

THE THREAD

DISCOVERING THE THREAD OF THE GOSPEL THROUGH THE BIG-PICTURE STORY OF THE BIBLE

PART 1: BEGINNINGS

LESSON 12 || THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

SESSION SNAPSHOT

NARRATIVE PASSAGE: Exodus 19:1-6; Exodus 20:1-17

GOSPEL FOCUS: Titus 2:11-14

STUDENT TAKEAWAYS:

- Realize that by following the Ten Commandments and the rest of the Law, the Israelites would be set apart as God's people.
- Understand that through grace, not law, all who believe in Jesus are welcomed into God's family and are made holy in God's sight.
- Gauge their attitude toward serving God, specifically in sharing the Gospel with those around them.

OVERVIEW:

You're going to continue your look at the Israelites' journey to inherit the Promised Land. As you continue to uncover the big-picture story of the Bible, keep in mind that the Promised Land represents God's faithfulness to His covenant with Abraham. God kept His promise to make Abraham the father of a great nation, but that nation needed a home. And that nation needed to know how to act as a people set apart by God. The path to helping them know how to live as God's people started with the Ten Commandments. This lesson will show your students why the Ten Commandments were necessary and how we see God's grace and love threaded through them.

TEACHER PREP VIDEO:

Each *Thread* lesson comes with a Teacher Prep Video. These short videos are designed to help you grasp the lesson's main point as you prepare to teach.



BIBLE BACKGROUND

The Bible Background is designed to help you provide the basic context for the passages you'll be studying.

- **WHAT DO WE MEAN BY "CONTEXT"?** In every YM360 Bible study lesson, we encourage teachers to help students know *who* wrote a particular book, *when* it was written, and *why* it was written.
- **WHY TEACH CONTEXT?** Grasping the big-picture view of God's story of redemption is difficult for teenagers without understanding the context of the books and passages they're studying.

EXODUS

- *Author:* While there's no specific author named within the text, Moses is the accepted author for Exodus, with some editing and additions done after his death (such as the account of his death!).
- *Time frame:* The dating of the book of Exodus is a point of debate. The issue is that no one knows exactly when the Exodus occurred, whether in the mid-1400s BC or a later date around the mid-1200s BC. The writing of the book of Exodus would have occurred around those general dates.
- *Purpose:* Exodus means "a going out" or a "departure." Exodus was written to be a record of God's great rescue of His people from slavery in Egypt and His commands to His people, guiding them to live for His purposes in a new land.

TITUS

- *Author:* The Apostle Paul wrote the letter to Titus. Of course, we know Paul as the former chief enemy of the Church. After his miraculous conversion on the road to Damascus, Paul would go on to have a position of great importance in the early Church and beyond. He wrote 13 of the 27 books of the New Testament.
- *Time frame:* Titus was probably written by Paul in the latter years of his life, before a final arrest and eventual execution, perhaps sometime between 62 and 67 AD.
- *Purpose:* Titus is one letter in a group of three by Paul, known as "the pastorals." Paul wrote this letter to Titus, who had been a companion of Paul's. Titus was a Gentile convert to Christianity.

LESSON PLAN

The Lesson Plan contains four elements:

- **GETTING STARTED**– An introductory activity designed to prepare teenagers to engage with God and the truth of His Word.
- **THE STORY**– A section featuring a narrative from Scripture that helps teenagers know God better through learning the story of the Bible.
- **THE THREAD**– A special emphasis where teenagers discover the Gospel thread coursing throughout the story of the Bible.
- **WRAPPING UP**– An application-focused segment helping teenagers ask the question, “How am I impacted by what I learned today”?

GETTING STARTED

- *Goal:* To get students to start thinking about rules and the consequences that come when we break them.
- *Set-Up:* You’ll need to be able to show students a series of four pictures. If you want to print and display them, access the Lesson 12 “Busted.pdf” located in your lesson 12 folder. If you want to display them digitally, access the “Busted .jpgs” folder in your lesson 12 folder. Either way, plan to show them at the beginning of the lesson.

