

Study Plan

Question / Topic	Passages
1 Is the Bible Trustworthy?	Various
2 Did God Really Create the World?	Genesis 1
3 If God is good, why does suffering exist?	Genesis 2,3
4 Why is evil so widespread and powerful?	Genesis 4-11
5 How can evil people become righteous?	Genesis 12-47
6 Who is God?	Exodus 1-12
7 What is the purpose of the Ten Commandments?	Exodus 14-34
8 What does it mean to take a "step of faith?"	Joshua, 1&2 Samuel
9 How do the Old and New Testaments fit together?	Isaiah, Luke
10 Why did Jesus perform miracles?	Mark
11 What did Jesus really say?	John
12 Is death the end (or the beginning)?	Matthew

What is the *Real* Purpose of the Ten Commandments?

Our second big problem...

We've talked a lot about the first big problem of all humanity – sin leads to death. Tonight, we'll discover the second big problem that all people face.

Things to Remember

- Our first big problem: **Sin**. Because we all are sinful, we are all separated from God and will die.
- "All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way;" Isaiah 53:6

As we've said before, sin is much deeper than the wrong things that we do, it is who we are, woven into our DNA. When we act as though God does not exist, we go our own way and seek our own glory. Basically, we take the God of the Universe off His throne and try to take His place – high treason!

Things to Remember

- Our first big problem: **Sin**. Because we all are sinful, we are all separated from God and will die.
- The Bible is not just a book of rules, it is the true story of God seeking man.
- **Exodus 3:14** > God's Name: "I AM"
 - He is the eternal source of everything that exists
 - He is the Creator and has Absolute Authority over everything and everyone

Our problem is much deeper than good or bad behavior. Since we cannot save ourselves, God gave us His word to bring us back to Him.

As the great "I AM," God is the only self-existent, eternal being, He is the source of everything that exists: every physical or spiritual thing, every truth of logic or philosophy, every law that governs the universe.

Always remember that God has absolute authority over everything: every star and galaxy (Isaiah 40:26), every nation and people group (Proverbs 21:1), every storm (Mark 4:39), every plant and worm (Jonah 4:6-8), every virus and bacterium, etc.

"If there is one single molecule in this universe running around loose, totally free of God's sovereignty, then we have no guarantee that a single promise of God will ever be fulfilled." — (R.C. Sproul, Chosen By God: Know God's Perfect Plan for His Glory and His Children)

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS: What and Why?



The "Entrance Exam" to enter heaven...?

If God were to give each of us an "entrance exam" to enter heaven, how would we do?

Imagine for a minute that the 10 commandments were like the SAT or GaoKao...

