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UNIT 1

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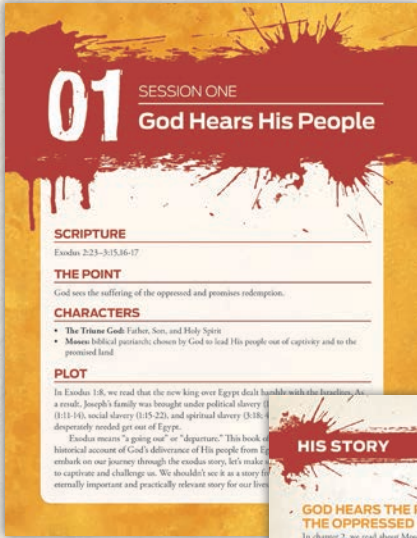


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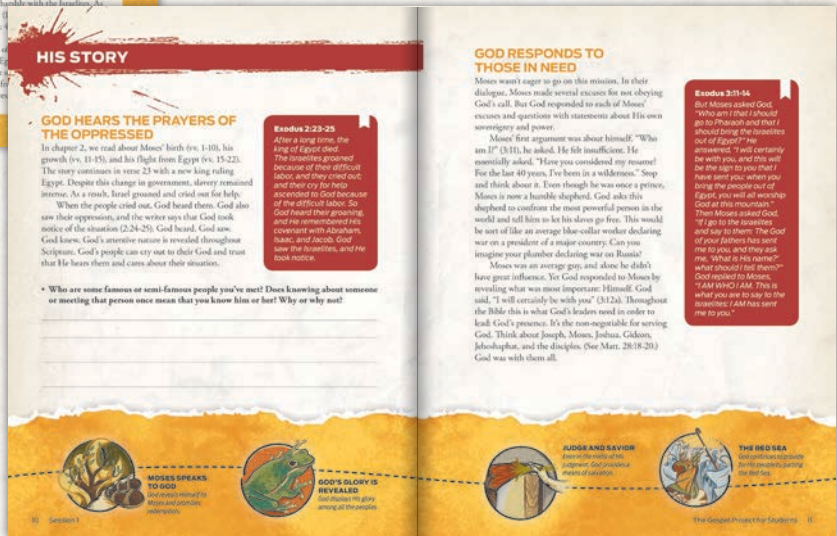
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HOW TO USE



INTRO

The first page of each session contains a brief overview of what to expect in the His Story section. This will include the Scripture passage(s), the main point, key figures, as well as a basic plot that sets the scene for the Bible study.



HIS STORY

Intended for group and personal use, the His Story section follows the storyline of the Bible, focusing on what God has done in redemptive history throughout the pages of Scripture. These pages also feature questions to engage with, Essential Doctrines to learn, and a visually helpful timeline to follow throughout the study. In addition, there is a Christ Connection section at the end, helping you to connect the dots between Jesus and the biblical storyline for each session.

THIS STUDY

CHRIST CONNECTION

At the beginning of our story, we see Moses leading his father-in-law's flock. The fact that Moses is a shepherd is significant. Egyptians didn't think highly at all of shepherds (see Gen. 46:34), and yet there is an important pattern of shepherding throughout all of Scripture.

Whether it is Moses who spent forty years as a shepherd in Midian, or the shepherd David who was taken from the shepherds to become king, it is clear that God loves to use shepherds! God even refers to Himself as a shepherd (Ps. 23:1). And ultimately, salvation would come through Jesus, whom the Bible calls the Good Shepherd, the one who lays down His life for his sheep (John 10:11).

As we see in this story, the plan is in place. God responds to His people's suffering by revealing His promise of redemption to the reluctant shepherd-mediator, Moses. And here we look forward through the Scriptures to Jesus, the great I Am who gives us an even greater revelation of God's goodness and righteousness. He is the Good Shepherd, who would lay down His life for His sheep, in order to lead us out of a greater slavery into a greater freedom, from the kingdom of darkness into His kingdom of light.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Enslaved to Sin

Because of the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, all of humanity has inherited a sin nature that inclines them toward sin and rebellion. Human beings are enslaved to sin (Rom. 6:5), continually living with the propensity to transgress God's commandments whenever possible. It isn't until one experiences salvation through the work of Christ that he or she is able to overcome sin's enslavement, through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:2).

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- ▶ How does it comfort you to know that God sees every sinful deed done against you? How does it challenge you to know that God sees every sinful deed you have done against someone else?
- ▶ How does it encourage you to know that God hears the cries of the oppressed? How can we make sure we pay attention to injustice and oppression in our world so that God can work through us?
- ▶ What are some areas where you feel unqualified or unable to do what God has called you to do? How does God's presence and His promise enable you to keep trying?
- ▶ What fears prevent you from speaking on God's behalf? How can faith in God's promised redemption help you overcome these excuses?

HIS STORY
God's Story of Redemption, through His Son, Jesus Christ.

THE WILDERNESS
GOD'S WAY TO BRING HIS PEOPLE INTO THE PROMISED LAND.

THE GOLDEN CALF
HOW SINNERS REJECT GOD.

YOUR STORY

Intended for group and/or personal use, the Your Story section is designed to connect what God has done in the past to the present. As you discuss and answer these questions, you'll begin to realize that what God was doing in the lives of these biblical characters easily connects with life today.

YOUR MISSION

Also intended for group and/or personal use, the Your Mission section is designed to show how God's Story is capable of creating lasting transformation into how we think, feel, and live from this day forward. It is intended to show that every session goes beyond mere Bible study to a calling to be on mission with God in this world.

YOUR MISSION

HEAD

When Moses encountered God, the Scripture says Moses "hid his face." Why? It's because Moses was in the presence of the Holy One. We should understand Moses' fear. We should also maintain a sense of reverence before God. However, as believers we don't have to hide from God in fear because of the work of Christ. We are hidden in Him! We can seek God with confidence because of Christ.

- What are some ways we can increase our sense of reverence for God?
- What is the difference between being "terrified" by God and being "awed" by God?

HEART

It's important for believers to see our potential through God's eyes. In God's response to Moses (Ex. 4:11-12), He told Moses to rely upon His power. If God gives us the ability to see and speak, why could He not give Moses the power to speak before Pharaoh?

- What are some other excuses Moses could have offered for not following God's plan? What excuses have you used for not following God's plan?
- What is one way you sense God calling you to serve Him? Are you willing to depend on God and not on your own abilities to see it through? Explain.

HANDS

When talking to Moses (Ex. 3:1-6), God explains that He is going to save His people from something (slavery), for something (ownership and witness). In the same way, Paul tells the Ephesians that's exactly what has happened to those who trust in Jesus (Eph. 2:1-10). According to Paul, Christians have been saved from wrath, and for good works.

- Why should the grace of God motivate us toward good works?
- How can you demonstrate this week the truth that God has saved you from slavery to sin and to be a witness of His great grace and mercy?

14 Session 1

FROM THE EDITORS



Ed Stetzer

General Editor
The Gospel Project
President, LifeWay
Research

Who is Yahweh? Perhaps you think this a strange question, especially in this context, but for every person who has a knowledge of God through faith in Jesus Christ, there are countless more who echo Pharaoh's words: "Who is the LORD that I should obey his voice?...I do not know the LORD" (Ex. 5:2). And God is not content with this situation; nor should we be.

In Genesis, God revealed Himself as the Creator and a Covenant-Maker. In Exodus through Deuteronomy, God reveals Himself—to Pharaoh, the Egyptians, and the Israelites—to be a Redeemer and a Lawgiver. Whether through displays of His power or communication of His law, God's concern was that the whole world would know "I am the LORD." There is no other God!

Nor is there another Savior than the One sent to redeem those who believe. You see, as grand as the story of the exodus is—and it is a great and awesome historical account of God fulfilling His covenant and bringing His people out of slavery in Egypt—as great as it is, it is still but a picture foreshadowing the even greater reality that One would come to free people from their slavery to sin and death! So, experience the ground-shaking account of Yahweh redeeming His people, but recognize the earth-shaking redemption from sin that comes through faith in Jesus Christ and proclaim His freedom to the captives.



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books, including
*Gospel-Centered
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Clear Winter Nights: A
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What Comes After*

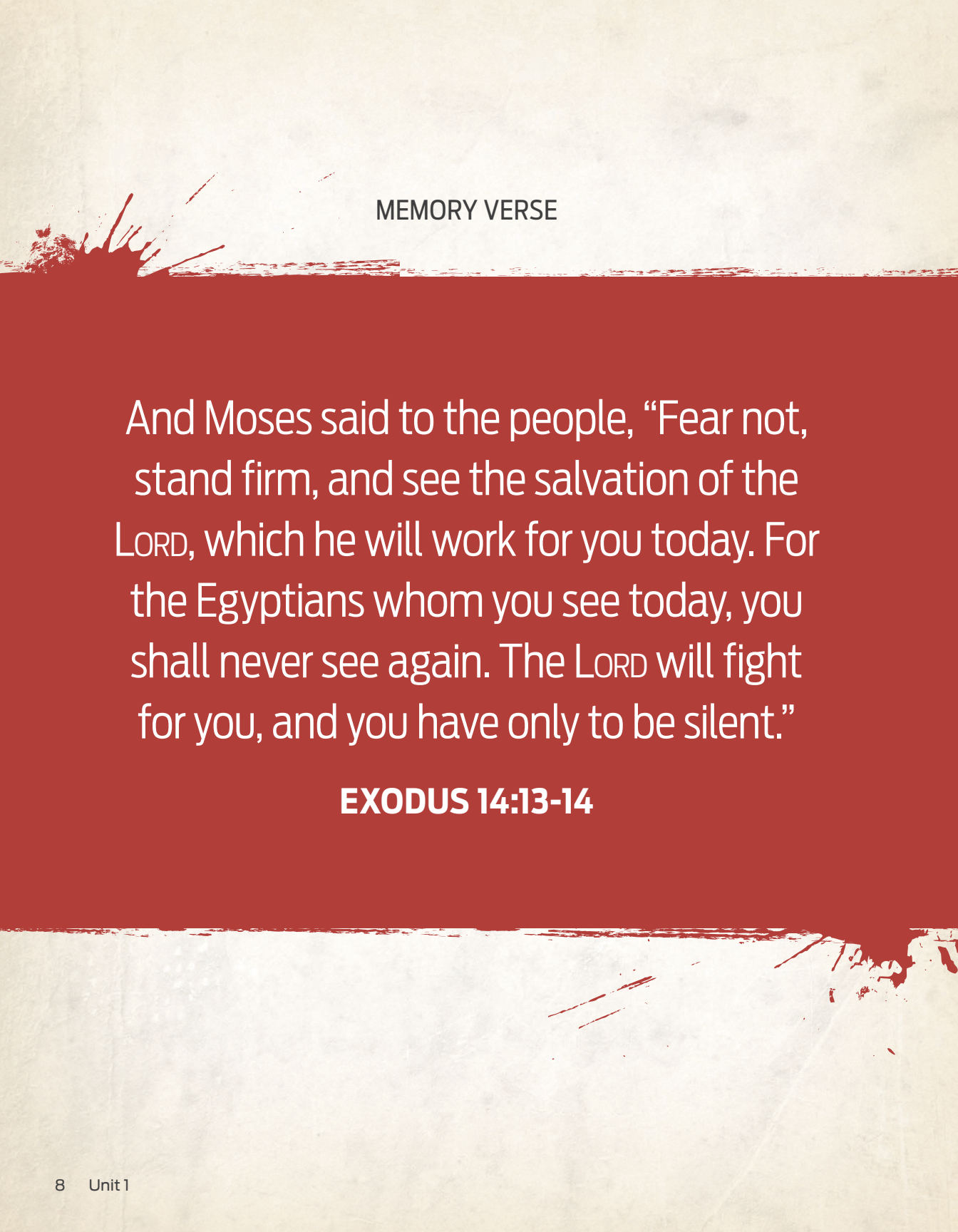
When I was a kid, I wanted to memorize more than just Bible verses. I wanted to memorize whole books of the Bible. I remember, around the age of 8, deciding I would memorize the Book of Exodus. Epic fail. I only got a few verses in before giving up. But looking back, it's not surprising that I would choose Exodus. Here was the story of Moses and his own deliverance and transformation into a deliverer to lead his people out of slavery. The story fascinated me as a kid, and it captures me still today.

