking about how the 10 Commandments set a foundation for us to know what's important to God, and some of the basic things that are expected of us when we become His people. You might have heard Commandment #3 growing up. It goes something like: "Don't take the Lord's name in vain." It seems like an odd thing to make the Top Ten when we haven't even gotten to murder or theft yet, but let's take a look at why this is such an important part of God's heart.

(play the video here)

Alright, so this Commandment is all about honor and reverence for God.

- In your world, where do you notice the most honor and reverence being demonstrated by people?

- Are there any areas of the culture around you where you have noticed a change in the level of decorum or honor that is expected?
- Why do you think God demands this type of reverence for Himself?

Most of us prefer our close relationships to be somewhat casual and relaxed. But there are several unintended consequences that happen when we become too familiar or comfortable with one another.

- What are some of the negative consequences of a relationship that has become too familiar?
- How can we maintain a level of intimacy with people, without it crossing the line of irreverence?
- How can we maintain a level of intimacy with God, without it crossing the line of irreverence?

We started our conversation with a Scripture from Hebrews 12. The point of that passage is that it puts us in danger to reject the voice of God, but it also provides the alternative; to “be thankful and please God by worshiping him with holy fear and awe.”

- How does true thankfulness impact the level of honor with which we approach God?

- What does healthy fear and awe look like in our relationship with God?
- How will you adjust your approach to God based on this conversation?

DEEPER DIVE

Read 1 John 4:16-19 aloud:

We know how much God loves us, and we have put our trust in his love. God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. And as we live in God, our love grows more perfect. So we will not be afraid on the day of judgment, but we can face him with confidence because we live like Jesus here in this world. Such love has no fear, because perfect love expels all fear. If we are afraid, it is for fear of punishment, and this shows that we have not fully experienced his perfect love. We love each other because he loved us first.

The 3rd Commandment carries with it the threat of a punishment from God. That's something we all have to wrestle with in the Scripture; this idea that poor behavior results in punishment from God. But we have these passages like 1 John 4 that frame up a more complete view of God's

character. So many generations before us have neglected a healthy fear of and reverence for God, and instead embraced this unhealthy fear of being punished by Him.

- What are the differences between fearing God, and being fearful of God?
- What happens when we try to relate to God using the wrong kind of fear?

The Scripture says, “Perfect love expels all fear.” So in order to address a fear of God’s punishment we need a greater understanding of His love.

- What aspects of the love of God have helped you to overcome fear?
- Are there any lingering fears that you have about God or the future?
- What steps are you willing to take to increase your trust in God, and decrease your trust in fear?

PRAYER POINT

This week, ask God to help you approach Him with a greater level of awe and reverence. Ask Him to show you the areas where you've become too comfortable and familiar, and to help you grow in humility. Thank Him for a perfect love that casts out all fear, and commit yourself to sharing that love with the people around you.

NEXT STEPS

Try something new:

- Come to worship at the Chapel with an attitude of thankfulness and reverence.
- Take a step of obedience toward what you know God has instructed you to do.
- When you say the name of God, make sure it means something significant to you.

COMMANDMENT 4

Remember to observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy

Start by having someone in your group read Exodus 31:13-17 NLT

“Tell the people of Israel: ‘Be careful to keep my Sabbath day, for the Sabbath is a sign of the covenant between me and you from generation to generation. It is given so you may know that I am the Lord, who makes you holy. You must keep the Sabbath day, for it is a holy day for you. Anyone who desecrates it must be put to death; anyone who works on that day will be cut off from the community. You have six days each week for your ordinary work, but the seventh day must be a Sabbath day of complete rest, a holy day dedicated to the Lord. Anyone who works on the Sabbath must be put to death. The people of Israel must keep the Sabbath day by observing it from generation to generation. This is a covenant obligation for all time. It is a permanent sign of my covenant with the people of Israel. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, but on the seventh day he stopped working and was refreshed.’”

Pray that we would leave today with a deeper understanding of God's provision through the Sabbath day. Ask God to reveal Himself and His nature as we seek Him more. Ask for a blessing on not only the conversation, but over the action steps that we'll take as we apply God's Word to our lives. Thank God for His loving kindness throughout the generations. Amen!