<u>The Ten Commandments : Exodus 20</u> Exodus 20:1-2 “And God spoke all these words, saying, I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.” - Who spoke these words? > God spoke all these words - Who is He? > I am the LORD your God > God makes this statement 184 times in the Bible. Why? - What gives Him the right to give commands? > He is the Creator of everything, including me and you	Before God gives the 10 commandments to people, He starts by proclaiming His authority over them (and all mankind) in Exodus 20:1-2. These are not just the words of Moses – they are the words from God! God constantly reminds people that “I am the Lord” (184 times). People quickly forget and worship other things (or themselves). He has ultimate wisdom and power over everything in the universe, hence, the first commandment...
<u>The Ten Commandments : Exodus 20</u> 1. Verse 3: You shall have <u>no other gods</u> before Me – The first commandment broken by men – Who/what is your source of authority? * Remember – “I am the LORD your God” > Every other sin shows we all broke this commandment!	The First Commandment – God begins with the first commandment broken by men. In the garden, they abandoned Him and sought to be their own God. Ever since that day, we have all tried to take the place of God, determining our own purpose for life, defining our own rules of right/wrong, and trying to save ourselves by fulfilling our own dreams. <u>Is there anyone</u> who has kept this command, always recognizing that the true God is Lord of all (including us)? Our #1 offense: turning our back on God and going our own way (trying to become our own god).
<u>The Ten Commandments : Exodus 20</u> 1. Verse 3: You shall have <u>no other gods</u> before Me – The first commandment broken by men – Who/what is your source of authority? 2. Verses 4-6: You shall <u>not make and worship “idols”</u> – Is anything (other than God) the “most important” thing in your life? – Everyone worships something, usually a physical or mental image (“smaller gods” – idols) Verses 4-6: “You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; The root word of “worship” is “worth” (value). What do you value most of all? (hint: where do you spend time and money?)	The Second Commandment - The word “worship” comes from two words: “worth” and “ship.” We worship something when we assign a very high level of “worth” to it. <u>Here is a fact of life: we all worship something</u> – we all worship “smaller gods.” Here is the test – is there <u>anything or anyone</u> that is more important to me than the true God? Have I taken <u>“good” things</u> like career, material possessions, and family, and turned them into <u>“ultimate” things</u>, seeking significance, security, safety and fulfillment in them? One way to determine the most important thing in your life is to “follow the money and the time.” If you were to look at your calendar and your bank account, what would you learn about “worship”?
<u>The Ten Commandments : Exodus 20</u> 1. Verse 3: You shall have <u>no other gods</u> before Me – The first commandment broken by men – Who/what is your source of authority? 2. Verses 4-6: You shall <u>not make and worship idols</u> – Is anything (other than God) the “most important” thing in your life? – Everyone worships something, usually a physical or mental image (“smaller gods” – idols) 3. Verse 7: You shall <u>not misuse the name of God</u> – Not only using his name as a curse (“OMG”), but speaking falsely about Him and His greatness Verse 7: “You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.	The Third Commandment - Although this includes saying the name of God as a curse (e.g. “OMG”), it goes much further. God is our creator and provider, and when we complain against Him, we are speaking falsely about His great name. Conversely, when we do not speak His name with thanksgiving (Colossians 3:17), we break this command as well (even in our heart). Remember how the Israelites broke this commandment in the wilderness, saying the God had brought them out of Egypt to kill them (Exodus 14:11, 16:3, 17:3)
<u>The Ten Commandments : Exodus 20</u> 1. Verse 3: You shall have <u>no other gods</u> before Me – The first commandment broken by men – Who/what is your source of authority? 2. Verses 4-6: You shall <u>not make and worship idols</u> – Is anything (other than God) the “most important” thing in your life? – Everyone worships something, usually a physical or mental image (“smaller gods” – idols) 3. Verse 7: You shall <u>not misuse the name of God</u> – Not only using his name as a curse (“OMG”), but speaking falsely about Him and His greatness	So, here are the first three commandments out of ten – how are you doing so far? Have you kept them perfectly?

<u>The Ten Commandments : Exodus 20</u> 4. Verse 8: Remember the <u>Sabbath day</u> to keep it <u>holy</u> – A reminder to take time and seek to know God personally – Did you reserve time each week to seek and worship God? Verse 8: "Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy."	<i>The Fourth Commandment</i> - In our busy world, do we regularly set aside a significant amount of time to regularly seek and worship God? God made us and knows what's best, so he gave us this structure for blessing and freedom. Yet, we spend our time working hard and burning out in pursuit of things that quickly fade away. God <u>didn't just give the people a list of external rules to obey</u> – He wanted them to <u>know and love Him</u>, so He gave them the Sabbath to rest, reflect, and grow in their relationship with Him. Sadly, the people reduced the commandments (including the Sabbath) to heartless, physical rules. God often rebukes the people for worshiping Him with their <u>words, but their hearts are far from Him.</u> (Isaiah 29:13)
<u>The Ten Commandments : Exodus 20</u> 4. Verse 8: Remember the <u>Sabbath day</u> to keep it <u>holy</u> – A reminder to take time and seek to know God personally – Did you reserve time each week to seek and worship God? 5. Verse 12: <u>Honor your father and mother</u> – Not just obey – honor. Did you always respect your parents...? Verse 12: "Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you."	The first four commandments focus especially on our relationship with God. The second six commandments guide our relationship with people (although we always offend God when we ignore any of His commands). <i>The Fifth Commandment</i> - Not just obey parents – honor them. Have you ever debated with your parents? Have you always protected their honor or have you complained against them behind their back?
<u>The Ten Commandments : Exodus 20</u> 4. Verse 8: Remember the <u>Sabbath day</u> to keep it <u>holy</u> – A reminder to take time and seek to know God personally – Did you reserve time each week to seek and worship God? 5. Verse 12: <u>Honor your father and mother</u> – Not just obey – honor. Did you always respect your parents...? 6. Verse 13: You shall <u>not murder</u> – Have you ever murdered or been angry at someone? Verse 13: "You shall not murder." Matthew 5:21,22: "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, 'Raca,' is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell."	<i>The Sixth Commandment</i> - Maybe Moses shook when he heard this one (he was a murderer). You might be thinking, "Finally, here is one that I haven't broken!" But Jesus reminds us of something important – God knows and cares about what is in your heart. It's not just our actions: everyone who has ever been angry has broken this command (Matthew 5:22).
<u>The Ten Commandments : Exodus 20</u> 4. Verse 8: Remember the <u>Sabbath day</u> to keep it <u>holy</u> – A reminder to take time and seek to know God personally – Did you reserve time each week to seek and worship God? 5. Verse 12: <u>Honor your father and mother</u> – Not just obey – honor. Did you always respect your parents...? 6. Verse 13: You shall <u>not murder</u> – Have you ever murdered or been angry at someone? 7. Verse 14: You shall <u>not commit adultery</u> – Have you ever committed adultery or lusted after someone? Verse 14: "You shall not commit adultery." Matthew 5:27,28: "You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."	<i>The Seventh Commandment</i> - God created sex for a wonderful purpose (in the context of marriage). It is a holy and beautiful thing and is designed as a picture of our faithful relationship with Him. But we have turned it into an unholy way to satisfy our physical and mental lust (Matthew 5:28). You can see why God often speaks about adultery and idolatry in the same context.
<u>The Ten Commandments : Exodus 20</u> 4. Verse 8: Remember the <u>Sabbath day</u> to keep it <u>holy</u> – A reminder to take time and seek to know God personally – Did you reserve time each week to seek and worship God? 5. Verse 12: <u>Honor your father and mother</u> – Not just obey – honor. Did you always respect your parents...? 6. Verse 13: You shall <u>not murder</u> – Have you ever murdered or been angry at someone? 7. Verse 14: You shall <u>not commit adultery</u> – Have you ever committed adultery or lusted after someone?	We've now viewed seven of God's ten commandments. If you're like most people, you're beginning to feel a bit concerned about standing before God, the Holy Judge.