Exodus (and the rest of the books of law) shines a spotlight on God as the Redeemer. Anytime in the New Testament we come across the words redeem or redemption, we ought to think back to God's redemptive work in Exodus. This is the pivotal moment in Israel's history that anchors the rest of the biblical storyline and provides the framework for our understanding of God's ultimate work of redemption in Jesus Christ. As you and your group work through these fundamental plot points of the Old Testament (the exodus, the Red Sea, the golden calf, the giving of the law, the tabernacle), I hope you'll not only be swept up in the drama of each story but that you'll also grow in gratitude for what they teach us about God, His salvation, and His mission to save His people to be a light to the world.

UNIT 1

God the Redeemer

EXODUS 2–17; 32



MEMORY VERSE

And Moses said to the people, “Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the LORD, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. The LORD will fight for you, and you have only to be silent.”

EXODUS 14:13-14

01

SESSION ONE

God Hears His People

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 2:23–3:15,16-17

THE POINT

God sees the suffering of the oppressed and promises redemption.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Moses:** biblical patriarch; chosen by God to lead His people out of captivity and to the promised land

PLOT

In Exodus 1:8, we read that the new king over Egypt dealt harshly with the Israelites. As a result, Joseph's family was brought under political slavery (1:8-10), economic slavery (1:11-14), social slavery (1:15-22), and spiritual slavery (3:18; 4:22-23; 5:8). As a result, they desperately needed get out of Egypt.

Exodus means “a going out” or “departure.” This book of the Bible provides the historical account of God's deliverance of His people from Egypt's cruel slavery. As we embark on our journey through the exodus story, let's make sure to allow the narrative to captivate and challenge us. We shouldn't see it as a story from distant past, but as an eternally important and practically relevant story for our lives.

HIS STORY

GOD HEARS THE PRAYERS OF THE OPPRESSED

In chapter 2, we read about Moses' birth (vv. 1-10), his growth (vv. 11-15), and his flight from Egypt (vv. 15-22). The story continues in verse 23 with a new king ruling Egypt. Despite this change in government, slavery remained intense. As a result, Israel groaned and cried out for help.

When the people cried out, God heard them. God also saw their oppression, and the writer says that God took notice of the situation (2:24-25). God heard. God saw. God knew. God's attentive nature is revealed throughout Scripture. God's people can cry out to their God and trust that He hears them and cares about their situation.

Exodus 2:23-25

During those many days the king of Egypt died, and the people of Israel groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob. God saw the people of Israel—and God knew.

- Who are some famous or semi-famous people you've met? Does knowing about someone or meeting that person once mean that you know him or her? Why or why not?



MOSES SPEAKS TO GOD

God reveals Himself to Moses and promises redemption.



GOD'S GLORY IS REVEALED

God displays His glory among all the peoples.

GOD RESPONDS TO THOSE IN NEED

Moses wasn't eager to go on this mission. In their dialogue, Moses made several excuses for not obeying God's call. But God responded to each of Moses' excuses and questions with statements about His own sovereignty and power.

Moses' first argument was about himself. "Who am I?" (3:11), he asked. He felt insufficient. He essentially asked, "Have you considered my resume? For the last 40 years, I've been in a wilderness." Stop and think about it. Even though he was once a prince, Moses is now a humble shepherd. God asks this shepherd to confront the most powerful person in the world and tell him to let his slaves go free. This would be sort of like an average blue-collar worker declaring war on a president of a major country. Can you imagine your plumber declaring war on Russia?

Moses was an average guy, and alone he didn't have great influence. Yet God responded to Moses by revealing what was most important: Himself. God said, "I will be with you" (3:12a). Throughout the Bible this is what God's leaders need in order to lead: God's presence. It's the non-negotiable for serving God. Think about Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Gideon, Jehoshaphat, and the disciples. (See Matt. 28:18-20.) God was with them all.

Exodus 3:11-14

But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?" He said, "But I will be with you, and this shall be the sign for you, that I have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain." Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"



JUDGE AND SAVIOR

Even in the midst of His judgment, God provides a means of salvation.



THE RED SEA

God continues to provide for His people by parting the Red Sea.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Enslaved to Sin

Because of the fall of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, all of humanity has inherited a sin nature that inclines them toward sin and rebellion. Human beings are enslaved to sin (Rom. 6:17), continually living with the propensity to transgress God's commandments whenever possible. It isn't until one experiences salvation through the work of Christ that he or she is able to overcome sin's enslavement through the power of the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:2).

CHRIST CONNECTION

At the beginning of our story, we see Moses leading his father-in-law's flock. The fact that Moses is a shepherd is significant. Egyptians didn't think highly at all of shepherds (see Gen. 46:34), and yet there is an important pattern of shepherding throughout all of Scripture.

Whether it is Moses who spent forty years as a shepherd in Midian, or the shepherd David who was taken from the sheepfolds to become king, it is clear that God loves to use shepherds! God even refers to Himself as a shepherd (Ps. 23:1). And ultimately, salvation would come through Jesus, whom the Bible calls the Good Shepherd, the one who lays down His life for his sheep (John 10:11).

As we see in this story, the plan is in place. God responds to His people's suffering by revealing His promise of redemption to the reluctant shepherd-mediator, Moses. And here we look forward through the Scriptures to Jesus, the great I Am who gives us an even greater revelation of God's goodness and righteousness. He is the Good Shepherd, who would lay down His life for His sheep, in order to lead us out of a greater slavery into a greater freedom, from the kingdom of darkness into His kingdom of light.



THE WILDERNESS

Israel is to walk in faith and follow after God on their way to the promised land.



THE GOLDEN CALF

Israel commits idolatry against God.

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- ▶ **How does it comfort you to know that God sees every sinful deed done against you? How does it challenge you to know that God sees every sinful deed you have done against someone else?**

- ▶ **How does it encourage you to know that God hears the cries of the oppressed? How can we make sure we pay attention to injustice and oppression in our world so that God can work through us?**

- ▶ **What are some areas where you feel unqualified or unable to do what God has called you to do? How does God's presence and His promise enable you to keep trying?**

- ▶ **What fears prevent you from speaking on God's behalf? How can faith in God's promised redemption help you overcome these excuses?**

HIS STORY

*God's Story of
Redemption, through
His Son, Jesus Christ.*

YOUR STORY

*Where your story
meets His.*

YOUR MISSION



HEAD

When Moses encountered God, the Scripture says Moses “hid his face.” Why? It’s because Moses was in the presence of the Holy One. We should understand Moses’ fear. We should also maintain a sense of reverence before God. However, as believers we don’t have to hide from God in fear because of the work of Christ. We are hidden in Him! We can seek God with confidence because of Christ.

- What are some ways we can increase our sense of reverence for God?
- What is the difference between being “terrified” by God and being “awed” by God?



HEART

It’s important for believers to see our potential through God’s eyes. In God’s response to Moses (Ex. 4:11-12), He told Moses to rely upon His power. If God gives us the ability to see and speak, why could He not give Moses the power to speak before Pharaoh?

- What are some other excuses Moses could have offered for not following God’s plan? What excuses have you used for not following God’s plan?
- What is one way you sense God calling you to serve Him? Are you willing to depend on God and not on your own abilities to see it through? Explain.



HANDS

When talking to Moses (Ex. 3:1-10), God explains that He is going to save His people from something (slavery), for something (worship and witness). In the same way, Paul tells the Ephesians that’s exactly what has happened to those who trust in Jesus (Eph. 2:1-10). According to Paul, Christians have been saved from wrath, and for good works.

- Why should the grace of God motivate us toward good works?
- How can you demonstrate this week the truth that God has saved you from slavery to sin and to be a witness of His great grace and mercy?

02

SESSION TWO

The Sending of the Plagues

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 6:2-9; 7:14-18

THE POINT

God demonstrates His glory by comforting His people and confronting those who oppose Him.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Moses:** biblical patriarch; chosen by God to lead His people out of captivity and to the promised land
- **Pharaoh:** ruler over Egypt

PLOT

In the previous session, we saw how God not only hears the cries of His people, but He responds by promising redemption. God has not forgotten the promises He made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. He is still unfolding His plan of redemption that began in the garden and would one day make all things right. God has chosen Israel to play a significant role in that redemption—to be the corridor by which all other nations will be blessed. And He will see to it that Israel is delivered not only for their good and joy, but for His glory as well.

In this session, we see God's glory and grace through the unleashing of the plagues against Pharaoh and the false gods of Egypt. And through it all, we learn that God has unrivaled supremacy. He alone is God, and He alone is worthy of all praise and glory.

HIS STORY

Exodus 6:2-8

God spoke to Moses and said to him, "I am the LORD. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by my name the LORD I did not make myself known to them. I also established my covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered my covenant. Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.'"

GOD COMFORTS HIS PEOPLE

In the previous session, we saw how God commissioned Moses and his brother, Aaron, to deliver a message to Pharaoh on behalf of the Israelites. As Moses and Aaron encounter Pharaoh, we see God reassuring Moses that He is in control (Ex. 6:1). Then God comforts Moses by giving several promises.

- **Make a list of the promises of God in this passage. What promises do you think would have been most meaningful to the Israelites?**
-
-

Promises provide us with hope of what is to come. In the midst of darkness, promises remind us of the glory of God. Here, we find that God gave Moses several awesome reminders.

Consider these four "I will" statements: God says: (1) "I will deliver you" (Ex. 6:6a); (2) "I will redeem you" (6:6b); (3) "I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God" (6:7); and (4) "I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob" (6:8). These four statements highlight God's work of salvation.



GOD'S GLORY IS REVEALED

God displays His glory among all the peoples.



JUDGE AND SAVIOR

Even in the midst of His judgment, God provides a means of salvation.

GOD CONFRONTS THOSE WHO OPPOSE HIM

Despite these amazing promises in chapter 6, Moses and the people still struggle to believe God's plan. (See 6:9-13,26-30.) In 6:10-13, God told Moses to go back to Pharaoh, yet Moses' response was one of unbelief and despair. Moses responded to God with confusion. He couldn't understand how Pharaoh would listen if the Israelites wouldn't even listen. But once again, God charged Moses and Aaron to go confront Pharaoh and finish the mission.

In addition to comforting His people, we now get to see another way that God revealed His glory: by confronting false gods. The following chapters reveal God's judgment on the Egyptians through a series of severe plagues. Today someone may look at these plagues and say, "Are you kidding me? This scene is bizarre! Is God a cosmic jerk? Is he trying to annoy the Egyptians?" Or they might be tempted to say, "This is silly and hard to believe."

It's certainly strange and severe. But we must understand that there's something bigger going on than what we see at first glance. God is judging not only the Egyptians, but also the gods of Egypt. In Exodus 12:12, God says that he is going to perform the last sign, the death of the firstborn, and in so doing he is executing judgment "on all the gods of Egypt." This is also repeated in Numbers: "On their gods also the LORD executed judgments" (33:4b).

Exodus 7:14-18

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hardened; he refuses to let the people go. Go to Pharaoh in the morning, as he is going out to the water. Stand on the bank of the Nile to meet him, and take in your hand the staff that turned into a serpent. And you shall say to him, 'The LORD, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let my people go, that they may serve me in the wilderness. But so far, you have not obeyed." Thus says the LORD, "By this you shall know that I am the LORD: behold, with the staff that is in my hand I will strike the water that is in the Nile, and it shall turn into blood. The fish in the Nile shall die, and the Nile will stink, and the Egyptians will grow weary of drinking water from the Nile."'"



THE RED SEA

God continues to provide for His people by parting the Red Sea.



THE WILDERNESS

Israel is to walk in faith and follow after God on their way to the promised land.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Miracles

A miracle is an event in which God makes an exception to the natural order of things, or supersedes the natural laws, for the purpose of demonstrating His glory and/or validating His message. Miracles are recorded throughout Scripture; miraculous signs and wonders were oftentimes evident when a prophet or an apostle was speaking God's message to the people.

CHRIST CONNECTION

The truths we see in this Old Testament story are taught in the New Testament as well. For instance, Paul said that Jesus “gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age” (Gal. 1:4). Spiritually, God sets us free from slavery and our inability to keep the law through the mediator, Jesus Christ. This occurs only by grace through faith; we haven’t earned this. The purpose of our release, like the Israelites, is worship.

**TRUE FAITH AND SUFFERING
FREQUENTLY GO HAND IN HAND...
LIVING FOR CHRIST, WALKING IN HIS
WAY, WILL NOT BE AN EASY PATH.**

Billy Graham



THE GOLDEN CALF
Israel commits idolatry against God.