Alright, so today's conversation is about the Sabbath day. Let's start with a little conversation.

- Do you currently participate in a Sabbath day? What do you do on that day?
- In what ways do you experience rest and refreshing from your Sabbath experience?

The Bible has a lot to say about the Sabbath day. Sabbath is mentioned 137 times between Old Testament and New. Let's check out the video, and get some info to help us start our discussion.

(play the video here)

Now we know that the Sabbath day is a day of rest, and that we observe the Sabbath when we keep it holy; set apart for a sacred purpose.

- How does this differ from the way you have understood or practiced the Sabbath in the past?
- What are some ways that you can think of to keep the Sabbath day holy?
- What gets in the way of your intentions to observe the Sabbath?

Jesus and His disciples were often criticized by the religious leaders of His day for something they did or didn't do on the Sabbath day. Whether He was healing people, or simply grabbing a quick snack as they passed through a wheat field, it drove people crazy who had a "rules-based" understanding of the Sabbath.

- Why do you think we attach so many rules to the Sabbath day?
- In what ways do the rules about the Sabbath interfere with the purpose of the Sabbath?
- What rules have you attached to the Sabbath for yourself or others? Do they help or hurt the experience for you?

Jesus' response to those rules-based, religious leaders was this, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath."

- What do you think Jesus' meant?

- What does this statement from Jesus show us about the generous heart of God?
- If the Sabbath is for us, what do you think we're supposed to get from the Sabbath?

DEEPER DIVE

Read Isaiah 58:13-14 aloud:

"If you keep your feet from breaking the Sabbath and from doing as you please on my holy day, if you call the Sabbath a delight and the Lord's holy day honorable, and if you honor it by not going your own way and not doing as you please or speaking idle words, then you will find your joy in the Lord, and I will cause you to ride in triumph on the heights of the land and to feast on the inheritance of your father Jacob."

The mouth of the Lord has spoken.

This passage from Isaiah makes a specific statement about not "doing as you please" on the Sabbath day. It's showing us that the Sabbath is not about pursuing our selfish desires. When we think of a day off, sometimes we think about doing

what we want to do.

- Why do you think God gave us this specific direction about the Sabbath?
- What kind of selfish desires have been a part of your Sabbath day?
- What about the idle words? What are idle words to you?

When we observe a Biblical Sabbath day, the Scripture promises joy, triumph and an inheritance for us.

- Has it been hard for you to find joy and provision in the Sabbath?
- What do you think is in the way of that joy and provision?
- What will you adjust to align your weekly rhythm with a biblical Sabbath day?

PRAYER POINT

This week, ask God to help you receive what He intends to give you through the Sabbath day. Ask Him for the courage to place healthy boundaries around the time so that it is truly set apart for His purpose. Thank Him for blessing us with the Sabbath provision, and for the joy that flows out of it.

NEXT STEPS

Try something new:

- Pick a day and observe a Sabbath. Feel free to start small with part of a day, and work your way up.
- At some point on your Sabbath, make an effort to be out in nature.
- Share your Sabbath day with your church family, and attend a wknd service.

COMMANDMENT 5

Honor your father and mother.

Start by having someone in your group read Ephesians 6:1-3 NLT

Children, obey your parents because you belong to the Lord, for this is the right thing to do.

“Honor your father and mother.” This is the first commandment with a promise: If you honor your father and mother, “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.”

Pray that God would open our eyes to the special relationship between parents and their children. Ask for God’s help to overcome any wounds that have damaged that relationship, and to restore honor for our parents. Give the Holy Spirit control over your time together with your Group, and thank Him for His promises that are always true. Amen!

Today we’re talking about mothers and fathers. We’ll talk about our relationship with them, and what God’s vision is for that relationship in our lives. It’s a tricky relationship because of the wide

range of experiences we have with single parents, absentee parents, adoptions and guardianship.

- Tell us about your relationship with those who were responsible to raise you.
- If you are a parent (or functioning as a parent), tell us about your relationship with your children.

This commandment actually teaches us something about the larger Kingdom principle of honor. Let's check in with the video, and get some conversation starters.

(play the video here)

It's interesting that last week's commandment focused on keeping the Sabbath HOLY, and that this commandment about mothers and fathers focuses on HONOR. Both of these words imply a level of prioritization and importance placed on the subject of the commandment.

