

BY THE FINGER OF GOD

unit 5 | session 1



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](#)).



LEADS TO LIFE

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

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.

MAIN POINT.

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



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**.

DISCUSSION



GOD SHOWS US HOW TO LOVE HIM

EXODUS 20:1-11

- Why do you think God started with the commands to have no other gods or idols?
- Look at verses 4-5. What do we learn about God, and how should this affect us?
- Read Psalm 40:8. What is the difference between simply knowing the Ten Commandments and actually delighting in God's law?

GOD SHOWS US HOW TO LOVE OTHERS

EXODUS 20:12-21

-  • Why would God give people commandments they could never follow perfectly?
-  • Why should our relationship with God affect our relationship with others?
- What has culture done to the meaning of the Ten Commandments? How is it different from what Jesus explained in Matthew 5:21-48?

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

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.



DAY ONE

HEBREWS 10:1

Most of us typically fall into one of two categories: we're either obsessive rule followers who strive for perfection, or we're rule benders who search for loopholes. Think about it: Do you focus so much on the "rules" because you want to please people and not make others upset? Or do you look for ways around the rules? Rules are good. They keep us safe; they help society function. But there is a danger in thinking that if we just follow the rules, then we'll be good enough—for other people, for our parents, for our coaches, for God. We can't ever be good enough to earn our salvation.

God gave the Israelites the law, or the Ten Commandments, for their good, but it was never so they'd be good enough. The law could never save them, and it can't save us. Hebrews 10:1 is a good reminder that the law was simply a "shadow" of something better—Christ, who would perfectly fulfill the law and purchase our salvation by His perfect sacrifice. The law was, and still is, a reflection of God's character. It is a set of expectations for how we should live so that we can reflect God's character to the world and so that we can represent His kingdom as citizens of heaven. Perfectly following God's law was never a possibility for us because of sin, but it kindly points us to the truth that we need a Savior. It helps to point out our sin and our imperfection so we'll seek the only One who is perfect—Jesus, the Son of God (Rom. 7:7).

- **WHEN HAVE YOU STRUGGLED WITH THE BELIEF THAT YOU NEEDED TO BE "GOOD ENOUGH" TO PLEASE GOD OR EARN SALVATION? HOW DOES THIS VERSE CHALLENGE THAT IDEA?**

- **HOW IS THE LAW A REFLECTION OF GOD'S KINDNESS TO US?**

PRAY

GOD, THANK YOU FOR THE BEAUTY OF YOUR LAW. THANK YOU FOR USING IT TO SHOW ME I'M IN NEED OF A SAVIOR AND FOR PROVIDING SALVATION THROUGH JESUS.





DAY TWO

MATTHEW 22:34-40

Did you know that the entire law of the Old Testament actually contained 613 laws, according to most biblical scholars? While the exact number may be debated, the truth of the matter remains: God's people lived according to these laws, and they knew them very well. For many Jews, especially corrupt religious leaders, keeping these laws led to pride and legalism. Some of these religious leaders were set on trapping Jesus in His words and asked Him, "Out of all the commandments, what's the most important one?" What Jesus responded with came as a shock.

Jesus broke down the entire as this: love God with everything you are, and then love your neighbor as yourself. Can you imagine hearing His words after you'd spent your entire life striving for perfection? But here's what Jesus knew about these people and very often about us: they may have looked good on the outside, but their hearts were far from God. Their motive was to look righteous before men, and they often condemned others who didn't live in the same way. But Jesus's way was simple. When we love God with our entire being—our heart, soul, and mind—then everything else will flow from it. We'll want to live godly lives. We'll desire to love others well, and they'll see Christ in our actions. Our words will speak life. How do we grow in our love of God? We must know Him. And to know Him, we must know His Word. If you're struggling to truly love God, dig into His Word; get to know His character and His love for you.

○ **WHAT WOULD IT REALLY LOOK LIKE TO LOVE GOD WITH YOUR HEART, SOUL, AND MIND?**

○ **WHY MUST EVERYTHING WE DO BEGIN WITH OUR LOVE OF GOD? WHAT HAPPENS IF THAT'S MISSING?**

PRAY

GOD, HELP ME TO LOVE YOU MORE, NOT SO I CAN LOOK GOOD IN FRONT OF OTHERS BUT SO THAT OTHERS CAN KNOW YOU.



DAY THREE

JAMES 1:22-25

How important is it to you that people do what they say they'll do? In your friendships, is it important for you to be able to believe what your friends say? What about in your family—is it important that you can trust their promises? Most of us would probably say yes to all of these questions. It's really difficult to trust others when what they say is very different from what they do. We just want people to be real. And when it comes to living out our faith, the world needs us to be real.