**THE
COMMANDMENTS
(PART I)**
God gives Israel instructions on how to relate to Him.

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

▶ **Why is it easy to put our trust in things we can see (money, homes, people, etc.)? Why is it more difficult to rely on the One who is invisible?**

▶ **When was the last time you were discouraged by God's timing or lack of intervention in a difficult situation? What truths about God helped you through this time?**

▶ **Why should God's deliverance in our lives lead us to genuine worship?**

▶ **What are the false gods our society turns to for security?**

HIS STORY

*God's Story of
Redemption, through
His Son, Jesus Christ.*

YOUR STORY

*Where your story
meets His.*

YOUR MISSION

HEAD

When you think about it, God could have obliterated Pharaoh at a moment's notice, but He didn't. God's ways aren't our ways. There are things that happen and timing of events that may not make sense to us, but in the end put God's glory on full display. This means that even in our confusion and sometimes disappointment, God's ways are just and good, and they inevitably benefit us in the end.

- Share of a time when you felt disappointed and questioned God's ways and goodness.
- How can this session help alter the way you view those disappointing times?

HEART

In Exodus 7, the text says on a few occasions that Pharaoh's heart was hardened (vv. 14,22), which consequently prevented him from listening to the word of the Lord. Instead of allowing the series of plagues to convince him to release the Israelites, Pharaoh continued to resist the word of the Lord, and therefore became more hardened as a result. Eventually, God gave him over to the hardening of his own heart, which eventually resulted in his own death.

- How is it that sin causes us to turn our hearts from God and His Word?
- What are some ways we can guard our hearts from being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin?

HANDS

Like Moses and Aaron, God calls us to war against the powers of this world that keep people in bondage to sin and suffering. These powers might be things from our own fear of rejection or failure in our abilities to putting our trust in cultural messages that promise happiness in sinful pleasures that ultimately can't deliver.

- When have you, like Moses, felt that God was asking you to do something you couldn't do?
- How can resting in God's promises and trusting His sovereignty help you be obedient to Him?

03

SESSION THREE

The Passover Lamb

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 11:4-8; 12:1-13,29-32

THE POINT

Even in His righteous judgment, God offers salvation through the sacrifice of a substitute.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Moses:** biblical patriarch; chosen by God to lead His people out of captivity and to the promised land
- **Pharaoh:** ruler over Egypt

PLOT

In the previous sessions we saw God response to Pharaoh's refusal to let His people go. However, the plagues God sent only served to harden Pharaoh's heart even more. By now, nine plagues have passed and Pharaoh has still refused to part with the Hebrew people. As we will see, this refusal to listen to God would cost him something very dear in the end.

In this session we take a look at the tenth and final plague, the one that started the Passover tradition. The Passover story gives us a beautiful picture of both God's judgment and God's salvation. We see the severity of God's judgment as He warns and then unleashes judgment upon the Egyptians. We see the beauty of His grace as He provides a substitute in order to protect His people from His wrath and free them to worship Him with full and grateful hearts. As God's "passed-over" people, we now celebrate His salvation with joy.

HIS STORY

GOD WARNS OF JUDGMENT

The first nine plagues had wreaked havoc on the Egyptians, and God had manifested His glory in unleashing judgment upon the empire that stood against Him and His people. One final plague remained—one that would be worse than all the others. And through Moses, God chose to warn Pharaoh of the judgment to come.

Exodus 11:4-6

So Moses said, "Thus says the LORD: About midnight I will go out in the midst of Egypt, and every firstborn in the land of Egypt shall die, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sits on his throne, even to the firstborn of the slave girl who is behind the handmill, and all the firstborn of the cattle. There shall be a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there has never been, nor ever will be again."

- List some techniques your parents used when you were younger (or still use) to warn you that you were about to get into trouble? (for example: count to three; call you by your middle name; etc.) What did it take for your parents to get your attention?

- What warnings might we receive from God today when we refuse to listen to His instruction? What does it take for God to get your attention?



JUDGE AND SAVIOR

Even in the midst of His judgment, God provides a means of salvation.



THE RED SEA

God continues to provide for His people by parting the Red Sea.

GOD OFFERS PROTECTION THROUGH A SACRIFICE

In Exodus 12:6-7 we see what was to happen to this unblemished lamb. It was to be killed at twilight. The slain lamb would be a vivid reminder to everyone that all deserve judgment. (See Rom. 3:23.) Consequently, a blameless life had to be sacrificed in the place of the guilty people who needed salvation. The blood of the lamb was to be applied to their doorposts (v. 7). The obedience of placing the blood on their doorposts showed that they believed God would keep His word and pass over, sparing that house from judgment. So, Israel escaped judgment through this sacrifice, and salvation was accomplished by faith in the work of the substitute. The blood on their doors served as a sign that judgment had already fallen at that house. Just as the plagues were a sign to Egypt of God's justice and judgment, now the Passover was a sign of God's mercy to Israel.

Thus, we see God continue to keep the promise of Genesis 3:15 and the Abrahamic covenant. In the midst of looming judgment, God provided. He protected Israel from slavery and death for future salvation. In accomplishing this, He said, "And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt." (v. 13). God accepted the blood of the sacrifice and passed over their sin.

Exodus 12:5-7,12-13

Your lamb shall be without blemish, a male a year old. You may take it from the sheep or from the goats, and you shall keep it until the fourteenth day of this month, when the whole assembly of the congregation of Israel shall kill their lambs at twilight. "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it on the two doorposts and the lintel of the houses in which they eat it. [...] For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt."



THE WILDERNESS

Israel is to walk in faith and follow after God on their way to the promised land.



THE GOLDEN CALF

Israel commits idolatry against God.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Sin and Death

The ultimate consequence for sin is death—physical death, spiritual death, and eternal death (Rom. 6:23). God was clear to Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden that if they ate from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they would surely die (Gen. 2:17). The type of death that would result from the fall in the garden of Eden wasn't only physical death, but spiritual death—separation from God.

CHRIST CONNECTION

This need for a perfect sacrifice reminds us of our own state. We, being corrupted by our sin, cannot save ourselves. Our good works are like the blemished lamb—unworthy before a holy God. We need one who serves as a substitute on our behalf. Jesus is the Lamb for the household of God. Only through faith in Him are our sins covered. He alone is our hope. Paul says, “For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed” (1 Cor. 5:7b).

Similarly, those who have been born again have Christ's blood covering them. God sees Christ's blood on us and passes over our sin. He forgives our trespasses and accepts Christ's righteousness as our own.

“TRUE, CHRIST DIED FOR OUR SINS AS A SACRIFICE, AND AS A PRIEST HE SPRINKLETH WITH HIS BLOOD THE MERCY SEAT.”

John Bunyan



THE COMMANDMENTS (PART I)

God gives Israel instructions on how to relate to Him.



THE COMMANDMENTS (PART II)

God Gives Israel instructions on how to relate to others.

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- ▶ **Why was it important for the sacrificial lamb to be spotless? What did being spotless signify?**

- ▶ **The blood on the door was a public statement for all to see. How does this influence the way we think of our Christian faith? What characteristics should distinguish your life from the lives of others?**

- ▶ **What does the Passover event communicate about our sin?**

- ▶ **How has this session challenged you when thinking about God's judgment and grace?**

HIS STORY

*God's Story of
Redemption, through
His Son, Jesus Christ.*

YOUR STORY

*Where your story
meets His.*

YOUR MISSION



HEAD

This story causes us to remember the severity and mercy of God. When we think about it, we all will have to admit that we deserve this kind of judgment. We are all like Pharaoh. Some think they will never be judged. They think that they can spend their life piling up pyramids full of stuff, chasing fame, and refusing to bow down to the true God. Sadly, they will end up much like Pharaoh unless they look to God alone for mercy.

- Why do you think God gave Pharaoh advance notice of the coming plague instead of simply unleashing His wrath? What “advance notice” has God given humanity regarding His judgment?
- How should the severity of God’s judgment and the magnitude of His mercy affect the way we live?



HEART

In Exodus 12:27b-28, notice the people’s reaction to the Passover instructions: worship and obedience. They “bowed their heads and worshiped. Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.” This theme of worship and obedience runs right through Exodus. By remembering who God is and what He has done, they give God praise and obedience.

- What is the connection between our worship of the Lamb and our witness to the gospel?
- Share of a time when you responded in obedience as a result of God’s goodness in your life.



HANDS

God calls us to warn others of His coming judgment and to offer the good news of salvation through Jesus, the substitute Lamb.

- Do you find it difficult to talk about coming judgment? If so, why?
- What difference does it make in talking about judgment knowing that Jesus bears the wrath of judgment in our place through faith in Him?

04

SESSION FOUR

The Waters are Parted

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 13:17-22; 14:1-14,21-31

THE POINT

God protects His people and brings judgment upon those who oppose Him.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Moses:** biblical patriarch; chosen by God to lead His people out of captivity and to the promised land
- **Pharaoh:** ruler over Egypt

PLOT

As we continue our journey through the story, we see God's people exiting Egypt only to be caught between a rock and a hard place. In this session, we see what happened to the children of Israel as they left Egypt and crossed the Red Sea. Once again, God demonstrates His worthiness and strength as He delivers His people from the armies of Pharaoh.

HIS STORY

GOD GUIDES HIS PEOPLE

Notice Israel didn't exit by the way of the sea, though it was the quickest route. They would have arrived in less than two weeks instead of forty years! That was the shortest way, but not the best way. There were enemies in that direction, and Israel was not ready for battle.

The text says, "Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt" (Ex. 13:17). They would have turned back to Pharaoh at the first sign of trouble. Even though they left "equipped for battle" (v. 18), this doesn't mean they were ready to fight. Later in their journey, once they reached Canaan and saw how big their enemies were, they said, "Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt" (Num. 14:4).

God's route wasn't an easy route. They would spend 40 years in the wilderness, and soon they would be hemmed in between the Red Sea and Pharaoh's army. God planned to teach them many things on this journey; He had other purposes in mind, involving much more than moving them from point A to point B.

Exodus 13:17-18

When Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although that was near. For God said, "Lest the people change their minds when they see war and return to Egypt." But God led the people around by the way of the wilderness toward the Red Sea. And the people of Israel went up out of the land of Egypt equipped for battle.



THE RED SEA

God continues to provide for His people by parting the Red Sea.



THE WILDERNESS

Israel is to walk in faith and follow after God on their way to the promised land.

GOD PROTECTS HIS PEOPLE

As the story continues, we see how Pharaoh pursued God's people just as God said he would (vv. 5-9). Even though Pharaoh thought he had a good military strategy, he was actually fulfilling the purposes of God. As Pharaoh pursued Israel, he would have used the best of chariots. Egypt had all the modern military advantages. Surely they thought the Israelites would be defeated. Pharaoh was probably singing victory songs before the battle began. But he was wrong.

According to verse 10, when Israel saw the Egyptians, they were afraid. No surprise here! The Egyptians were superior soldiers. They had "weapons of mass destruction" so to speak. But what was the real problem? Israel had forgotten that it was God who brought them to this place. They needed only to fear God and trust in His love.

- **Do you usually react like the Israelites when your circumstances become difficult?**

- **Why do you think we are so quick to stress out and whine when life gets tough?**

Exodus 14:1-4

Then the LORD said to Moses, "Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, 'They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.' And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the LORD." And they did so.

GOD JUDGES THOSE WHO OPPOSE HIM

Through the end of chapter 14, we find one of the most important stories in the Bible: the crossing of the Red Sea. God will get His people out of Egypt through the miracle of parting the sea, and He's going to judge the Egyptians by swallowing them up in the sea.



THE GOLDEN CALF
Israel commits idolatry against God.



THE COMMANDMENTS (PART I)
God gives Israel instructions on how to relate to Him.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

People of God

Scripture describes the church as the people of God (2 Cor. 6:16). Comprised of both Jew and Gentile, the church is created by God through the atoning death of Christ.

Moses obeyed the instruction God gave him (v. 21). But think about these instructions: Pharaoh was coming, the people were complaining, and God essentially said, “Hold out your stick, and I will part the waters!” Why? Once again the theme of God’s glory is repeated: “I will get glory over Pharaoh” (see 14:17-18). It may have sounded foolish, but Moses obeyed.