<u>The Ten Commandments : Exodus 20</u> 8. Verse 15: You shall <u>not steal</u> – Even small things, software, or copied materials Verse 15: “You shall not steal.”	<i>The Eighth Commandment</i> - We are all thieves, starting from when we were small children taking toys from other children. We grow up and take bigger things, physical and virtual. We download pirated software and music, we steal time from others, and we copy the work of others and <u>claim credit for ourselves</u>. Why do we steal? Because we do not trust and believe God’s promise that He will provide for our needs (like the Israelites).
<u>The Ten Commandments : Exodus 20</u> 8. Verse 15: You shall <u>not steal</u> – Even small things, software, or copied materials 9. Verse 16: You shall <u>not lie</u> – God is truth. Guess who is “the father of lies”? Verse 16: “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.” Proverbs 12:22: “The LORD detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy.” John 8:44: “You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father’s desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies.”	<i>The Ninth Commandment</i> - God hates lying (Revelation 22:15). Whenever we lie, it reminds us who we are – children of “the father of lies” – Satan (John 8:44). Why do we lie? Because we think that we must lie <u>to get what we think we need</u> from others or to escape a difficult situation. Once again, it demonstrates that if we choose to <u>be our own god</u>, we also <u>make up our own rules</u>. We also know that our small lies eventually grow up to be big lies. Close relationships (like marriage) require trust, and trust requires honesty. Perhaps it isn’t a surprise that close relationships are becoming rare...
<u>The Ten Commandments : Exodus 20</u> 8. Verse 15: You shall <u>not steal</u> – Even small things, software, or copied materials 9. Verse 16: You shall <u>not lie</u> – God is truth. Guess who is “the father of lies”? 10. Verse 17: You shall <u>not covet</u> – If only I had _____, I would be more satisfied. Verse 17: “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house. You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or <u>anything</u> that belongs to your neighbor.”	<i>The Tenth Commandment</i> - Have you ever thought something like this: “If only I had _____, I would be more successful and satisfied.” When we look at someone else* and strongly desire what they have, we are basically telling God that we are <u>not satisfied with what He has given to us</u>. We are basically showing that we <u>do not trust Him</u>. This 10th commandment exposes the fruit of our failure to obey the 1st one. Our biggest problem is <u>not only our bad behavior – it is our bad belief</u>. * Beware the “comparison trap” – it always leads to coveting, criticism, or self-exaltation – revealing the true nature of our sinful heart.
<u>The Ten Commandments : Exodus 20</u> 8. Verse 15: You shall <u>not steal</u> – Even small things, software, or copied materials 9. Verse 16: You shall <u>not lie</u> – God is truth. Guess who is “the father of lies”? 10. Verse 17: You shall <u>not covet</u> – If only I had _____, I would be more satisfied.	So there it is – ten commandments from God. We often refer to this as God’s moral law.
<u>So, how did you do?</u> • We all fail this test! – The only passing score: 100% perfect James 2:10 – “For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it.” Matthew 5:48 – “Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.”	So, you just took God’s entrance exam for heaven. How did you do? By the way, the “passing score” is very high – 100% (Matthew 5:48). If you miss just one, you fail (James 2:10). When we compare ourselves with others, we often think that we aren’t too bad. In fact, when people are asked if they consider themselves to be more moral, ethical, or fair than the average person, more than 60% to over 80% say yes. (This tendency—part of the psychological "better-than-average" effect—is even stronger for moral traits than for intelligence or physical skills).