- Why do you think the commandments focus so much on the value that we place on things?
- What does it mean to you to "give weight" to your relationship with your mother and father?
- In what ways do you struggle the most to give honor to your parents?

The Scripture we read from Ephesians amplifies the promise that is attached to this commandment, that “things will go well for you, and you will have a long life on the earth.” That’s an awfully big promise, and it’s hard to take it at face value. So if I honor my parents, I’m guaranteed a good, long life?

- In what ways have you seen the results of honoring your parents in your life?
- Why do you think this promise of long life, and things going well is attached to this commandment?
- What adjustments will you make to increase the level of honor you give your parents?

DEEPER DIVE

Read Genesis 9:20-27 aloud:

After the flood, Noah began to cultivate the ground, and he planted a vineyard. One day he drank some wine he had made, and he became drunk and lay naked inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw that his father was naked and went outside and told his brothers. Then Shem and Japheth took a robe, held it over their

shoulders, and backed into the tent to cover their father. As they did this, they looked the other way so they would not see him naked.

When Noah woke up from his stupor, he learned what Ham, his youngest son, had done. Then he cursed Canaan, the son of Ham:

“May Canaan be cursed! May he be the lowest of servants to his relatives.”

Then Noah said, “May the Lord, the God of Shem, be blessed, and may Canaan be his servant! May God expand the territory of Japheth! May Japheth share the prosperity of Shem, and may Canaan be his servant.”

This story about Noah can be hard to understand with our culture's value system. Noah got drunk and naked. He had one son, Ham, who dishonored him by drawing everyone's attention to Noah's compromised state, and he had two sons, Shem and Japheth, who showed honor by covering Noah up. Noah blessed the two sons who honored him, and cursed the other one. We might think that Noah deserved to be dishonored because he was dishonorable.

- Who do you side with; Noah or Ham? Why?

- What was different between the sons' two responses to the situation?
- What does it look like to “cover” our parents today as a sign of our honor toward them?

PRAYER POINT

This week, make it a point to address your family relationships (parent to child). Ask God to help you see the opportunities to give honor. Ask for the forgiveness and emotional healing that needs to take place to restore honor to your mother and father. Thank Him for the promise of long life and blessing that follows a choice to extend honor.

NEXT STEPS

Try something new:

- Reach out to your parents, and listen deeply to what they say. Try to understand their perspective without judgment or opposing them.
- Take an opportunity to talk to your kids about the blessing that follows honor. Teach them in practical ways to extend honor.
- Extend forgiveness for past hurt caused by your parents. Remember that forgiveness doesn't

mean forgetting, and forgiveness doesn't always result in a restored relationship. But it should result in restored honor.

COMMANDMENT 6

You must not murder.

Start by having someone in your group read Romans 12:17-21 NLT

Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

Dear friends, never take revenge. Leave that to the righteous anger of God. For the Scriptures say,

*“I will take revenge;
I will pay them back,” says the Lord.*

Instead, “If your enemies are hungry, feed them. If they are thirsty, give them something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals of shame on their heads.”

Don’t let evil conquer you, but conquer evil by doing good.

Pray that God would give us new insight into the

value of life, and more than that, that we would come to understand more about His will as our God. Ask for the help of the Holy Spirit both to see the beauty in our lives on earth, and the courage to hold them loosely. Thank God for His awesome power to determine the length of our days, and the promise of eternal life.

Who's ready for Commandment #6? Let's start today with the video.

(play the video here)

Alrighty. I bet you never thought you'd show up to a Connect Group meeting on the subject of murder, but here we are! I want to reiterate the part of the video that said we are not here for a debate on divisive political issues. That doesn't mean we can disagree, of course, but let's try to keep our conversation focused on our own spiritual growth; better understanding the heart of God. That said ...

- What does this Commandment reveal to you about God's priorities or character?
- Why do we sometimes believe that ending a person's life is necessary or beneficial?
- Do you ever worry about the end of your life, or the end of the life of someone you love?

We said that the length of our lives are meant to be determined by God alone, and that when we make those decisions, we put ourselves in the position of God.

- In what ways do we make choices about life that should belong to God?
- Why do you think we are tempted to make those decisions?
- What are the consequences of putting ourselves in the position of God?