Exodus 14:21-23

Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east wind all night and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided. And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left. The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Just as Moses led his people through the waters of judgment to the other side, those who are in Christ will pass through the waters of death to the other side safely because of His mighty resurrection. This is what baptism represents: passing from death to life. In baptism we are saying, “I have died with Christ, I have been buried with Him, and I have been raised with Him!”

The true story of the exodus provides a picture of what has happened to us in salvation and in the Christian life:

1. We are saved from bondage.
2. We are saved by grace.
3. We are saved through a mediator.



THE COMMANDMENTS (PART II)

God Gives Israel instructions on how to relate to others.



THE TABERNACLE

The tabernacle is built so that God may dwell among His people.

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- ▶ **Why is it sometimes difficult to trust God's guidance? What are some things we learn as we walk by faith in God's guidance?**

- ▶ **When have you been able to look back on your life and see how God has guided you? How does looking at God's guidance in the past increase your confidence in His future guidance?**

- ▶ **How do we give glory to God by obeying His instructions even when we don't understand His purpose?**

- ▶ **In what ways is the complaining of the Israelites like holding a mirror up to our own hearts?**

HIS STORY

*God's Story of
Redemption, through
His Son, Jesus Christ.*

YOUR STORY

*Where your story
meets His.*

YOUR MISSION



HEAD

The reality of judgment and salvation are clear in Exodus 14:30-31. Imagine the scene—bodies washed on the shore, giving a dreadful picture of unrepentant people. The waters of judgment had come down on those who refused to believe. In contrast, on the other side we see the happy picture of believers who have been saved from the waters of judgment. They were delivered by grace through faith.

- In what ways have you seen the power of God after waiting a long time for Him to act?
- Why do you think it is important that God's saving actions on our behalf demonstrate our weakness and His strength?



HEART

In Exodus 15, God's people sing, which is how a saved people should respond. If Israel sang with all their hearts over this salvation, how much more should we who have received a greater deliverance through Jesus? We praise what we prize. Do you prize your Savior?

- How has God's work of grace and mercy in your life led you to praise Him?
- How does the temptation to sin still affect our hearts even after we are redeemed?



HANDS

Treasuring Jesus for His work of salvation will inevitably lead to a love for others and a desire to see them come to know Jesus in a saving way. It is what fuels obedience to Jesus' command to share with others the good news of what He has done, so that they, too, may come to praise Him and bring Him glory.

- Why do you think a love for God naturally leads to a desire to make Him known to others?
- How has this session challenged you to live differently?

05

SESSION FIVE

Tested In the Wilderness

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 17:1-7; 1 Corinthians 10:1-6

THE POINT

God's goodness is shown through His sustaining grace toward His people.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Moses:** biblical patriarch; chosen by God to lead His people out of captivity and to the promised land

PLOT

By this point in the story, the people of God have witnessed some miraculous defeats against the bondage and strength of Pharaoh and his armies. With all of that now behind them, the people find themselves in a period and place in time waiting to take possession of the land promised to their forefathers. Yet in this period of waiting, God still has some things He wants to teach His people, things that will continually shape them into the type of people God is calling them to be.

HIS STORY

GOD'S PEOPLE COMPLAIN

As the Israelites move on, this time at “Rephidim,” they have no water. But instead of trusting and seeking God, they “quarrel” and “grumble” against Moses (Ex. 17:2-3). Because of this, Moses named the place “Massah and Meribah,” which means testing and quarreling. (See also Ps. 95.) Instead of trusting God, they were testing God.

This sinful entitlement attitude was expressed in two ways. First, they demanded water. “Give us water to drink,” Israel said (v. 2a). The text highlights their attitude. They weren’t coming in humility asking for water, but were acting like spoiled kids.

This was a sad pattern for Israel. They grumbled under Pharaoh (Ex. 2:23). They grumbled at the Red Sea (14:11-12). They grumbled at Marah (15:23-24). They grumbled about their leaders (16:2-3; 17:3-4; also Num. 11). God had just turned bitter water into sweet water and had sent bread from heaven, yet they still complain here at Rephidim.

Exodus 17:1-2

All the congregation of the people of Israel moved on from the wilderness of Sin by stages, according to the commandment of the LORD, and camped at Rephidim, but there was no water for the people to drink. Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?”



THE WILDERNESS
Israel is to walk in faith and follow after God on their way to the promised land.



THE GOLDEN CALF
Israel commits idolatry against God.

GOD'S PEOPLE QUESTION HIS GOODNESS

Next, we see Israel questioning God's goodness (Ex. 17:3). "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" they asked. They were beginning to question their entire deliverance from Egypt. Was the purpose of their liberation for death in a wilderness? Of course not! There was no need to question God's provision.

God didn't redeem Israel to then forsake them. God redeems, and God provides. As believers, we should remember that God has brought us through a greater exodus. And if God would provide the solution for our greatest problem (through Christ's death and resurrection), then we have no reason to question His goodness or doubt His faithfulness when facing our day-to-day problems. God is good. Believe it.

Exodus 17:3-4

But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?" So Moses cried to the LORD, "What shall I do with this people? They are almost ready to stone me."

- **Have you ever questioned God's goodness? Explain.**

- **We all grumble and complain. How does adding the words "against the Lord" after "grumble" or "complain" change our view of this attitude?**

- **What does grumbling about our circumstances say about our heart's posture toward God?**



THE COMMANDMENTS (PART I)

God gives Israel instructions on how to relate to Him.



THE COMMANDMENTS (PART II)

God Gives Israel instructions on how to relate to others.

GOD HAS MERCY AND PROVIDES FOR HIS PEOPLE

Moses knew that what made Israel distinct was God's presence among them. Moses proclaimed that they could not move one step without God. What distinguished Israel wasn't their land (they didn't have it yet). It wasn't their wealth (they had been slaves). It wasn't their culture (it wasn't fully developed yet). What distinguished them? It was that God was with them.

Once again, God's presence was manifested to the people in a remarkable way. Look at Exodus 17:5-7 to see how God solved this particular water problem.

Exodus 17:5-7

And the LORD said to Moses, "Pass on before the people, taking with you some of the elders of Israel, and take in your hand the staff with which you struck the Nile, and go. Behold, I will stand before you there on the rock at Horeb, and you shall strike the rock, and water shall come out of it, and the people will drink." And Moses did so, in the sight of the elders of Israel. And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the LORD by saying, "Is the LORD among us or not?"

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Sin as Missing the Mark

One aspect of sin is missing the mark of God's standards set for humanity. Missing the mark isn't simply making a mistake, but consciously choosing to sin and falling short of God's glory as a result.

CHRIST CONNECTION

In this "rock experience," Paul says that this story points to Christ who is the Rock that was stricken for our salvation. When Paul says, "that rock was Christ" (v. 4), I take this to mean that the rock was a type of Christ. Moses struck the rock instead of striking the people, and water flowed to save people. Jesus, the Rock, was stricken for our salvation. Instead of striking us, God struck the Son. Like the rock, when He was stricken water flowed from His side (John 19:34). He died the death we deserved to die. Now, we drink from the water of life for eternal life (John 7:37-38). By believing in Jesus, we drink from the ultimate saving water.



THE TABERNACLE

The tabernacle is built so that God may dwell among His people.



ATONEMENT SACRIFICES (PART I)

The burnt, grain, and fellowship offerings are explained.

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- ▶ **When was the last time you grumbled about a situation you were in? How is grumbling related to a sense of entitlement?**

- ▶ **Do difficult circumstances cause us to have wrong attitudes and actions, or do they merely reveal wrong attitudes of the heart? Explain.**

- ▶ **God intended to train and form His people during their years in the wilderness. In what ways might God be training you as you walk through difficult times?**

- ▶ **Can you think of a parallel between God's provision of water for complaining Israel and a specific provision He has made for you when you were grumbling? How did God's provision affect your attitude?**

HIS STORY

*God's Story of
Redemption, through
His Son, Jesus Christ.*

YOUR STORY

*Where your story
meets His.*

YOUR MISSION



HEAD

When most people question God's goodness, it is oftentimes the result of a difficult time in their life. However, Christians, knowing that God is good and is working for our ultimate joy in Him, rest in the fact that God is shaping us into the image of Christ (Rom. 8:28-29), and this process often involves trying times (Jas. 1:3; Rom. 5:3-4). God knows exactly what it will take for us to become more like Jesus in the way we live.

- How can Jesus' suffering and death on the cross encourage you during difficult times?
- What is the greatest thing God could ever do for us?



HEART

Grumbling and complaining are symptoms of a deeper problem taking place within the heart. When desires run rampant and turn into demands within our hearts, sin takes root and begins to produce grumbling behavior within our lives (Jas. 4:1).

- Think about the last time you grumbled and complained. What demands have you created in your heart to cause you to respond that way?
- How has this session challenged you to address the grumbling in your own life?



HANDS

The Rock, Jesus, was stricken for our salvation, but we can't keep this good news to ourselves. We must tell everyone about the Living Water. We can offer a lot of good things to the world, and so we should. The world needs clean water, food, and clothing. And while we offer these things, let's also make sure we are offering the gospel, the good news of the Savior who was crushed so that those who place their faith and trust in Him may live forever.

- In what ways can Christians be a stream of living water to the lost around us?
- How does being the recipient of God's mercy impact the way you show mercy to others?

06

SESSION SIX

The Sin of Idolatry

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 32:1-14

THE POINT

Idolatry is putting something or someone in the place of God.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Moses:** biblical patriarch; chosen by God to lead His people out of captivity and to the promised land
- **Aaron:** older brother of Moses; chosen by God as Moses' spokesman

PLOT

In the previous sessions, we've watched how God heard the cries of His people in slavery, rescued them from Egypt, and guided them into the wilderness. The right response to God's salvation is gratitude and worship. Unfortunately, Israel redirected their worship—not to their Redeemer, but to a golden calf idol.

In this session we watch how Israel's sinful idolatry brings about God's righteous condemnation. Idolatry is dangerous because it distorts our view of God and corrupts our behavior, leading us away from God as He has revealed Himself and toward a false god who is powerless to save and transform us. We also see how Moses stepped in between God and the people and interceded on their behalf. As those who have Jesus Christ as our mediator, we trust in His power to overcome our idolatries and empower us for His mission.

HIS STORY

THE PEOPLE FALL INTO IDOL WORSHIP

Why did Israel fall into idolatry? Why did they distort true worship? For the same reasons we, too, fall into idolatry.

1. We fall when we disobey the word of God. (Ex. 32:1a)
 2. Like Israel, we will also fall if we distrust the purposes of God. (v. 1b)
 3. Like Israel, we fall when we forget the grace of God. (vv. 2-4)
 4. Like Israel, we fall when we fail to use our gifts to the glory of God.
- **How are you using your gifts of time, talent, and treasure for God's glory? Explain.**

Exodus 32:1

When the people saw that Moses delayed to come down from the mountain, the people gathered themselves together to Aaron and said to him, "Up, make us gods who shall go before us. As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him."



THE GOLDEN CALF
Israel commits idolatry against God.



THE COMMANDMENTS (PART I)
God gives Israel instructions on how to relate to Him.

THE PEOPLE NEED A MEDIATOR BECAUSE OF THEIR IDOLATRY

The people chose to worship a created thing instead of worshipping the Creator God. The psalmist writes in Psalm 106, “Therefore he said he would destroy them—had not Moses, his chosen one, stood in the breach before him, to turn away his wrath from destroying them” (v. 23). What a remarkable statement about the work of Moses on behalf of the Israelites. In verses 11-14, we learn about intercession, particularly about Moses’ important role of intercession.

Exodus 32:11-12

But Moses implored the LORD his God and said, “O LORD, why does your wrath burn hot against your people, whom you have brought out of the land of Egypt with great power and with a mighty hand? Why should the Egyptians say, ‘With evil intent did he bring them out, to kill them in the mountains and to consume them from the face of the earth’? Turn from your burning anger and relent from this disaster against your people.

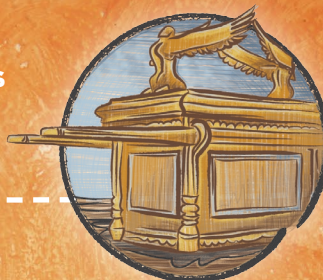
- **What does it mean to intercede from someone?**

- **How can we intercede for others in prayer? Why is this important?**



THE COMMANDMENTS (PART II)

God Gives Israel instructions on how to relate to others.



THE TABERNACLE

The tabernacle is built so that God may dwell among His people.

