

Value Reset Small Group Guide

Warm-up Question: (Choose one, make up your own, or skip this part altogether, depending upon the nature of your group.)

1. What was one rule around your house growing up?
2. What is one of the most thrilling experiences you have ever had?

Read the following passages: Exodus 19:10-19; 20:1-21.

After generations of influence by Egyptian culture, the Israelites needed a reset. So God gives the people a striking encounter with his holiness and power “so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning” (Exodus 20:20). When the Bible uses the word fear, it typically has connotations of awe and wonder, not merely terror or fright. On this occasion, the Israelites were probably both afraid and in awe of God’s majestic power. As impactful as such moments can be, they are usually not sufficient to sustain longterm transformation. A new pattern of daily living is needed. God gives the Israelites a new way of living in the Ten Commandments (or, more literally, the Ten Words).

Questions for Discussion (Choose several that are relevant for your group):

1. Philosopher James K. A. Smith argues that our desires or “loves” are what drive our lives. As he puts it, “[we] live toward what [we] want.” Deep transformation, then, is not just a change in our beliefs. It’s a change in our desires. What are some of the desires driving your life? Where do you think those desires came from?
2. What’s wrong with living our lives and making our decisions according to “what makes us happy?” Do you think “what makes you happy” can change? Explain. What can we do to influence our own desires or perception of what makes us happy?
3. In the ancient world, most people believed that different gods had influence over different spheres. But God commanded the Israelites, “You shall have no other gods before me.” Is God the God of everything for you? Are there any areas of your life in which you are living by your own rules or your own values? Explain.
4. What is holiness? Describe some of the ways the category of holiness appeared in life of Israel. Why do you think God intentionally built rules around holiness into Israel’s laws? What might it look like for us to live according to the prayer, “Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy” (Matthew 6:9, NLT)?
5. Is it challenging for you to honor your father and mother? Explain. How do we honor the imperfect human authorities in our lives?
6. Do you struggle with desiring vengeance or harboring anger or bitterness toward other people? Explain. How can we address anger and bitterness in our hearts?

7. Jesus taught that adultery begins in the heart. Do you struggle with lust, flirting, or creating inappropriate emotional bonds with people you are not married to? What about pornography, casual sex, or sexual intimacy with a partner you are not married to? Why do you think God condemns all sexual activity outside of the covenant of marriage? What can we do to move forward after committing sexual sins?

8. Jesus spoke about greed on multiple occasions. Are there any areas of your life in which you are prone to struggle with greed, envy, or covetousness? Explain. What do you think is underneath those desires? What can we do to address the roots of greed and envy in our lives?

Pray