

# BY THE FINGER OF GOD

## MAIN POINT.

How we **love God**  
affects the way we  
**love others.**



## CHRIST CONNECTION

God gave us the law to show us how to live for Him. Since we could never perfectly keep the law, it also pointed to our need for a Savior. Jesus came to fulfill the law in our place so that we might be saved by His perfect righteousness (**Matt. 5:17**).



# **LAW LEADS TO LIFE**

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to read all of the content on the timeline as you prepare to teach.

**Exodus 19**

**Exodus 20; 31**

## **GOD SHOWS US HOW TO LOVE HIM**

### **EXODUS 20:1-11**

1 And God spoke all these words, saying, 2 “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. 3 You shall have no other gods before me. 4 You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. 5 You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, 6 but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments. 7 You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain. 8 Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”

## **GOD SHOWS US HOW TO LOVE OTHERS**

### **EXODUS 20:12-21**

12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you. 13 You shall not murder. 14 You shall not commit adultery. 15 You shall not steal. 16 You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. 17 You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male servant, or his female servant, or his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.” 18 Now when all the people saw the thunder and the flashes of lightning and the sound of the trumpet and the mountain smoking, the people were afraid and trembled, and they stood far off 19 and said to Moses, “You speak to us, and we will listen; but do not let God speak to us, lest we die.” 20 Moses said to the people, “Do not fear, for God has come to test you, that the fear of him may be before you, that you may not sin.” 21 The people stood far off, while Moses drew near to the thick darkness where God was.

# BEFORE YOU TEACH

## MAIN POINT.

Leaders: May God give you instruction, hope, and encouragement as you study His Word this week (Rom. 15:4).

How we **love God** affects the way we **love others**.

## BIBLICAL COMMENTARY

### GOD SHOWS US HOW TO LOVE HIM

#### EXODUS 20:1

“It has been well said that the commandments are God’s nature expressed in terms of moral imperatives: and it is significant that God chose to reveal himself so, rather than in terms of philosophical propositions. So, to the Israelite, he is the God of history (verse 2) and of daily life (verse 13) rather than the God of speculation.”<sup>1</sup>

#### EXODUS 20:1-2

“Before the Ten Words, a statement about God’s salvation is made: ‘I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery.’ This is the gospel. . . . God frees us by His grace, giving us new life, and then calls us to obedience to His words. Because Yahweh is Israel’s God, who has brought them out of Egypt, they are to live for His glory by following His commands.”<sup>2</sup>

### GOD SHOWS US HOW TO LOVE OTHERS

#### EXODUS 20:1-17

“The Ten Words point us to the Savior. Christ was ‘born under the law, to redeem those under the law’ (Gal. 4:4–5). He fulfilled the law in every respect (Matt. 5:17–18). He paid the penalty of the law and bore the curse of the law on the cross (Gal. 3:10–14; Col. 2:13–14). We cannot keep God’s law perfectly. We need another to do this for us. The law drives us to Jesus for forgiveness and a new heart, and the Spirit then empowers for obedience. While in this life we cannot keep the law perfectly and are always in need of grace, we are never crushed by the law because there is no condemnation for those in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:1). Because the weight has been lifted, we are able to delight in God’s law. We do not see His commandments as burdensome (1 John 5:3).”<sup>3</sup>



## CONTEXT

In Exodus 20, God audibly spoke to the people of Israel for the first time. Previously, God used Moses as a prophet, but here on Mount Sinai, God left no doubt that He was present. The Ten Commandments, or the Ten Words, outlined the covenant between God and His people. In ancient eastern culture, a king making a covenant with his subjects would first identify himself and his relationship to the parties involved. Here, God clearly identified Himself as the only true God, who saved them from Egyptian slavery. In the next step, the king outlined the stipulations of the covenant. The Ten Commandments contained those stipulations: how to love God and how doing so should affect the way the Israelites were to love and interact with one another.

God is omniscient, or all-knowing. When He gave the people the Ten Commandments, He already knew they couldn't follow them perfectly, and neither can we. Instead, they pointed all of humanity to the need for a Savior. The law always pointed to Jesus—the only One who could perfectly fulfill it.

## THEOLOGY CONNECTION



### God the Son

Jesus honored the divine law by His **personal obedience**. In His substitutionary death on the cross, He made **provision for the redemption of men from sin**.

## LEADERS' PRAYER

GOD, THANK YOU FOR TEACHING US HOW  
TO LOVE YOU AND OTHERS. THANK YOU FOR  
USING THE LAW TO MAKE US AWARE OF OUR  
NEED FOR A SAVIOR.



## KICK STARTER

### ♡ HEART CHECK

How have you worked on letting others walk with you through life's battles?  
What are some ways you've worked on walking with other people through theirs?

These optional activities are designed to help your students interact. You'll find a Discussion Activity and a Cultural Connection, which touches on a relevant topic in today's teen culture. Each group is different, so adapt these activities to fit your group's needs. The goal is for students to connect more to the lesson as they connect to the topic and to one another.

# 1

## ALL TEN

### SUPPLIES LIST: NONE

Allow students to pair up. Set a timer and challenge pairs to write down the Ten Commandments. The first group to finish and get them all correct wins. Then ask the following questions:

- **WHICH COMMANDMENTS ARE EASIER TO REMEMBER? WHICH ONES DID YOU LEAVE OFF?**
- **DO YOU THINK ALL OF THEM ARE STILL RELEVANT TODAY? EXPLAIN.**
- **WHY DO YOU THINK THEY ARE SOMETIMES POSTED ON PUBLIC BUILDINGS? WHAT DOES THAT SHOW US?**

The Ten Commandments are some of the most recognizable words in Scripture. Many unbelievers can even state at least a few of them. But do we really live them out? Today, we'll look at why they're relevant and what Jesus said about them.