This passage echoes the same thought. It urges us to be doers of the Word, meaning that we actually live out what it says. In our culture, there are a lot of people who claim to believe in God's Word. They will say His Word is truth. But when it comes to living out its commands, their actions don't line up. We've all been guilty of this. The world will find it very difficult to take us seriously if our actions don't line up with our words. If we call ourselves Christians but our lives don't reflect Christ or the truth in God's Word, then we're deceiving ourselves (v. 22). We're no different than the people Jesus described as honoring Him with their lips but being far away from Him in their hearts (Matt. 15:8). Our world needs us to be real. Unbelievers need to see believers who actually do what God's Word says. While we won't ever be perfect, we can strive to be authentic. We can strive to love God because when we do, we'll desire to keep His commands (John 14:21).

- **IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOU ONLY SAYING YOU BELIEVE GOD'S WORD BUT NOT LIVING IT OUT?**

- **HOW COULD IT AFFECT UNBELIEVING FAMILY, FRIENDS, AND PEERS IF YOU'RE ONLY A "HEARER" OF GOD'S WORD AND NOT A "DOER"? WHAT'S AT STAKE?**

PRAY

GOD, HELP ME TO BE A DOER OF YOUR WORD.
I DON'T WANT TO MISREPRESENT YOU TO A
LOST AND DYING WORLD. I WANT TO REFLECT
YOU IN ALL I SAY AND DO.



DAY FOUR

MATTHEW 23:25-28

Imagine biting into a red, shiny apple, but to your surprise, it's completely rotten on the inside. Would you continue eating it, or would you spit it out and throw it away? Here's the truth: something can look really good on the outside, but if the inside is bad, then it's useless. We can even apply this to physical beauty. While our culture places a lot of importance on looks, most of us know a person's character matters more. Someone can be physically beautiful yet ugly on the inside.

Jesus made a similar point—a strongly worded one—to the Pharisees in His day. He even called them “hypocrites.” Why? Because their lives didn't line up with God's Word. They were like dishes, which were filthy on the inside but clean on the outside; they were like beautifully decorated tombs, which in reality only housed decaying bones. What did He mean? They looked holy on the outside. In fact, they even flaunted their religious standing. But they were filthy on the inside. Their hearts were full of greed and indulgence and every kind of impurity.

What's the condition of your heart? Have you placed importance on how you appear to others yet neglected to draw near to God? Here's a beautiful truth: it's Christ living within us that makes our hearts clean. Christ living in us changes us from the inside out. It's Christ who walks with us and continues refining us so that our actions are only an overflow of the work He's doing in our hearts.

○ **IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOU FOCUSED ON YOUR OUTSIDE MORE THAN YOUR HEART?**

○ **WHAT AREAS OF YOUR HEART DO YOU NEED TO SURRENDER TO GOD?**

PRAY

LORD, THANK YOU FOR MAKING ME CLEAN FROM THE INSIDE OUT. I KNOW BECOMING MORE LIKE JESUS STARTS IN MY HEART. HELP ME TO SURRENDER ALL OF IT.



DAY FIVE

ROMANS 8:1-4

We've talked a lot about the law this week. We studied how it points us to our need for a Savior. We looked at how Jesus heightened it yet simplified it by teaching us to love God with our entire self and to love others. And we talked about how having only an appearance of being godly is worthless if our heart hasn't been made clean by knowing Christ. But we must distinguish between following God's commands out of our love for Him and becoming legalistic—hinging our salvation and worth on our ability to perfectly follow the law. Because the law can't save us; it never could.

Jesus came to do what the law couldn't. He lived sinlessly when we couldn't. He showed us that the law is more about our heart because when our heart is right with the Father, our actions will follow. But the truth is that we will still mess up. And these verses in Romans remind us that because of Christ's work on the cross, we're no longer condemned to death when we do fail. The "law of sin and death" (v. 2) says breaking even one of God's commands warrants death (James 2:10). But for those who've confessed Christ as Lord, the law of sin and death is null and void. We live under the "law of the Spirit of life" (v. 2). We've been set free! And it's this truth that should motivate us to live out God's Word. We're freed from the burden of sin, and we're empowered by the Spirit of God living inside of us! God's Word isn't a list of rules we begrudgingly follow; it's how we get to live as God's sons and daughters. When we live with that mindset, it changes everything.

- **HOW SHOULD KNOWING THAT YOU'RE NO LONGER CONDEMNED CHANGE THE WAY YOU LIVE?**

- **ARE YOU JOYFULLY FOLLOWING GOD'S WORD, OR DO YOU APPROACH IT BEGRUDGINGLY? WHY SHOULD IT BE A JOY TO LIVE OUT GOD'S WORD?**

PRAY

**GOD, LIVING OUT YOUR WORD IS AN HONOR
AND A JOY. THANK YOU FOR FREEING ME
FROM THE BURDEN OF THE LAW. THANK YOU
FOR FREEING ME TO LIVE FOR YOU.**