This story teaches us a lot about pleading to God for others. For starters, we should appeal to God's character and faithfulness in prayer. Notice how Moses appeals to God's compassion, God's past investment and reputation, and God's covenant faithfulness.

Second, we must seek the will of God, not our own selfish desires, in prayer. Moses didn't ask for personal glory here. God said that He would start all over with Moses, "I may make a great nation of you" (v. 10). This could have been flattering, but Moses cared more about the people fulfilling God's purposes of making them into a great nation. We too should pray in line with God's will; that is, making disciples of all nations, not desiring our own fame.

Third, we must believe that God answers prayer! This account in Exodus 32 is one of the best examples of how God responds to prayer. Because God is personal, He responds to prayer.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Sin as Idolatry

Sin is not only a physical act of rebellion against God, such as lying or stealing, but it is also a matter of the heart. The physical displays of sin are the fruit of what has been birthed in the heart of a person. (See Matt. 15:10-20.) In Scripture, idolatry usually refers to bowing down to a statue made of wood or gold, worshipping created things instead of the Creator. But idolatry can take on more subtle forms: a seeking of approval, security, power, pleasure, etc.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Like the Israelites, we need a mediator who will intercede for us because of our own idolatry. Moses foreshadowed the final and ultimate mediator humanity would every need—Jesus. (See 1 Tim. 2:5.) Jesus, the Mediator greater than Moses, turned away the wrath of God from us through His intervention. (See John 3:16.) Without Jesus' work, we would all be justly condemned. But praise God for the God-Man, Jesus Christ, who rescues idolaters like us!



ATONEMENT SACRIFICES (PART I)

The burnt, grain, and fellowship offerings are explained.



ATONEMENT SACRIFICES (PART II)

The sin and restitution offerings are explained.

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- ▶ **Why is it important that what we believe about God match up with what He has revealed about Himself in Scripture? What are the dangers if our opinions don't line up?**
- ▶ **What is the relationship between our view of God and our behavior? What are some choices we make that come from a wrong view of God?**
- ▶ **Make a list of common idols that you struggle with today and how they fail to deliver on what they promise.**
- ▶ **Like the Israelites, what happens when we forget the past work of God's grace in our own lives?**

HIS STORY

*God's Story of
Redemption, through
His Son, Jesus Christ.*

YOUR STORY

*Where your story
meets His.*

YOUR MISSION



HEAD

Anything can be an object of idolatry. Usually, the better something is, the more likely people will idolize it. People live in bondage to sexual sin, in part, because the human body is an amazing creation. The same goes for food and relationships. But we must not take “good things” and turn them into “god things.” If we do, we will end up in a life of total bondage and corruption.

- What are some good things God created that are often turned into “god things” by ourselves and others?
- What are some ways we can avoid falling into this type of idolatry?



HEART

Because of Israel’s rejection of God’s Word, their lack of trust in God, their lack of gratitude for the grace of God, and their lack of desire for the glory of God, they fell into idolatry. This whole scene is a picture of distorted worship. They were doing everything their way instead of God’s way. We must remember that worship is about glorifying God, not gratifying self. It’s possible to do things in the name of the Lord but still not worship the Lord.

- What are the signs that our worship has become “distorted” or focused on ourselves and our preferences rather than on God and what He has said?
- What are some ways we can prepare our hearts for genuine worship during our time with others at church?



HANDS

As we see with Moses, God calls us to intercede for people who need Him, appealing to His character and His will as we pray for their salvation. Part of that interceding takes place by speaking truth in love to others, as well as pleading that God’s grace would intervene in their life.

- How can we help one another turn to God instead of idols during difficult times?
- How would you describe the way you divide your time in prayer? How much time do you spend praying for yourself? How much time do you devote to praying for other people? What are those prayers like?

UNIT 2

God the Lawgiver

EXODUS, LEVITICUS, DEUTERONOMY

MEMORY VERSE

For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner, therefore, for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt.

DEUTERONOMY 10:17-19

07

SESSION SEVEN

The Commandments (Part I)

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 19:1-6; 20:1-11

THE POINT

The first four commandments reflect God's desire to be first in the hearts of His people.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Moses:** biblical patriarch; chosen by God to lead His people out of captivity and to the promised land

PLOT

God communicated truth to the Israelites when He gave the law to Moses. The children of Israel had been wandering in the wilderness and had grown weary. God's great victory on their behalf at the Red Sea was a distant memory, and they desperately wanted to settle in the land that God had promised. However, the people of Israel were not prepared to enter the promised land. The work that God was doing among them was not yet finished.

In this session, we will listen to God's declaration of love for Israel and see how that declaration of love led to the giving of His law. The Israelites needed to understand God's love and what He expected from them. They needed to know God more fully and understand what it meant to live in a covenantal relationship with Him. Through God's law, we can see the holiness of God as well as His redemptive love for us, and as we obey, we reflect the holiness and love of God to the world.

HIS STORY

GOD REMINDS HIS PEOPLE OF HIS GREAT LOVE FOR THEM

When we think of Moses on Mount Sinai, we usually think of the Ten Commandments. But it's important to put those commandments in context. God reassured the people of His love and protection when He spoke of delivering the Hebrews by carrying them on eagles' wings. God told Moses to remind Israel that He was the One who delivered them from their bondage to the Egyptians and brought them to Himself. In delivering Israel, God was putting His character as Redeemer on display.

Exodus 19:3-6

The LORD called to him out of the mountain, saying, "Thus you shall say to the house of Jacob, and tell the people of Israel: You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel.

- Why is it important for all believers to recognize that the God who spoke these words is the same God who delivers us today?



THE COMMANDMENTS (PART I)

God gives Israel instructions on how to relate to Him.



THE COMMANDMENTS (PART II)

God Gives Israel instructions on how to relate to others.

Exodus 20:3-6

You shall have no other gods before me. 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. 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, but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

GOD SHOWS HIS PEOPLE WHAT A HEART THAT LOVES HIM LOOKS LIKE

As we've seen, God reminded Israel again that He was their God and that He alone had delivered them out of Egypt. The lesson is simple: God deserves our full devotion simply because of who He is. Notice how the first two commandments reinforce this important truth in Exodus 20:3-6.

The desire to deify anything but God comes from a heart that is always striving to compete with God for first place. Left to our own devices, we will always choose to exalt ourselves and wrap our lives around things we believe will fulfill us. Our hearts have to be remade and empowered by something outside of ourselves—something that can break our sinful tendency to worship things that are inferior to God.

In the next two commandments, God gives a picture of what will flow out of a life fully devoted to Him.

To revere God's name means we will not use His name recklessly. When we use God's name to speak about Him or for Him, it is serious business.

As Christians, we believe Jesus Christ has freed us from the technicalities of Sabbath law, since He is the rest for our souls (Col. 2:16). Still, there are principles in this commandment we would do well to remember:

- **It acknowledges that we are not God.**
- **It acknowledges that we trust God.**
- **It acknowledges that we need God.**



THE TABERNACLE

The tabernacle is built so that God may dwell among His people.



ATONEMENT SACRIFICES (PART I)

The burnt, grain, and fellowship offerings are explained.

CHRIST CONNECTION

Through the law, God pulled back the veil of heaven to give us a significant glimpse of Himself. He shows us His holiness and helps us to see our utter hopelessness to fulfill the demands that His holiness requires apart from the work of Jesus on our behalf. It is only at the cross that we can find the fulfillment of the law. When we repent and believe on Jesus for our salvation, He becomes our righteousness and satisfies the law for us. He is the One who put God's glory first, the One who perfectly revered His Father's name, and the One who became our Sabbath rest.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

God Is One

The Bible affirms that God is one, as seen in Deuteronomy 6:4-9, otherwise known as the Shema. In both Old and New Testament times, the advocacy of monotheism (belief in one God) was contrary to the surrounding culture. Where most cultures practiced polytheism (belief in multiple gods) or henotheism (the worship of one god with the belief in multiple gods), the people of God knew, based upon God's self-revelation, that Yahweh, the Lord, was the only one, true God.



ATONEMENT SACRIFICES (PART II)

The sin and restitution offerings are explained.



MOSES' FAREWELL ADDRESS

Moses' final instructions to the children of Israel.

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

▶ **Like Israel, how has God given you evidence of His love and rescue of you? How is your life a testimony to the character of God as a deliverer?**

▶ **What are some of the good things in your life that you struggle against making an idol?**

▶ **What are some ways God's name is misused today? Why does God take this so seriously?**

▶ **How has this session challenged you in thinking about the command to keep the Sabbath? What are the benefits of being reminded of the three principles that were discussed?**

HIS STORY

*God's Story of
Redemption, through
His Son, Jesus Christ.*

YOUR STORY

*Where your story
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YOUR MISSION



HEAD

The first four commandments deal with our relationship with God, and the remaining six commandments deal with our relationship with other people. This ordering of God first and then others is important. When you think about it, our relationship with God will determine the quality and extent of our relationships with other people. If that first relationship is healthy and centered on Jesus, then the grace, mercy, and love received in that relationship will carry over into relationships with other people.

- How might your own relationship with God influence your relationships with other people?
- What might this look like in your own life moving forward?



HEART

You and I may not struggle with making statues or images of gods to give our attention and devotion, but we should be on guard for idolatry in its more subtle forms. An idol can be anything or anyone that we give first place in our lives. In fact, the most common idols are good things that we make ultimate things. The first two commandments remind us that God is a loving and jealous God who will tolerate no rivals to His throne. He must be first in our lives.

- Why is it right for God to demand first place in our hearts?
- What are some ways you might identify personal idols in your own life?



HANDS

God calls us to live in such a way that demonstrates to others that He is in first place in our lives. Part of doing that will involve wanting others to know and experience the joy that comes from having God as first place in their lives as well.

- Why is personal idolatry a hindrance to our mission and message as Christians?
- What are some ways you have been challenged to live differently because of this session?

08

SESSION EIGHT

The Commandments (Part II)

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 20:12-17

THE POINT

The remaining six commandments reflect God's desire for how people should relate to one another.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Moses:** biblical patriarch; chosen by God to lead His people out of captivity and to the promised land

PLOT

People have often noticed a distinct line of division among the Ten Commandments. The first four commandments lay out a loving response to God for His deliverance and grace. The final six focus on our treatment of other people. God desires that His grace bring about not only a reconciled, intimate relationship with Him but also vibrant, healthy relationships with others.

In this session, we examine the six commandments that focus on honoring God in our relationships. We will see that God calls us to honor Him by honoring our father and mother, by loving our neighbors as ourselves, and by cultivating a heart of contentment. One of the primary ways we show our love for God is by loving others who are made in His image.

HIS STORY

WE HONOR GOD BY HONORING OUR PARENTS

God calls us to honor our parents in response to His redeeming love for us. The Hebrew word translated *honor* means to make weighty and carries a positive sense of giving respect in abundance. Because all human parents are sinful, they may be “worthy” of honor in varying degrees. But God does not call us to weigh our parents’ worthiness and then decide whether or not to honor them. He calls us to honor them as a way of honoring Him, of recognizing His authority in our lives.

- **Do you struggle to honor your parents? In what ways?**

- **How would your family life be different if you made the Fifth Commandment more of a priority?**

Exodus 20:12

Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Authority of Scripture

Since the Bible is the inspired Word of God, containing God’s special revelation to humanity, it is the ultimate standard of authority for those who follow Christ. Because it is truthful in everything it teaches, Scripture is humanity’s source for wisdom, instructing us on how to live life well to the glory of God. Submitting to the authority of Scripture means that we are to believe and obey God by believing and obeying His Word.



THE COMMANDMENTS (PART II)

God Gives Israel instructions on how to relate to others.



THE TABERNACLE

The tabernacle is built so that God may dwell among His people.

WE HONOR GOD BY HONORING OUR NEIGHBORS

Do Not Murder

This commandment is clear and concise. Murder is condemned as a sin because of the motive behind it and the way it disregards the inherent value of human life.

Do Not Commit Adultery

This is rooted in God's original design for marriage. From the beginning, God saw that it was not good for man to be alone, and He created woman. Adam and Eve together reflected the image of God in their relationship of trust and love.

Do Not Steal

The Eighth Commandment forbids stealing—taking something that does not belong to us. This command covers a wide range of dishonest practices birthed in a heart gripped by possessions instead of a heart that trusts in the One from whom all good things come.