FIRST, explain to your students that you’re going to show a few different pictures. As you show each picture, **ask the following questions about each one:**

- What’s going on here?
- What could have caused this to happen?
- What is the outcome probably going to be?

THEN, after you’ve gone through all of the pictures, **ask the students:**

- What do all the pictures have in common?
 - *Answer:* Someone has broken a rule and is paying the consequence.
- Penalties in football, people getting arrested, and people getting speeding tickets are all pretty common occurrences. What are some other rules teenagers consistently break?
 - *Answers will vary.* Some examples may include breaking curfew, underage drinking, being on your phone in class, etc.
- Are rules good or bad? Do you like rules or not?
- What is the point of rules?
- What would life be like if there weren’t any rules?

FINALLY, explain to the students that you are continuing your look at the big-picture story of the Bible with a look at some of the rules God put in place for the nation of Israel. These rules are what we call the Ten Commandments. **Say something like:**

- The Ten Commandments weren’t just a random set of rules God put in place for no reason. We’re going to see that there was meaning and purpose behind them. While there are severe consequences for disobeying God, we’ll also see how God made a way for us to still be a part of His family.

TRANSITION TO THE STORY.

THE STORY

- *Goal:* To understand that by following the Ten Commandments and the rest of the Law, the Israelites would be set apart as God's people.
- *Set-Up:* Students will need a Bible or a Bible app. A dry-erase board may be beneficial, but it's not necessary.

FIRST, explain that in this lesson, you'll be looking at God giving the Ten Commandments to Moses and the nation of Israel in Exodus 19 and 20. If you'd like, use the Connecting The Dots section below to review or fill in the gaps between your last lesson and this one.

CONNECTING THE DOTS

As you teach The Thread, there will naturally be some gaps in the story. This is an optional way for you to fill in some of the gaps between the last lesson you taught and this one. Use it to review or connect the dots to the events surrounding the passage.

- God rescued the Israelites from 400 years of slavery in Egypt.
- After the people crossed the Red Sea and were free from the Egyptians, they consistently complained about not having food or water. No matter how much God provided, they kept complaining!
- All of the people looked to Moses as their leader. Any dispute they had was brought before Moses, and he made the decisions. Moses' father-in-law, Jethro, told him that this was too much for him to handle on his own, so Moses selected some able men to help him lead the people.

THEN, explain to the students that we'll look closely at the Ten Commandments, but before we get to that point, we want to set the stage a little bit and understand what God was planning to do through the nation of Israel. We want to understand some of the "why" behind the commandments.

NEXT, have the students turn to Exodus 19. If you want, provide some context for the book using the Bible Background. Then, read or have a student read verses 1-6. Explain that the first three verses give us a little historical context. The ESV Study Bible tells us that "the third new moon" would date this passage around seven weeks after they fled Egypt. Verses 4-6 tell us what God said to Moses on that day. Lead students in a brief discussion. **Ask:**

- **Why do you think God felt the need to remind the Israelites about what happened seven weeks earlier?**
 - *Answer:* We are forgetful people. We see God move in powerful ways and quickly forget about it. Before He established the Ten Commandments with the people, God reminded them of how He had moved in power and rescued them.
- **In verses 5-6, the "therefore" shows a connection to the previous verse. God rescued the Israelites for a purpose. The "therefore" lets us know that we're about to read the reason for the rescue. What do verses 5-6 tell us about God's reason for rescuing the people from slavery in Egypt? What was the purpose?**
 - *Answer:* God rescued the Israelites from Egypt in order to set them apart as His people. As a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation," they would be able to display the love and power of God to the world.
- **What did God tell them they had to do to be set apart?**
 - *Answer:* In verse 5, He told them to obey His voice and keep His covenant.