The Scripture we read from Romans talked about the “righteous anger of God.” We see that “righteous anger” many times in Scripture.

- What makes the anger of God different from our anger?
- Have you ever experienced righteous anger? What did it feel like?
- Under what circumstances do you believe that taking a person’s life is justified?
- What is the Biblical basis for believing that? (For this question, referee the conversation a little bit. If we’re not talking about a specific passage of Scripture, we won’t arrive at Biblical reasoning. Challenge the group to ensure that

all the comments are held up against the mirror of the Word, and not just a personal belief or conviction.)

DEEPER DIVE

Read Colossians 3:5-11 aloud:

So put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within you. Have nothing to do with sexual immorality, impurity, lust, and evil desires. Don't be greedy, for a greedy person is an idolater, worshiping the things of this world. Because of these sins, the anger of God is coming. You used to do these things when your life was still part of this world. But now is the time to get rid of anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, and dirty language. Don't lie to each other, for you have stripped off your old sinful nature and all its wicked deeds. Put on your new nature, and be renewed as you learn to know your Creator and become like him. In this new life, it doesn't matter if you are a Jew or a Gentile, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbaric, uncivilized, slave, or free. Christ is all that matters, and he lives in all of us.

A quick journey through the early books of the Bible, Exodus, Leviticus & Deuteronomy, will

reveal many of the laws that pertain to God's people, the people of Israel. Several of those laws give instruction to purify the community by putting to death people who committed certain crimes. Among them: Adultery, sorcery, rebellious children, homosexuality, idolatry, even working on the Sabbath day, and there are still others.

- Why do you think that putting these people to death was commanded by God during this time?
- Why do you think these instructions follow a commandment that says that we are not to murder?

The passage from Colossians also speaks of putting some things to death. The list of things bear a striking resemblance to the Old Testament laws about putting criminals to death.

- In light of Jesus, what changed about the way God's people deal with sinful actions?
- Why do you think the extreme illustration of "putting to death" is applied to these areas of our lives?
- How can we apply this Scripture in the way we "put to death the sinful, earthly things lurking within us?"

PRAYER POINT

This week, let's ask God to increase our faith and trust Him to be the giver and taker of life. Ask for the courage to look inside to our own sin, and be ruthless about putting to death the areas that shouldn't be there anymore. Release to God any desire for revenge that might be built up in your heart, and thank Him that He first forgave us!

NEXT STEPS

Try something new:

- Evaluate your perspective on some of those hot-button issues that we argue about sometimes. Hold up your opinion to the mirror of God's Word, and be willing to change your mind.
- Colossians listed adultery, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, greed, anger, rage, malicious behavior, slander, dirty language, and lies among the areas of our lives that must be put to death. Pick one you struggle with and treat it like it's dead! Live in the new life you have in Christ instead!

- As you go about your day, thank God for the lives of the people around you. They are precious, and they matter. Treat them that way.

◀COMMANDMENT 7

You must not commit adultery.

Start by having someone in your group read Jeremiah 3:6-10 NLT

During the reign of King Josiah, the Lord said to me, “Have you seen what fickle Israel has done? Like a wife who commits adultery, Israel has worshiped other gods on every hill and under every green tree. I thought, ‘After she has done all this, she will return to me.’ But she did not return, and her faithless sister Judah saw this. She saw that I divorced faithless Israel because of her adultery. But that treacherous sister Judah had no fear, and now she, too, has left me and given herself to prostitution. Israel treated it all so lightly—she thought nothing of committing adultery by worshiping idols made of wood and stone. So now the land has been polluted. But despite all this, her faithless sister Judah has never sincerely returned to me. She has only pretended to be sorry. I, the Lord, have spoken!”

Pray that God would give us the capacity to become more faithful. Ask for the Holy Spirit’s

help to produce the self-control we need to stay in love with Jesus and with our spouses, and not look to the left or to the right. Our attention and affection belong to God alone. Thank Him for His grace and patience when we wander, and for welcoming us back with open arms. Amen!