Do Not Lie

The Ninth Commandment forbids us to bear false witness against our neighbors. Throughout the Old Testament, God expressed His hatred for lying and declared truthfulness to be a requirement for His people. Because He is a God who tells the truth, His people must also tell the truth—always.

Do Not Covet

The Tenth Commandment gets right to the heart of our chase for satisfaction. From the garden of Eden, we've seen the human trait of wanting what we cannot have and placing hope for ultimate satisfaction in people and things. If we are honest, we see it in our own lives too.

Exodus 20:13-17

"You shall not murder.

"You shall not commit adultery.

"You shall not steal.

"You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

"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."



ATONEMENT SACRIFICES (PART I)

The burnt, grain, and fellowship offerings are explained.



ATONEMENT SACRIFICES (PART II)

The sin and restitution offerings are explained.

- What commandment do students tend to ignore the most when it comes to relating to other people?
-
-

- How would the world be different if more Christians lived according to the last six commandments?
-
-

CHRIST CONNECTION

When we are fulfilling the command to honor and obey our parents, we are imitating Jesus. If Jesus could set aside His glory and make Himself subject to authority, who are we not to? Obedience to parents displays Christlike humility and love.

When it comes to the command to not murder, Jesus takes it a step further by addressing the heart behind murder—hatred. He was concerned with how we feel about others, knowing that a heinous act such as murder is overflow from a heart that is harboring hate and anger against someone.

When it comes to the command to not commit adultery, once again Jesus addresses the heart behind the act—lust. Jesus opposes adultery and the lustful heart because the marriage covenant is an earthly picture of Jesus' relationship with His church. Jesus is the faithful, loving Bridegroom who has entered into an intimate bond with the people He has redeemed, and when a man and a woman enter into the covenant relationship of marriage, they are to visually represent the faithfulness that Christ has to His people.

When it comes to the command to not steal, Jesus puts possessions in their proper place by reminding us what really matters (Matt. 6:19-24).

When it comes to the command to not lie, Jesus reminds us that through the power of the gospel we can be remade to love truth more than we love ourselves.

And when it comes to the command to not covet, Jesus teaches us that through the power of the Spirit, contentment can be ours. Only through Christ can we put our selfishness to death and be content with God's plan and provision for our lives.



MOSES' FAREWELL ADDRESS
Moses' final instructions to the children of Israel.



SCOUTING THE PROMISED LAND
The spies deliver their report.

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

▶ **How is honoring your parents' authority more than merely obeying them?**

▶ **Why does Jesus connect murder to a hateful heart? What are some ways we express hatefulness with our words?**

▶ **What are some examples of stealing non-monetary items that seem commonplace today? How should a Christian respond to these things?**

▶ **What types of lies are seen as being acceptable today? How should Christians think about lying?**

HIS STORY

*God's Story of
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YOUR STORY

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YOUR MISSION



HEAD

Stealing is not just robbing a bank or shoplifting in a store. There are many forms of theft, and all of them are a sin before God. All of them, of course, come from a covetous heart. What begins as a simple desire within our hearts and minds turns into something we demand and can't live without. James 4:1-3 shows us the process of temptation and sin, telling us that each man is drawn by his own renegade desires.

- What is the connection between stealing and coveting? How is idolatry at work in the heart of the person who steals?
- Do you agree that it is more blessed to give than to receive? Why or why not?



HEART

Unlike many of the other commandments, the nature of coveting is one that cannot be seen on the outside. Much like the First Commandment, which commands us to worship God, coveting is something primarily in the heart. However, you can see the fruits of this sin within people's lives, often being the source that leads to other sins.

- How does a coveting heart reveal discontentment with God?
- What are some comparable modern day objects from the ones mentioned in Exodus 20:17 that tempt us to covet today?



HANDS

How we relate to others impacts our witness to those around us. If we treat others poorly and with disrespect while claiming to be Christians, our witness to them will likely be a negative one. If our relationships, instead, are characterized by love and respect, then our witness will likely be better received. Our Christian beliefs ought to positively impact our relationships, and our relationships should positively contribute to our witness to those around us.

- How might our mission as Christ's ambassadors be hindered by dishonoring our parents, stealing, coveting, and so forth?
- What might your friends conclude about your walk with Christ if they observe a heart that is content within you?

09

SESSION NINE

Building the Tabernacle

SCRIPTURE

Exodus 25:1-9; 39:32-43; 40:34-38

THE POINT

God desires to dwell among His people.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Moses:** biblical patriarch; chosen by God to lead His people out of captivity and to the promised land
- **Bezalel and Oholiab:** Commissioned and gifted by God to be the lead artists and craftsmen of the wilderness Tabernacle.

PLOT

Following our study of the Commandments, our story picks up on another important event in the biblical storyline—the construction of the tabernacle. While being a somewhat familiar story, the construction of the tabernacle, and its place of meaning and importance in the life of an Israelite, could hardly be overstated. It is a story that not only teaches us many things about God and His willingness to dwell among His people in a special way, but also teaches us something about ourselves and how we encounter God in light of the sin in our hearts.

HIS STORY

GOD PLANS THE TABERNACLE

While Moses was alone with God, God showed him what was next on the divine agenda. God asked for a tabernacle—a sacred tent—to be constructed as the place where His presence would be manifested. This would make it possible for a holy God to dwell among His people.

Note the phrase, “so that I may dwell among them.” The Israelites understood—as we do—that God’s presence is everywhere (that He is omnipresent). Yet God chooses to manifest His presence, open to the senses, among human beings in specific times and places. The tabernacle in the wilderness would become just such a place.

Exodus 25:8-9

And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell in their midst. Exactly as I show you concerning the pattern of the tabernacle, and of all its furniture, so you shall make it.

- Why do you think God was so specific about everything associated with the tabernacle?

- Do you think having really specific instructions makes it easier or more difficult to obey God? Why?



THE TABERNACLE

The tabernacle is built so that God may dwell among His people.



ATONEMENT SACRIFICES (PART I)

The burnt, grain, and fellowship offerings are explained.

GOD BUILDS THE TABERNACLE

For the tabernacle, everything worked out perfectly. After the raw materials were gathered, two master craftsmen—Bezalel and Oholiab, as well as those working under them—set about constructing the tent and all the furnishings. The inspired biblical writer noted that their skills were God-given (Ex. 36:1). The Scriptures also provide exact details about each aspect of the construction.

Exodus 39:32-33a

Thus all the work of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting was finished, and the people of Israel did according to all that the LORD had commanded Moses; so they did. Then they brought the tabernacle to Moses.

Exodus 40:34-35

Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. And Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

GOD DWELLS WITHIN THE TABERNACLE

God had manifested His presence earlier (and temporarily) to the Israelites through a “pillar of cloud.” A cloud was visible over the tent outside the Israelite camp where Moses and the Lord talked (Ex. 13:21; 33:7-11). But now something new and fantastic happened. God visibly showed up in the heart of the camp, above the tabernacle, as Exodus 40 indicates.

Twice in these verses “the glory of the LORD” is emphasized. The term translated “glory” carries ideas both of “weightiness” and “brightness.” With reference to the God of Israel, glory refers to the overwhelming manifestation of His presence.



ATONEMENT SACRIFICES (PART II)

The sin and restitution offerings are explained.



MOSES' FAREWELL ADDRESS

Moses final instructions to the children of Israel.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Christ as Priest

As our Great High Priest, Jesus accomplishes the work of reconciling us to God. He is the One whose perfect righteousness is presented to the Father for our justification. He is the One who intercedes for us before the Father (Heb. 7:25; 9:24) and prays for us to remain faithful (Luke 22:31; John 17).

CHRIST CONNECTION

The tabernacle section of Exodus clearly demonstrated that God wanted to be with His people, and He wanted them to know that He was with them. The same is true today. The greatest evidence of this truth is the incarnation: God Himself took on human form. Jesus was (and is) the preeminent tabernacle where God has displayed Himself to humanity.

GOD'S PROMISE OF GIVING HIS POWERFUL PRESENCE TO ISRAEL—THAT IS, COMING DOWN TO ACTUALLY LIVE AMONG THEM—IS ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PROMISES IN THE SCRIPTURES, AND IT WILL ECHO THROUGHOUT ALL THE REST OF THE STORY.

Scott Duvall and Daniel Hays



SCOUTING THE PROMISED LAND
The spies deliver their report.



THE BRONZE SERPENT
The people look and are healed.

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- ▶ **Why do you think God wanted the offerings to be voluntary? What should this say about our own offerings?**

- ▶ **Just as God used some human leaders to accomplish His will in constructing the tabernacle, what might be some tasks we are called to fulfill as “divine instruments” of God’s will?**

- ▶ **When Jesus died on the cross, the veil in the temple that protected people from being in direct contact with God was torn in two from top to bottom (Mark 15:38). What did that symbolize?**

- ▶ **If God is always with us and we have access to Him, then why don’t we continually “experience” Him?**

HIS STORY

*God's Story of
Redemption through
His Son, Jesus Christ..*

YOUR STORY

*Where your story
meets His.*

YOUR MISSION



HEAD

It is a remarkable thing to consider that the God of this universe, the Creator of heaven and earth, desires to dwell among us. This is true not only before the fall occurred in Genesis 3, but even now in the midst of human sin and rebellion. God graciously accommodates us, redeemed sinners, making it possible for us to enter into His presence with full confidence.

- Imagine you were an Israelite who saw God's presence displayed in the brilliance that filled the tabernacle and the cloud above it. How would this have affected your understanding of God's character? Of His greatness?
- How might the thought of God's desire to dwell among His people impact the way you battle sin in your life?



HEART

The apostle Paul took up the language associated with a temple to remind early Christians that they were indwelt by God's Spirit; therefore, they were God's temple and manifested His presence to others in the world. (See 1 Cor. 3:16; 6:19; Eph. 2:21-22.)

- In what ways do you see God's glory in your life?
- How can you demonstrate the presence of God to those around you as a living tabernacle?



HANDS

This story of the tabernacle's construction is a great reminder that God creates people with various gifts to be used for His kingdom and for the good and joy of others. One doesn't necessarily need to go into full-time vocational ministry in order to make much of Christ with his or her life—both Bezalel and Oholiab were able to glorify God by being the artists and craftsmen God created them to be. This should be encouraging as you think about your own giftedness and what you will do one day as a profession.

- Why is it wrong to think that some gifts/professions are sacred and some are secular?
- If you are interested in the arts in some way (graphic design, acting, etc.), how does this encourage you to pursue that craft for the glory of God?

10

SESSION TEN

Atonement Sacrifices (Part I)

SCRIPTURE

Leviticus 1:3-9; 2:1-3; 3:1-5

THE POINT

Atonement is needed for removal of guilt, restoration of service, and reconciliation with God.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Moses:** biblical patriarch; chosen by God to lead His people out of captivity and to the promised land
- **Aaron:** older brother of Moses; chosen by God as Moses' spokesman and later to become Israel's first high priest

PLOT

As we saw in the previous session, the tabernacle in the wilderness was the place where God's presence was manifested among His people. Although it was extravagant, the tabernacle was not a showplace to be admired for its beauty. It was a place for serious work to be done. The large bronze altar at the entrance was the place where slaughtered animals would be sacrificed as burnt offerings.

After the account of the tabernacle's construction and God's glory filling the tent (Exodus 40), Scripture gives us a detailed account of the various animal sacrifices to be offered there (Leviticus 1–7). The Lord laid out specific instructions for this complicated system of sacrifices. Each of these five sacrifices served a slightly different purpose, but together they provide a biblical picture of atonement.

HIS STORY

THE BURNT OFFERING

The first kind of animal sacrifice that God specified to be presented to Him was called the burnt offering. Perhaps its name was derived from the fact that it was the only offering that was completely burned up, leaving nothing.

Based on Leviticus 1:3-9, answer the following questions:

- **Where was the animal to come from?**

- **What kind of animal was it to be?**

- **Where was the animal to be offered?**

- **How was the offerer to identify with the animal?**

- **How would the Lord respond to the offering?**

Leviticus 1:3-9

If his offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish. He shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting, that he may be accepted before the LORD. He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for him. Then he shall kill the bull before the LORD, and Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting. Then he shall flay the burnt offering and cut it into pieces, and the sons of Aaron the priest shall put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. And Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, the head, and the fat, on the wood that is on the fire on the altar; but its entrails and its legs he shall wash with water. And the priest shall burn all of it on the altar, as a burnt offering, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.