THEN, direct the students to Exodus 20 and tell them that we're now going to dive into the particulars of the Ten Commandments. Read or have a student read Exodus 20:1-8. As someone is reading the passage, it might help to make a paraphrased list of the four commandments on a board. The list would look something like this:

1. Don't have any other gods
2. Don't make any carved images and bow down to them
3. Don't take the Lord's name in vain
4. Keep the Sabbath

Then, ask the students:

- **What do these four commandments have in common?**
 - o *Answer:* They all deal with our relationship with God.
- **Why do you think God needed to give these particular commands?**
 - o *Answer:* Because people are bent toward sin and, left to their own, will serve other gods, take the Lord's name in vain, and disregard the Sabbath. Left in our sin, God's commandments and lordship over our lives are things we naturally rebel against.

NEXT, read or have a student read Exodus 20:12-17. Make another list on the board that summarizes these six commands. The list will look something like this:

5. Honor your mom and dad
6. Don't murder
7. Don't commit adultery
8. Don't steal
9. Don't lie about your neighbor
10. Don't covet your neighbor's possessions

Ask the students:

- **What do these six commandments have in common?**
 - o *Answer:* They all deal with how we interact with others.
- **Why do you think God needed to give these particular commands?**
 - o *Answer:* The answer is the same as the one that dealt with the first four commandments. People are bent toward sin. Thus they are bent towards selfishness and mistreating others.

Remind students that the Israelites had just recently come out of slavery in Egypt, where many gods were worshipped. The Lord was leading them toward Canaan, and the people there also worshipped many other gods. **Ask the students:**

- **What would it look like to other people if the Israelites truly obeyed these commandments? What impact would it have?**
 - o *Answer:* Back in chapter 19, God told them that if they obeyed Him and kept His covenant, they would be "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." Obedience to the Lord would set them apart from the other nations. Other people would take notice of how they acted toward God and others. Essentially, they would show God's presence to the nations around them.
- **How do you think things went? Did the people live up to the covenant? Did they obey the Lord?**
 - o *Answer:* No, they didn't. The people went through an excruciatingly repetitive cycle of sin and disobedience.

EXPLAIN THAT, AS YOU HAVE DONE SO FAR, YOU'LL LOOK AT THE STORY OF THE TEN COMMANDMENTS TO SEE THE CONNECTION TO THE GOSPEL.

THE THREAD

FIRST, instruct students to turn to Titus 2. If you choose, while they are finding Titus, provide them with some brief context for the book by referencing the Bible Background. Before you have someone read the text, **ask the students:**

- **We just said that the people didn't obey the Lord. They didn't live up to the covenant. Are we any different than the Israelites? Have we fully obeyed the Lord? Have we lived up to what He has called us to do?**
 - *Answer:* The short answer is "no." We're no different; we have all disobeyed. Press the students to elaborate on their answer beyond "no."
- **Let's say you decided you wanted a fresh start right now and said you weren't going to disobey God ever again. Could you live up to that commitment? Why or why not?**
 - *Answer:* No, no one could live up to that commitment because we're all sinners. We're bent toward sin and don't have the ability to live up to God's holy standard.
- **What should the consequence of disobedience be?**
 - *Answer:* The consequence of disobedience is death. Remind the students of the first half of Romans 6:23 – "For the wages of sin is death."

Say something like:

- **If you've already sinned and don't have the capacity to stop sinning, it's obvious that you can't live up to the standard of God's law. So, it's clear that you'll never obtain salvation by keeping God's law. That sounds pretty bleak, huh? But there has to be an answer, right? God didn't give us His Word just to let us know we're hopeless and can never have a relationship with Him, did He?**