We're on Commandment #7 today. It's a simple verse of Scripture that says, "You must not commit adultery." We're going to ask some questions today that may be a bit personal in nature. I want to encourage you to only share what you're comfortable sharing for the benefit of the Group. Let's also be reminded that this is a confidential space, and anything shared here must not be mentioned anywhere else.

- Who has been impacted in some way by an experience with adultery? How?
- What were the results of those experiences?

Let's get a little extra insight from the video.

(play the video here)

We know that many relationships are seasonal and temporary by their nature, but Lilly talked about some long-term covenant relationships that require another level of faithfulness and

commitment.

- What are the long-term covenant relationships in your life?
- How are those relationships different from others?
- What are the circumstances that create a level of temptation to violate those commitments?

The Scripture we read at the beginning talked about the unfaithfulness of God's people.

Some background on that passage. After King Solomon's death, about 930 years before Jesus, The Kingdom of Israel broke into two parts. The northern part of the Kingdom kept the name Israel, but they immediately began to worship false gods and idols. Judah was the area in the south, and they remained faithful to God...for a short time. That's what the prophet Jeremiah was talking about. Both "sisters" as he called them became adulterous, and even behaved like prostitutes.

- Why do you think God's people had such a hard time remaining faithful to the one true God?
- In what ways has our nation followed this pattern of Israel and Judah, and become unfaithful to God?
- In what ways have we personally become unfaithful to God?

Jeremiah also showed us something about the heart of God when he said about Israel, “I thought, ‘After she has done all this, she will return to me.’ But she did not return ... Sometimes we think, “We just need to get it out of our system,” as though that will inspire a more faithful heart going forward, but instead it often just increases our appetite to wander.

- What do you see about God’s heart and character in that He thought Israel would return?
- Why do we think we can just “get it out of our system?”
- What would it look like for us to return to our first love?

DEEPER DIVE

Read Proverbs 6:24-29 aloud:

*It will keep you from the immoral woman,
from the smooth tongue of a promiscuous
woman.*

Don’t lust for her beauty.

Don’t let her coy glances seduce you.

For a prostitute will bring you to poverty,

but sleeping with another man’s wife will cost you

your life.

*Can a man scoop a flame into his lap
and not have his clothes catch on fire?*

*Can he walk on hot coals
and not blister his feet?*

*So it is with the man who sleeps with another
man's wife.*

He who embraces her will not go unpunished.

If adultery didn't look so enticing, we probably wouldn't do it. That's the way it is with temptation. It presents itself in such an attractive way that you can't see the consequences behind it.

- What are the most effective ways that you have learned to deal with temptation?
- What do you think the author of Proverbs is getting at with the examples of getting too close to a fire: Scooping flame into your lap, or walking on hot coals?
- What boundaries do you have in place to keep from getting too close to the "fire"?
- What boundaries do you NEED to put in place because you are already too close to the "fire"?

PRAYER POINT

This week, let's ask God to help us re-commit to our most essential relationships including our relationship with Him. Thank Him for the everlasting covenant of marriage, and for the constant reminder it provides of His covenant with us. Ask for the wisdom to protect these relationships, and thank Him for the Holy Spirit which produces the fruit of self-control.

NEXT STEPS

Try something new:

- If you're toying with a relationship right now that could damage your marriage, cut it off!
- If your affection and attention is being attracted by something other than God right now, cut it off!
- Reset your commitment to show up faithfully: Honor a date night every week. Attend a WKND service every week. Show up for the Connect Group every time.

COMMANDMENT 8

You must not steal.

Start by having someone in your group read Ephesians 4:28 NLT

If you are a thief, quit stealing. Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need.

Pray that God would be present in the Group discussion today. Ask for the humility to have a change of heart and mind because of the Word of God. Thank Him for being a God who generously provides all that we need so that we will not experience lack, and ask Him for the grace to not fall into the trap of taking something He didn't give to us. Amen!

OK everybody! Our Commandment today is, "You must not steal."

- Tell us about something you've stolen whether intentionally or unintentionally.
- What happened as a result of the theft?
- How did it make you feel?

As you might imagine by now, there's a little more behind this Commandment than we might catch at first glance. Let's get our Conversation Starter from Lilly.

(play the video here)

Our verse from Ephesians gave us a restatement of the Commandment, but it also showed us what to do instead. As a reminder it said, "Instead, use your hands for good hard work, and then give generously to others in need."