ATONEMENT SACRIFICES (PART I)

The burnt, grain, and fellowship offerings are explained.



ATONEMENT SACRIFICES (PART II)

The sin and restitution offerings are explained.

THE GRAIN OFFERING

The second offering God specified to Moses in Leviticus involved grain (or bread or flour). Its name was derived from the fact that it was the only offering that did not involve the death of an animal but rather grain from the earth, which was hand ground into “meal” or flour.

Because people ate grain daily (in the form of flour baked into bread), the grain offering reminded the worshiper that their everyday life depended on God’s provision. Their ability to serve God—or even restoration to service after sin or sickness had disrupted service to Him—was demonstrated in this offering.

Leviticus 2:1-2

When anyone brings a grain offering as an offering to the LORD, his offering shall be of fine flour. He shall pour oil on it and put frankincense on it and bring it to Aaron’s sons the priests. And he shall take from it a handful of the fine flour and oil, with all of its frankincense, and the priest shall burn this as its memorial portion on the altar, a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the LORD.

THE FELLOWSHIP OFFERING

Of all the sacrifices God specified in Leviticus, only the fellowship offering could be eaten by the offerer. This provides an important insight into what the sacrifice symbolized: reconciliation to God so that a person may enjoy fellowship with Him.

This offering has also been called the peace offering in English, because the Hebrew term for the offering is closely related to the Hebrew term for peace or wholeness. The offerer was to present before the priest a spotless cow, sheep, or goat.

Unlike the burnt offering, only the fat and certain internal organs were burned. The offerer could eat (cooked) meat of this sacrifice, but only on the day of the sacrifice or the next day (7:16-18). In other words, it was a kind of fellowship meal between God, the priests, and the offerer. The animal offered in sacrifice and then eaten symbolized that there was now a right relationship with God. (In most cultures, those who share a meal together do so only if a certain level of friendship is present; in this instance God was, as it were, inviting the worshiper to enjoy a friendship meal with Him.)

Leviticus 3:1-2

If his offering is a sacrifice of peace offering, if he offers an animal from the herd, male or female, he shall offer it without blemish before the LORD. And he shall lay his hand on the head of his offering and kill it at the entrance of the tent of meeting, and Aaron’s sons the priests shall throw the blood against the sides of the altar.



MOSES' FAREWELL ADDRESS

Moses' final instructions to the children of Israel.



SCOUTING THE PROMISED LAND

The spies deliver their report.

**Beginning Spring 2016*

CHRIST CONNECTION

The New Testament writer of Hebrews, fully aware of the Old Testament sacrifices, explained how they were merely a shadow and a prefiguring of Christ's atoning death on the cross.

The writer went to great lengths throughout Hebrews 9 to explain how Christ's death fulfilled the symbolism of Israel's rituals. He offered His own blood on behalf of others, not needing the blood of another because He had no sin. He entered the heavenly "holy places" rather than the earthly copy of the most holy place. (See last week's study.) He obtained "eternal redemption" rather than a temporary atonement. He removed our guilt forever through the blood offering of Himself to God: "For by a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are being sanctified. ... Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin" (Heb. 10:14,18).

Hebrews 9:12

He [Jesus Christ] entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Christ as Sacrifice

There are several signs, symbols, and pointers in the Old Testament that foreshadowed Christ as being the sacrificial Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world. However, unlike the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, whose sacrifices were unable to take away sin (Heb. 10:4), Christ's sacrifice on the cross was able to remove our sin "once and for all."



THE BRONZE SERPENT

The people look and are healed.



THE PARTING OF THE JORDAN

God calls Joshua to lead His people.

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

▶ **Why is guilt a universal emotion? How can the feeling of guilt help us look outward to Christ instead of inward to ourselves?**

▶ **As with the grain offering, what are some ways we can express our gratitude to God today?**

▶ **What are ways we express a restored relationship with others today?**

▶ **Why do you think it was important for these offerings to be “costly?” What did the cost of the offering communicate about the seriousness of sin?**

HIS STORY

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YOUR MISSION



HEAD

Because of the once and for all sacrifice of Christ, we don't have to offer sacrifices to atone for ourselves. The offerings we make today aren't to appease our conscience or gain favor with God; instead, they're offerings made from gratitude and faith in response to His salvation.

- What are some poor offerings that we often offer up to God in response to His great gift of salvation?
- How can a proper understanding of Jesus' sacrifice help motivate us to giving God our best in these areas?



HEART

The story that Leviticus tells of the different sacrifices can easily make today's reader squeamish. We are not accustomed to talking about killing animals, having them skinned, dismembered, and burned on altars. It is a sobering picture, one that sheds light on two essential things: the severity of our sin and our need for a Savior.

- How do you think these sacrifices would have made the person offering them feel in regard to his or her sin?
- What would it say about our sin if no sacrifice or Savior was needed?



HANDS

In Romans 12:1-2, the apostle Paul advised believers to “present your bodies as a living sacrifice.” All the animal sacrifices of the Israelites involved killing the animal—only for the grain offering was there no death. Thus, just as the grain offering was presented to God and then benefited others, so it is with believers. Jesus' followers are alive, presented to God, and then are able to serve others through the use of their unique spiritual gifts (12:3-8).

- Why should Christ's sacrifice for us drive our desire to live for Him?
- What are some spiritual gifts God has given you, and how can you use them to serve others?

11

SESSION ELEVEN

Atonement Sacrifices (Part II)

SCRIPTURE

Leviticus 5:1-19; Hebrews 9:13-14; 13:11-12

THE POINT

Atonement is needed for purification and cleansing.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Moses:** biblical patriarch; chosen by God to lead His people out of captivity and to the promised land
- **Aaron:** older brother of Moses; chosen by God as Moses' spokesman and later to become Israel's first high priest

PLOT

Our journey into the sacrifices of the Old Testament—their meaning, purpose, and differences, etc.—continues as we look at two more: the sin offering and the restitution offering. It is important at this point in the story to be reminded that readers of the Bible today can't chalk these sacrifices up as being primitive practices of an ancient people group, but instead recognize that the biblical writers were giving us a glimpse into the perfect future sacrifice of Christ on our behalf. These offerings pointed forward to Jesus Christ, whose work purifies our hearts, cleanses our consciences, and frees us to do good deeds for His glory.

HIS STORY

THE SIN OFFERING

For Israelites, the sin offering became the way for certain unintentional sins to be remedied. It was God's solution for providing purification for those who were unclean. When talking about the sin offering, our story in Leviticus shows us how guilt was symbolically transferred from the unclean person to the clean sacrifice through the act of touching the animal being offered. It was only through this physical contact that atonement and restoration would take place.

Leviticus 5:5-6

...when he realizes his guilt in any of these and confesses the sin he has committed, he shall bring to the LORD as his compensation for the sin that he has committed, a female from the flock, a lamb or a goat, for a sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for him for his sin.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Satisfaction Theory of the Atonement

According to this theory, the atonement of Christ satisfies every requirement for God to be able to forgive the failures of humanity. God has not been given the proper honor He is due; in His death, Jesus compensated for the failure to give honor by willingly going to the cross as the God-man to pay the price for humanity's sins.

- **What do you do when you realize you've sinned? Do you try to hide your sin from God or do you admit you've made a mistake and repent? If you deny it, does that make you any less guilty? Explain.**



ATONEMENT SACRIFICES (PART II)

The sin and restitution offerings are explained.



MOSES' FAREWELL ADDRESS

Moses' final instructions to the children of Israel.

Leviticus 5:14-19

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying, "If anyone commits a breach of faith and sins unintentionally in any of the holy things of the LORD, he shall bring to the LORD as his compensation, a ram without blemish out of the flock, valued in silver shekels, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, for a guilt offering. He shall also make restitution for what he has done amiss in the holy thing and shall add a fifth to it and give it to the priest. And the priest shall make atonement for him with the ram of the guilt offering, and he shall be forgiven. "If anyone sins, doing any of the things that by the LORD's commandments ought not to be done, though he did not know it, then realizes his guilt, he shall bear his iniquity. He shall bring to the priest a ram without blemish out of the flock, or its equivalent for a guilt offering, and the priest shall make atonement for him for the mistake that he made unintentionally, and he shall be forgiven. It is a guilt offering; he has indeed incurred guilt before the LORD."

THE RESTITUTION OFFERING

Our consciences hurt when we've hurt another. It's human nature to try to set things straight when we know we've messed up. The Israelite people felt the same way. God's answer to this need was the restitution offering. In some English Bibles, this sacrifice has been variously translated the guilt offering, the trespass offering, or the reparation offering.

The restitution offering was the fifth (and final) offering that Yahweh specified. It shared some features with the sin offering. Like the sin offering, it was concerned with the remedy for unintentional sins, but it focused on repairing the damage done to others because they had been deprived of what was rightfully theirs. Look at how Leviticus 5 describes the restitution offering.

- **Do you seek to make things right when you realize you've hurt someone? Why is this important?**

- **How do we get right with God when we sin today?**



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The spies deliver their report.

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CHRIST CONNECTION

The New Testament writer of the Book of Hebrews clearly knew the passage from Leviticus about the sin offering on the Day of Atonement. He believed it prefigured Jesus' bloody death outside the gates of Jerusalem.

In addition, the author of Hebrews specifically dealt with the issue of how Jesus' death relates to the conscience of a sinner who trusts in Christ.

Thus, in Hebrews 9:14, the author exclaimed "how much more" is accomplished through "the blood of Christ":

- The Israelites presented unblemished animals; Christ was the only human ever "without blemish" and therefore fit to be our substitution in atonement.
- Christ was both the sacrifice and the high priest (because he "offered Himself").
- Christ was fully accepted by God as a once-for-all sacrifice for sin (Heb. 10:14).
- Through Jesus' death, believers have consciences that are completely and forever cleansed, unlike the Israelite restitution offering, which dealt only with immediate defilement of the offender's conscience.
- Because of this cleansing, believers have been set free "to serve the living God."
- Good works cannot save. Salvation in Christ brings people into joyful service to God. In Hebrews 9:13-14, the author showed that all three Persons of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; or God, the Messiah, and eternal Spirit) have brought about our full salvation.

Hebrews 13:11-12

For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp. So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood.

Hebrews 9:13-14

For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.



THE PARTING OF THE JORDAN

God calls Joshua to lead His people.



THE BATTLE OF JERICO

Rahab helps the Israelites in their conquest of Jericho.

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- ▶ **When it came to the sin offering, Leviticus tells us the role of confession on the part of the offerer. Why do you think a heart-felt confession is important?**

- ▶ **How does the sin offering challenge the way we think about our own purity?**

- ▶ **Apart from Jesus, what are some ways people try to alleviate a guilty conscience?**

- ▶ **How does a cleansed conscience empower us to serve God? How does an unclean conscience hinder our mission?**

HIS STORY


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HEAD



Everyone is aware of their inner conscience—that inner impression that certain behaviors and thoughts within their lives are wrong. However, too often people try to address the conscience with self-help techniques. If they have a speech problem, they focus on using certain words (and avoiding others). If it is an anger problem, they look for ways to control their temper. However, the problem with these strategies is that they never get to the root of the issue—namely, that it is a heart problem.

- What are some careless words or outbursts you've heard from other people when talking to or about someone else?
- Why is it so important that your words, decisions, and actions be different than those who aren't living for Christ?


HEART



Purity of heart has always been of great importance for God. Jesus went to great lengths to emphasize purity of heart in His teachings. For example, it was not only the act of adultery that was evil, it was also the lustful heart behind the act (Matt. 5:28). Purity matters to God, and therefore it should matter to God's people. Like God Himself, Christians should be set apart from the rest of the world, demonstrating the purity that has been freely received through the moral perfection of Christ on their behalf.

- Think about the words you've used today when talking with your parents, friends, teachers, and others. How would you (or others) rate the condition of your heart based on your words?
- When you consider the decisions you've made over the past 24 hours, would Jesus be pleased? Why or why not?

HANDS



Purification and restitution lead to evangelization. If we've been the recipients of these gifts through the sacrificial death of Christ on our behalf, we should likewise proclaim to others how purification of sins is found in the atoning death of Christ alone for their sins.

- What evidence do your thoughts, words, and actions give to others that you are a Christian?
- How can you make sure your words and actions are a reflection of Christ this week? In what ways can this be a testimony to the purification and restitution you've received from Christ?

