

The Ten Words of the Covenant

*Distribute before session 1 for use in session 1.
Use Enrichment Magazine pages 2–3.*

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Exodus 20:1–20

Resources for Worship

Each study guide for the nine LifeLight lessons for this course on Exodus will suggest devotional resources. You may use these resources for a brief devotional time as you begin your study each day. These resources may be used, as well, at each week's group meeting, where you share your individual study of, and experiences and insights suggested by, your preparation of Exodus 20–40.

Hymn

The Law of God is good and wise
And sets His will before our eyes,
Shows us the way of righteousness,
And dooms to death when we transgress.

The Law is good; but since the fall
Its holiness condemns us all;
It dooms us for our sin to die
And has no pow'r to justify.

To Jesus we for refuge flee,
Who from the curse has set us free,
And humbly worship at his throne,
Saved by His grace through faith alone.

Matthias Loy

Prayer

Use this easy outline to aid your thoughts to flow: *Call God by name. Describe Him. Thank Him. Confess where you have failed Him and your fellow human beings. Present the request you want to bring before Him with this specific prayer. Close by remembering Jesus Christ is our intercessor, opening the way to God.*

Lord Jesus, You are always looking for people who with their lives are saying for all to hear, "Here's Jesus!" Help us as we look at ourselves in the mirror of God's commandments. Use our hands and voices and minds—all of us—to reflect You. Give us joy that does not depend on outside circumstances but only on Your filling us up within.

Bless each of us as we do our work in contributing to the common good. In all we do and say, let others hear "Here's Jesus!" that they, too, may know the perfect joy and peace You give. Amen.

Digging Deep

My Personal Study for Week 1

It is important that you do each day's work daily and not try to catch up just before coming to your weekly group session. You will find it far easier—and more enjoyable—to search God's Word in manageable and disciplined devotion to it. Pick a favorite comfortable spot and set aside the time (20 to 30 minutes should do) to return to it daily. You do deserve this kind of break each day! As you do your best to answer each day's questions in response to the Holy Spirit speaking to you through God's Word; don't worry about giving a wrong answer. There's no more freeing way to study Scripture than to ask constantly, "What is God saying to me with His Word right now?" Your answers drawn from your experiences and insights are most important to your group discussion.

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Day 1 • Read Exodus 20:1–6

1. It has been said, "We have 10 million laws trying to enforce Ten Commandments." What does that tell you about people's typical impression and handling of the commandments?

2. **Challenge question.** In contrast, the Scriptures describe the purpose of the commandments in ways that underscore how they serve as a curb, mirror, and rule. Look up the passages below and picture in words how the commandments work in your life.

a. As a curb (Romans 2:14–15)

b. As a mirror (Romans 7:7)

c. As a rule (Psalm 119:105)

b. Psalm 148:13

3. Note that the Lord identifies Himself as "your God" (v. 1) and then commands, "You shall have no other gods before Me" (v. 3). In verse 5 God is described as a "jealous God." What does that tell you about God's relationship to His people then and now?

c. Isaiah 57:15

d. Matthew 1:21

4. Read Exodus 20:4. The German philosopher Nietzsche declared, "If there is a God, I should want to be He." Someone else said, "God created man in His own image, and man returned the compliment."

a. What do these remarks suggest to you about our natural human tendencies?

e. Matthew 1:23

6. a. A common misuse of God's name is in cursing and swearing. A commonly heard curse begins, "God damn . . ." What is such a curse actually asking God to do?

b. *For personal reflection. Sharing optional.* What are some of the idols that tend to replace God in your life?

b. A common way of swearing begins, "By God . . ." What are those who swear in this way actually asking God to do?

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Day 2 • Read Exodus 20:7-11

5. Nicknames commonly describe us physically and temperamentally, while our given and surnames say little or nothing about those attributes. God's name (Exodus 20:7) describes Him and His character. What do the following passages tell us about God's name and character?

a. Psalm 135:13

c. What makes such cursing and swearing wrong? (Read Matthew 5:33-37.)

7. a. "Keep holy" means to separate something from the common use, recognizing that it belongs especially to God. Why were God's Old Testament people to devote the Sabbath out of each week to God (vv. 8–11)?

c. What benefits does every society of every time, in some way, experience through the maintenance of family standards?

b. In the New Testament believers began worshipping God on Sunday rather than on Saturday (the Sabbath). What did this commemorate (Mark 16:9)? See also Matthew 12:1–13 and Colossians 2:16–17.

9. a. The commandment given in verse 13 protects human life. What did Jesus include under the command concerning murder (Matthew 5:21–22)?

c. Reflect and share with your discussion group practical ways in which you make time in your week to worship God and listen to His Word.

b. Mention some indications that seem to show that respect for human life has (or has not) increased in our age compared to previous periods in world history.

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Day 3 • Read Exodus 20:12–14

8. a. What promise does God attach to the commandment concerning parents (v. 12)?

10. The commandment given in verse 14 protects the sacredness of marriage. How do the following passages apply this commandment to the whole range of sexual behavior?

a. Genesis 39:7–12

b. What observation does Paul make about this commandment (Ephesians 6:2)?

b. Matthew 5:28

c. 1 Corinthians 6:18–19

d. Ephesians 5:3-4

13. The commandments given in verse 17 prohibit coveting. How does James 1:14-15 describe the progressive chain of sin that begins with covetousness?

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Day 4 • Read Exodus 20:15-17

11. We have seen how the commandments have referred to how God would bless the Israelites by giving them the land He had promised to Abraham. These commandments also guide and direct God's people of all times in godly living, as with the commandment given in verse 15. It predicts how God's people will hold their own property and the property of others as a sacred trust from God. Beyond prohibiting stealing and fraud, this commandment moves us to be concerned about the "have nots" of society. What negative and positive aspects of this commandment does Paul refer to in Ephesians 4:28?

12. The commandment given in verse 16 supports a fair and honest judicial system. But its benefit goes far beyond—to the sacredness of personal reputation and a good name. What do the following passages say about this concern?

a. Psalm 15:1-5

b. Proverbs 14:25

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Day 5 • Read Exodus 20:18-20

14. You can imagine how that scene of Mount Sinai (thunder, lightning, trumpet blast, smoke) would strike fear in the hearts of those who witnessed it.

a. For what purpose did God show Himself to the people in such a terrifying way (v. 20)?

b. Moses stood between Israel and the terrifying way that God revealed Himself on Mount Sinai. He was a "mediator," a "go-between." In what ways is Jesus like and unlike Moses as a mediator between us and a holy God?

Hebrews 9:15

1 John 2:1-2

c. How does this awareness comfort you?