- Why is hard work with our hands connected to the subject of stealing?
- Why is generosity connected to the subject of stealing?
- As a rule, do you start the day with gratitude for what you have, or desire to have more? Why?

We all have areas of our lives that feel like we're lacking something. It may be a habit that you've struggled to break, or the sense that you should be doing better financially than you are. And then we sometimes also have the ability to do something about it; to correct the perceived injustice.

- What draws your attention to the areas where

you lack something?

- Why do they seem so much more important than enjoying what we have?
- Where do you feel tempted the most to take matters into your own hands, and get results by any means necessary?

DEEPER DIVE

Read 2 Peter 1:3-4 aloud:

By his divine power, God has given us everything we need for living a godly life. We have received all of this by coming to know him, the one who called us to himself by means of his marvelous glory and excellence. And because of his glory and excellence, he has given us great and precious promises. These are the promises that enable you to share his divine nature and escape the world's corruption caused by human desires.

God's promises to provide for us are really the reason that we can live differently than the world. When you think of the way God led Israel through the desert, providing manna (daily food) that showed up miraculously. It is clear that God wants us to trust him for the daily things we need.

- What is most difficult for you to trust that God will provide?
- What would it look like to trust God in that area?
- What promise of God from Scripture can you lean on when the going gets tough? You can provide this reference to your Group for help.
<http://thechapel.cc/promises/>

Trusting God to provide doesn't let us off the hook for working hard. In fact, it raises the bar. Now instead of just trying to get our needs met, we're working to worship God!

- How is God honored by the way you go about your work day?
- What area could you grow in to bring more honor to God by the way you work?
- How do you pursue excellence?

PRAYER POINT

This week, ask God to direct our attention to the things we have instead of the things we don't. Ask for a Spirit of gratitude to rise up on the inside of us. Ask for God's help to live each day free from worry or fear that we won't have enough, and for the generosity to share with others. Thank him for the self-control to resist making it happen ourselves.

NEXT STEPS

Try something new:

- Pick a day, and try to work all day without thinking about what you're getting out of it.
- Consider your work as an act of worship to the Lord.
- Complete Growth Track, and find out how you can Make a Difference in the world.

COMMANDMENT 9

You must not testify falsely against your neighbor.

Start by having someone in your group read Numbers 23:19 NLT

God is not a man, so he does not lie. He is not human, so he does not change his mind. Has he ever spoken and failed to act? Has he ever promised and not carried it through?

Pray that God would make us more like Him. Ask for the grace to be a truth teller, and a passion for people to know Him. Pray for the wisdom to correctly discern between the truth and a lie. And Thank Him that we can trust His Word as an anchor in a storm of misinformation. Amen!

Here we are at Week 9. Today our Commandment is about telling the truth! We're existing today in a world of fake news, convenient story telling, and everyone trying to figure out their own truth. It's odd that something so simple and fundamental as the truth seems so elusive.

- Tell us about a time when you believed something that turned out to be a lie.
- Has anyone ever lied about you?
- Is there an area of your life where you've found it difficult to tell the truth?

Telling the difference between the truth and a lie is a very big subject, but there are some things specifically that we pull out of this passage for our discussion.

(play the video here)

Let's first talk about the nature and character of God. The passage we read at the beginning is one of the places where Scripture defines that it is not in God's nature to lie.

- Have you ever had a situation where you felt like God lied?
- What are some of the things God has said that you find it difficult to believe?
- How does that impact your level of trust in God?

One of the ways that we testify falsely is through our evaluation of others. We use our judgment to assess people, and draw conclusions about them.

- Have you ever written off a person or an organization because of someone else's opinion of them?
- Has anyone ever believed a lie about you because of the opinion of someone else?
- Why do you think we feel so compelled to write and read reviews?

We also testify falsely when we pass along what we heard. We share secondhand information as though it's something with which we've had personal experience.

- Tell us about a time you were hurt by gossip.
- Why does it matter how we use our influence?

DEEPER DIVE

Read Exodus 23:1-3 aloud:

“You must not pass along false rumors. You must not cooperate with evil people by lying on the witness stand. You must not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you are called to testify in a dispute, do not be swayed by the crowd to twist justice. And do not slant your testimony in favor of a person just because that person is poor ...”