THEN, read or have a student read Titus 2:11-14. **Ask the students:**

- **In verse 14, the ESV uses the word "lawlessness." It's translated as "wickedness" in the NIV. What do you think this word means? What does it mean that we're "lawless?" How does it relate to what we've been talking about?**
 - *Answer:* God gave His perfect law and commanded His people to follow it. We have disregarded God's law and have chosen to go our own way, so we're "lawless."
- **Verse 14 also uses the word "purify." It says He will "purify for Himself a people that are His very own." Why do we need to be purified?**
 - *Answer:* God is holy and perfect, and we've established that we're sinners. We're impure, and God's holiness demands that He cannot have an eternal relationship with impurity. So, we will either suffer eternal separation from Him, or He will have to purify us so we can be a part of His family and have a relationship with Him.
- **Based on what we just read, what is God's answer to our disobedience and impurity problem? How has He chosen to save us from our sin?**
 - *Answer:* God has brought us salvation through grace by offering redemption through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **What is the difference between trying to obtain salvation by living up to the law and receiving salvation through God's grace?**
 - *Answer:* Trying to earn salvation through obedience is a pointless endeavor. It's impossible, and either leaves us prideful about how good (we think) we are or bitter and depressed because we always fail. It's usually some combination of the two. Receiving salvation through trusting God's grace takes the focus off of us and puts it on God. It isn't a burden we have to live up to; instead, it's a great gift we receive.

WRAPPING UP

- *Goal:* That students will gauge their attitude toward serving God, specifically in sharing the Gospel with those around them.
- *Set-Up:* A dry-erase board to write answers may be beneficial, but it's not necessary.

FIRST, ask the students:

- **One of the age-old questions about grace is: If this kind of grace is real, does it matter what I do? In other words, is disobedience a big deal? What do you think? Explain your answer.**

- o *Answers will vary.*

THEN, have a student reread Titus 2:11-14. Draw their attention to verse 12. **Ask:**

- **What does verse 12 call us to?**
 - o *Answer:* Renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives.
- **What does verse 14 tell us we're to be zealous for?**
 - o *Answer:* Good works
- **Based on verses 12 and 14, does it sound like grace means it doesn't matter how we act? Explain.**
 - o *Answer:* No, grace does not mean it doesn't matter how we act. It means that we can't earn our salvation. We aren't saved just so we can be careless about how we live. We are saved to be a part of God's family and reflect Him to the world around us. Grace frees us from trying to live up to an unattainable standard and frees us to live in the light of God's love for us.
- **Is it possible to be "zealous for good works" and not try to earn God's love and salvation simultaneously? Explain your answer.**
 - o *Answer:* Yes, it is possible. We can be zealous for doing good, all while understanding that doing good doesn't earn salvation. God doesn't love us more because we do good works. Being zealous for good works means that we're so enamored by God's grace and love for us that we want to obey His commands and reflect His holiness and glory to the world around us.

Explain to the students that we're going to take a few minutes and think about our attitude toward obeying God. If the room allows, you can have them spread out so they can be undistracted and really focus on the questions you're going to ask. If not, you can ask them to bow their heads and close their eyes. **Ask them the following questions:**

- **When you think about obeying God, what comes to mind?**
- **Does obeying God seem like a burden to you? Why or why not?**
- **Do your good works reflect God's love to those around you?**
- **Are you truly aware of the consequences you deserve for your disobedience? On the other hand, are you truly thankful for God's grace in your life?**
- **Are you zealous about God's grace to the point that you're willing to share that good news with others? Why or why not?**
- **Take a moment and think about how you've answered these questions. If you take God's grace for granted, pray that God would help you be in awe of how much He loves you. Pray that you would be so enamored by His love that you would be zealous to live a life that reflected that to others.**

FINALLY, finish the lesson by encouraging anyone that doesn't understand God's grace to talk to an adult leader

afterward. Finally, pray for the students as they go out. Pray that they would be zealous for good works and to point others to the grace of Jesus.

- If you've purchased the corresponding devotional journal, remind students they'll be working through Week 11 this week. Encourage them to keep up with the daily devotions and to give memorizing this week's verse their best shot.
- If you're utilizing the digital devotions included in the Thread curriculum, remind students how you'll be making them available, i.e., Instagram, Facebook, etc.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU . . .

- Do you have questions about a lesson?
- Something that worked particularly well that you want to share?
- Something that didn't work that you want to bring up?

We value your feedback! Please do not hesitate to email us with your questions, comments, or concerns at feedback@youthministry360.com.