# 2

## CULTURAL CONNECTION

The command to honor our parents can be difficult if they aren't honoring God. How do you honor a mom who abandoned you for drugs or a dad who doesn't spend time with you? Asking these questions shows that you want to honor God by keeping His command even when it isn't easy. Honoring parents means we show them respect because God put them in a position of authority in our lives. It's obeying them as long as it doesn't go against God's Word. It's loving them and serving them—even if their actions haven't earned it—because they're made in God's image. It means taking care of them or showing kindness in our words and actions. It looks like imitating Christ as a son or daughter. However, it's never tolerating abuse of any kind. If this is taking place, seek help from a trusted adult.

# DISCUSSION

## MAIN POINT.

How we **love God** affects the way we **love others**.

### GOD SHOWS US HOW TO LOVE HIM

READ EXODUS 20:1-11

#### WHY DO YOU THINK GOD STARTED WITH THE COMMANDS TO HAVE NO OTHER GODS OR IDOLS?

Remember: the Israelites were delivered from four hundred years in Egypt's polytheistic culture, which was more familiar to them than a monotheistic system. God was bringing them to a new land of their own, but it would be surrounded by polytheistic cultures. **It could be very easy to slide back into what they'd always known: the worship of many gods and the making of idols.** These commands taught them that to follow Yahweh was to follow only Yahweh.

#### LOOK AT VERSES 4-5. WHAT DO WE LEARN ABOUT GOD, AND HOW SHOULD THIS AFFECT US?

Most of us hear the word jealous and associate it with sin, right? But in this context, we learn that God demands what rightfully belongs to Him alone—our worship. **He isn't envious of something we have; He is jealous for what belongs to Him.** This should frame the way we worship. Rather than serving money, fame, sports, social media, famous people, and so on, we serve only the Lord. **We give Him what He so rightly deserves: our hearts.**

#### READ PSALM 40:8. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SIMPLY KNOWING THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AND ACTUALLY *DELIGHTING* IN GOD'S LAW?

Knowing God's Word and delighting in it are two different things. We can recite God's commands and still be far from Him in our hearts and actions (Matt. 15:8). We can even know all the right answers but dread following God's commands because to us, they feel like a list of rules. But they're so much better than rules. **God's law—His holy Word—teaches us how to live in right relationship with Him. It shows us more of His character. It teaches us what it looks like to live holy lives and to imitate Jesus, who perfectly followed every single command.** Following God's commands doesn't make us legalistic or narrow-minded. Rather, when we know and delight in God's commands, we show that we love Him. We can delight in the truth that God didn't leave us on our own to figure things out, but He gave us a road map for following Him. He points us to what citizens of heaven—anyone in Christ—live like here on earth. What a joy it is to represent the King of kings in our words, thoughts, and actions!

## GOD SHOWS US HOW TO LOVE OTHERS

### READ EXODUS 20:12-21



#### WHY WOULD GOD GIVE PEOPLE COMMANDMENTS THEY COULD NEVER FOLLOW PERFECTLY?



Since the fall in Eden, humans have been born into sin. We're incapable of living sinless lives. **But without the law, we may never recognize sin. We may never see the difference between holy and unholy. The law—the Ten Commandments along with all of God's commands throughout Scripture—is a gift that points us to our desperate need for salvation.** This salvation is only possible through Jesus, who lived a sinless life and gave His life on our behalf.

#### WHY SHOULD OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AFFECT OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHERS?

The commandments follow a format: our relationship with God affects relationships with others. **If we have no other gods, if we don't bow to idols, if we use our words as worship and practice Sabbath, then how could our relationships with others not be affected?** Being right with God helps us live in godly community with others; in fact, being right with Him is necessary to do so.

#### WHAT HAS CULTURE DONE TO THE MEANING OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS? HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM WHAT JESUS EXPLAINED IN MATTHEW 5:21-48?

Culture, and at times the church, has softened God's Word to make it more appealing or easier to follow. But Jesus did quite the opposite when He explained the meaning of the law. Jesus heightened it. In doing this, **Jesus made it even more apparent that following God is about our hearts and not just our right actions.** Jesus showed us that we need Him, along with the help of the Holy Spirit, to live in a way that honors the Father—not by following rules but by loving Him and others.

## WRAP-UP

### WHAT IDOL HAVE YOU WORSHIPED ALONGSIDE GOD? THIS WEEK, HOW CAN YOU COMMIT TO WORSHIPING GOD ONLY?

We can often look at the Egyptians or the Israelites and distance ourselves from their idol worship. We falsely assume it's just an issue for that time period, but in reality, it's very much an issue for us today. Our idols just look a little different. They appear innocent, so we attempt to worship God *and* these things at the same time. They may come in the form of an extra-curricular activity that consumes us, a relationship that causes us to sin, popularity that invites us to compromise, social media that tempts us to covet, or our phones that demand our full attention. **When we put something in the place of God and devote our hearts, time, and attention to it, then we're worshiping an idol. Many of these things aren't inherently sinful, but our elevation of them is.** We must keep our worship centered on God alone.