Our words are powerful, and they are able to sway the situation. Some of us have learned how to do that very effectively for better or worse.

- Have you ever felt manipulated by the way someone presented information?
- When are you most tempted to manipulate a situation by your handling of the information?
- Where do you feel the momentum of the crowd shaping what you believe is true?
- How can we grow to become more like Jesus in the way we handle the truth?

PRAYER POINT

This week, ask God to convict our hearts when we're misrepresenting information. Ask for eyes to see people the way He sees them, and not through the lens of our assessment or the assessment of others. Thank Him for always being the unmoving source of truth in our lives.

NEXT STEPS

Try something new:

- Resist the urge to evaluate or add your opinion.
- Before you post on social media, make sure

what you are saying aligns with Scripture.

- Identify something you have come to believe as true, yet it didn't come from God, and then replace it with the Truth.

COMMANDMENT 10

You must not covet your neighbor's possessions.

Start by having someone in your group read Philippians 4:10-14 NLT

How I praise the Lord that you are concerned about me again. I know you have always been concerned for me, but you didn't have the chance to help me. Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength. Even so, you have done well to share with me in my present difficulty.

Pray that God would give us the Spirit of contentment. Thank Him for lavishing His good gifts on all of us, and that even a challenging time is provision from a good Father. Teach us to be grateful in every situation, and to glorify the God who gives good gifts. Amen!

It's the home stretch! Our final Commandment is all about wanting what other people have.

- If you had some extra money right now, what would you go get?
- Where did you first see someone who had that?
- How did you feel when you saw it?

There's a reason that we have answers to those kinds of questions. Let's check the video and find out why.

(play the video here)

It's true! The impulse to compare our situation with someone else starts before we ever see what they have. It starts with a belief that God hasn't given us something.

- Why do we sometimes feel like God is holding out on us?
- Where do you feel the most tempted to compare your life with someone else's?
- How does that comparison affect how you approach your day?

We know from the apostle Paul's words in Philippians that we are meant to live in a content way whether we're experiencing plenty or lack. So

the idea isn't lying to ourselves about our situation, but instead learning to experience God in the variety of life.

- Tell us about a time when you were struggling, but very aware of God's presence and provision.
- What did God show you during that time?
- How is your level of contentment at this time in your life?

DEEPER DIVE

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10 aloud:

Yet true godliness with contentment is itself great wealth. After all, we brought nothing with us when we came into the world, and we can't take anything with us when we leave it. So if we have enough food and clothing, let us be content.

But people who long to be rich fall into temptation and are trapped by many foolish and harmful desires that plunge them into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. And some people, craving money, have wandered from the true faith and pierced themselves with many sorrows.

The pursuit of wealth is one of the things that Scripture warns us about. Our perspective and approach to money makes a huge difference in the way we will experience our life in Christ.

- What are your goals when it comes to financial wealth?
- How have you learned to quiet your craving for financial gain?
- Are there any areas where your attachment to or craving for money has become unhealthy?

Beyond just the desire we feel for someone else's possessions, we also can get stuck when we compare our financial position with that of others.

- When do you find yourself desiring the wealth of someone else?
- What do you do when you realize that you are comparing your wealth to someone else's?
- What adjustments will you make to ensure that a craving for money is not in control of your life?

PRAYER POINT

This week, thank God for the blessings in your life. List them in prayer, and thank God for them individually. Confess any desires that have come from comparing your life with the lives of others. Ask God to adjust your perspective to see that we have everything that we need.

NEXT STEPS

Try something new:

- Find an opportunity to be kind or generous with someone out of the blessing that God's given you.
- When you feel tempted to covet someone's stuff, think of something you can do to add value to them instead.
- Begin returning 10% of what comes into your household back to God through your tithe. It helps to reduce an unhealthy attachment to money. There are some excellent resources available here:

<http://thechapel.cc/give/>

CONCLUSION

Thank you for investing in the relationships of God's people. It's a firm belief for our church that community leads to transparency, and that transparency leads to freedom! You are now a part of the spiritual journey of some people. Be encouraged to remain connected and supportive as they continue to take next steps in their faith. We'd love you to lead a Group again next semester. Until then, thank you!