12

SESSION TWELVE

Moses' Farewell Address

SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 10:12-22; 11:1,26-28

THE POINT

God's law is a gift, but it cannot save.

CHARACTERS

- **The Triune God:** Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- **Moses:** biblical patriarch; chosen by God to lead His people out of captivity and to the promised land

PLOT

The books of Moses include extensive narrative about Israel's wilderness wanderings. At last, there was a new generation. They were on the verge of entering the promised land under Joshua. Many, perhaps, were wondering: What is the importance of all these laws? Why does God expect us to follow so many rules?

In this study, we will take a closer look at Moses' final instructions to the children of Israel. In his farewell address, Moses explained how God had given them the law for their own good, and he also claimed that the requirement of the law was total perfection. Obedience to God's law would bring blessing, but disobedience would bring God's curse. As believers, we recognize the law as a good gift of God, but we rely on the sacrifice of Jesus Christ to save us from the penalty for our disobedience.

HIS STORY

THE LAW IS FOR OUR GOOD

In Deuteronomy 10, we can see that Moses indicated a number of truths about the law. First, the law reveals the greatness and goodness of God. Notice how Moses spoke about God in these verses.

In addition, we see specific guidelines on what the Lord meant when He asked His redeemed people to love Him “with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deut. 6:5). Here are the ways that the law guided Israel’s understanding of what it means to love God:

- Fear the Lord (10:12,20).
- Walk in all His ways (10:12,13).
- Worship the Lord (10:12,20).
- Circumcise your hearts (10:16).

Deuteronomy 10:12-16

And now, Israel, what does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the LORD, which I am commanding you today for your good? Behold, to the LORD your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet the LORD set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn.

• What does your love for God have to do with your obedience to God?

• Does God only love us if we obey Him? Explain.



MOSES' FAREWELL ADDRESS

Moses' final instructions to the children of Israel.



SCOUTING THE PROMISED LAND

The spies deliver their report.

THE LAW REQUIRES PERFECTION

As noted throughout these sessions, God gave the law to people whom He had already redeemed. The commands of God were never, ever, intended by God as a way to earn salvation. In fact, the laws about sacrifice were given to guide Israel in what to do when people broke the law. The law was meant as a blessing for the good of God's people.

But what if the Israelite people misunderstood? What if they came to think that the way they related to God was essentially a matter of law-keeping? Even worse, what if they came to think that by doing the works of the law, they earned favor with God or even merited salvation? It is not surprising that many Israelites made this mistake. Unquestionably, as sinful humans we suppose that by our own deeds we earn divine favor. As can be easily observed, most of the world's religious activities can be understood as an attempt to work one's way to God.

In Deuteronomy 11:1 Moses noted the strictness of the law. Notice the term "always." The demands of the law were relentless. There was no time off for good behavior. The essence of living under the demands of the law is that it requires perfection. And because no one is capable of perfectly obeying the law, all have broken it. In fact, by knowing the strict demands of the law, human beings actually become more and more aware of how far short of perfection they have come.

Deuteronomy 11:1

You shall therefore love the LORD your God and keep his charge, his statutes, his rules, and his commandments always.



THE BRONZE SERPENT

The people look and are healed.



THE PARTING OF THE JORDAN

God calls Joshua to lead His people.

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

God Is Holy

God's holiness refers to His uniqueness in being separate from all He has created. The Hebrew word for holy means "separate" or "set apart." God's holiness also refers to His absolute purity. God is unstained by the evil of the world. His goodness is perfect, and the moral code we find in the Scriptures is a reflection of His holy nature. As people made in God's image, we are called to holiness.

CHRIST CONNECTION

There is no question that each of us is inclined to disobedience—we've all broken the law at some point. We are rebels against God and therefore justly under His curse. However, in the fullness of time, Jesus came and took the curse for us. As Paul explained, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13).

All who are in Christ are set free from the eternal condemnation that the law decreed against us. We are liberated by faith in the One who took the curse on our behalf. We don't have to fear the curse, because "there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death" (Rom. 8:1-2).

Yet in this life, "we make it our aim to please him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil" (2 Cor. 5:9-10). Or, as James noted, "So speak and so act as those who are to be judged under the law of liberty" (Jas. 2:12).



THE BATTLE OF JERICO

Rahab helps the Israelites in their conquest of Jericho.



CONQUEST OF AI

How one man's sin can negatively affect everyone around him.

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

- ▶ **Why do you think many people focus on God's law apart from His goodness? What is the danger of doing that?**

- ▶ **What practical examples can you give of the law providing specifics on how to love God and others?**

- ▶ **How does understanding God's moral laws help you understand His character? How should understanding His character in this way shape the way you treat others?**

- ▶ **How has this session challenged the way you understand God's commands in your own life?**

HIS STORY

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YOUR MISSION



HEAD

Rules get a bad rap sometimes. We tend to think of regulations as unnecessarily confining and restricting. But rightly understood, rules do not oppose freedom; they make freedom possible. A home without any rules would mean that the loudest, strongest-willed child would rule the roost, leaving everyone else to no longer have the freedom of a happy, well-balanced home. God's people need guidelines for their life.

- Have you ever had the impression that God's Commands are restrictive and burdensome? Why or why not?
- Why is it important to see God's commands as flowing from His character?



HEART

In Deuteronomy 11:1 we see two words that are very important. The first is love the Lord your God. We know from Jesus' words that obedience is the sign of love. In other words, the way we express our love for God is to obey Him without begrudging or with a bad attitude. And that leads us to the other scary word—always. We are to always keep His mandate and statutes, ordinances, and commands. God demands total obedience from a loving heart.

- What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear the word obedience? Why does obedience have such a negative connotation?
- How does understanding the demands of the law help increase our desire and gratitude for grace?



HANDS

Once we realize that God's commands are for our good and joy, and that they reflect the moral character of God Himself, the way we treat and approach His commands in our everyday life should change. And once we do that, people around us will see that instead of treating them as burdensome and constraining, we seek to live according to them so that we might emulate God's holiness in our own lives.

- How can following God's commands show your love for Him?
- How can others be challenged when they see the difference being obedient to God makes in our lives?

13

SESSION THIRTEEN

God With Us

SCRIPTURE

John 1:14-18

THE POINT

Christmas isn't about holiday decorations and gifts, but about God coming to dwell among His people.

CHARACTERS

- **Jesus:** the second person of the Trinity

PLOT

As Christians, we believe the incarnation of Christ was necessary for sinners to be allowed entrance back into intimate fellowship with God. The Christmas season is more than sentimentality and feelings of good will. For those of us who have gained access to God's presence through Christ (Heb. 4:14-16), the Christmas season serves as a reminder to go out into the world, even to difficult places, and shine the light of Christ.

In this session, we see that the glory of Christmas is not in lights and presents and all the trappings of commercialism. Scripture teaches that the glory of Christmas is revealed in the story of God loving us enough to invade our world, live among us, and reveal Himself to us through Jesus Christ. The glory of Christmas is the incarnation of Christ.

HIS STORY

GOD DWELLS WITH HIS PEOPLE

The word incarnation means “in flesh.” For Christians, the word is more than a technical term. It brings us comfort and joy because it reminds us of the moment the grace of God became personified through the birth of Jesus Christ. In the incarnation, God invaded our world so that He could save sinners who were unable to save themselves.

In John 1:14-15, John informed his readers that they observed “his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” This phrase expresses the unique quality of Jesus. He is the Father’s only Son, who is absolutely full of grace and truth. Simply put, Jesus is in a class all by Himself.

John 1:14-15

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”

99 ESSENTIAL DOCTRINES

Jesus’ Deity

Within the person of Jesus Christ, there are two natures—the divine nature and the human nature. Scripture teaches Jesus is fully divine and fully human. His divinity is on display in passages that describe Him as being equal with God (John 1:1-18; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:1-3). The New Testament also points to the deity of Christ by showing how He possesses attributes that God alone possesses (Mic. 5:2; John 1:4), how He performs works that only God performs (Mark 2:5-12; John 10:28; 17:2), and how He Himself claims to be the Son of God (John 8:58; 10:30; 17:5; Matt. 26:63-64).



SCOUTING THE PROMISED LAND

The spies deliver their report.

**Beginning Spring 2016*



THE BRONZE SERPENT

The people look and are healed.

GOD GIVES GRACE AND TRUTH

Our salvation is an extension of the grace of God's incarnation. God is continuously giving us grace after grace, meaning, we can never out-sin the amount of grace He supplies us with. When we fully grasp the beauty of God's grace, we don't see His forgiveness as a license to sin (see Romans 6), but rather as an open-door policy with a loving Father who holds us to the highest standards and showers us with the deepest love.

Through the incarnation, Jesus entered into our fallen world in order to place Himself under the Law of Moses (Gal. 4:4-5). He did this to meet God's requirements for humanity. His perfect life was the payment He submitted as a substitution for sinners on the cross (Mark 10:45). The evidence of His payment being accepted by God is His literal, physical, and visible resurrection from the grave (Rom. 4:24-25).

John 1:16-17

And from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

- How does our inability to keep God's laws demonstrate our need for grace?

- Is merely consenting to the truth about Jesus enough for salvation? Why or why not?



THE PARTING OF THE JORDAN

God calls Joshua to lead His people.



THE BATTLE OF JERICO

Rahab helps the Israelites in their conquest of Jericho.

John 1:18

No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

JESUS REVEALS GOD TO US

In Exodus 33:20, God said that no human being can see God's face and live. But in that same narrative, we read about Moses getting a glimpse of God.

John's statement in verse 18 highlights two important truths: there is a unique relationship between God the Father and God the Son (Jesus), and the depth of this unique relationship allows Jesus to reveal the Father to humanity. Put another way: Through Jesus, we see God Himself.

CHRIST CONNECTION

As you enter into this Christmas season, be reminded that the God who rescued Israel and delivered them from slavery in Egypt, the God who delivered the law through Moses, the God who dwelt among His people in the tabernacle, is the same God who came to us in the person of Jesus Christ.

When the holiday decorations and exchanging of gifts become a distraction, be reminded that Christmas is all about the truth that God loved us to the point of becoming like us in order to rescue us. And let the incarnation of Jesus inspire you and empower you to spend time with others this Christmas season, seeking to be a living witness to the truth that God cares and that God gets involved. We don't worship a distant deity who only speaks from afar; we worship a Savior who planted His feet in the dirt of this world and brought redemption through His death and resurrection.



CONQUEST OF AI

How one man's sin can negatively affect everyone around him.

YOUR STORY

God's Story has always been designed to connect with your story. It is because of His Story that our stories make sense, have meaning, and carry on into eternity. Use the questions below to help think through how His Story connects with your own.

▶ **How is Jesus different from other religious leaders?**

▶ **Why is believing Jesus is completely God and completely man so important?**

▶ **What does Jesus reveal to us about the Father?**

▶ **What are some things you can do this Christmas season to focus more exclusively on Christ and the true meaning of what this season represents?**

HIS STORY


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YOUR STORY

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YOUR MISSION


HEAD



The verses we covered mention John the Baptist (v. 15), the most sought-after minister during this time in Israel. He was the talk of the town, followed by large crowds who listened to his teaching and went into the Jordan River to be baptized. Yet he recognized that he was in no position to rob Jesus of His glory. In humility, he directed the eyes of the public to Jesus. He wanted Jesus to get the glory.

- How has God revealed Himself to you recently?
- What are some things that might keep people today from recognizing Jesus as King of kings and Lord of lords?


HEART



In the incarnation, God “took up residence” on this earth. In our salvation, God takes up residence in our hearts (Rom. 8:9-13; Eph. 1:13-14). He empowers us to say no to the desires of our flesh and yes to that which pleases God. However, since we live in unredeemed flesh (Rom. 7:7-25) and still commit sinful acts, God the Holy Spirit reveals His presence in our hearts by convicting us and leading us back to the cross of Christ to confess our sins, repent, and receive forgiveness (1 John 1:8-10).

- What is one way you can express your gratitude to Jesus for being your Savior?
- How should the incarnation impact the way we respond to sin within our lives?

HANDS



There’s no greater way to show our neighbors that God has not forsaken them than to be present with them. “Take up residence.” The principle of incarnation means we love people enough to bear with them, to be patient as we show them the love of Christ. We are open about God’s ongoing work in our lives, and we offer the Savior to the people around us—that He might work in their lives too.

- If someone’s only picture of who God came from the way you live, what kind of picture would they get?
- How does your life declare the glory of God to those around you?