<u>So, how did you do?</u> • We all fail this test! – The only passing score: 100% perfect – Ignorance is no excuse Leviticus 5:17 – “If anyone sins and does what is forbidden in any of the LORD’s commands, even though they do not know it, they are guilty and will be held responsible.”	When we compare with others, we deceive ourselves into believing that we are better than others, But this test asks a more important question: how do I measure up against God’s standards of moral goodness? And by the way, ignorance is no excuse (Leviticus 5:17).
<u>So, how did you do?</u> • We all fail this test! – The only passing score: 100% perfect – Ignorance is no excuse • The 10 Commandments are like a mirror – An honest look shows our guilt Romans 3:19-20 – “Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be silenced and the whole world held accountable to God. Therefore no one will be declared righteous in God’s sight by the works of the law; rather, through the law we become conscious of our sin.”	If we are honest with ourselves, the Ten Commandments are like a mirror for our soul (James 1:23-24) When we look at them, they clearly show us our sin. Some people assume that, in order to be a good person, we should keep the Ten Commandments. But the Bible provides a more important reason for the Ten Commandments: Romans 3:19,20 – The “Ten Commandments” (“the law”) we not given to help bad sinners be better sinners. It was given to show us that, before a perfectly holy God, we all stand guilty without defense.
<u>So, how did you do?</u> • We all fail this test! – The only passing score: 100% perfect – Ignorance is no excuse • The 10 Commandments are like a mirror – An honest look <u>shows our guilt</u> – “through the law we <u>become conscious of our sin.</u>” – THIS IS THE PURPOSE OF THE 10 COMMANDMENTS! – We don’t use a mirror to wash our face, we need something else to remove our sin...	The Ten Commandments were not given to improve the behavior of sinners – they were given to make us conscious of our sin. Like a wise medical doctor explaining the danger of stage 4 cancer to his patient, the Ten Commandments show us that are desperately in need of radical surgery in order to survive! Every person is infected with the “cancer of sin.” We will not get better by trying to ignore it. We need someone to save us.
<u>Guilty of breaking God’s Law</u> • Breaking the law leads to punishment – If we break the law of this country, we are guilty and the government has the authority to punish us. – When we break God’s laws, we are guilty and He has the authority to punish us. – He has perfect knowledge of our thoughts, feelings, and actions Psalms 139:2-4 – “You know when I sit and when I rise; You perceive my thoughts from afar. You discern my going out and my lying down; You are familiar with all my ways. Before a word is on my tongue You, LORD, know it completely.	When we break the laws of our country, the government has the authority to punish us. They don’t ask us if we like the law or approve of it – we are not given that privilege. Similarly, when we break the laws of God, He has the authority to punish us. And remember, He knows everything perfectly (Psalm 139:2-4).
<u>Guilty of breaking God’s Law</u> • Breaking the law leads to punishment – If we break the law of this country, we are guilty and the government has the authority to punish us. – When we break God’s laws, we are guilty and He has the authority to punish us. – He has perfect knowledge of our thoughts, feelings, and actions – We cannot erase our sin by trying to do a few good things (e.g. adding some sugar to feces does not make it good enough to eat). Isaiah 64:6 – “We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment.”	<u>Sin</u> is the word used by the Bible for breaking the laws of God. As you can see from these Ten Commandments, we can sin when we do the things that God tells us to avoid, or when we fail to do the things that He requires. Here is a very big problem for all of us: God has clearly spelled out His law, we have clearly broken His law, and we all must suffer the punishment for our sin. The Bible does not say we can “balance” our sin with good works any more than we can add some sugar to a jar of feces and make it edible. Every good thing we try to do gets contaminated by the sin in our lives. Even the “good things” are unacceptable to God.

<u>Guilty of breaking God's Law</u> • Breaking the law leads to punishment – If we break the law of this country, we are guilty and the government has the authority to punish us. – When we break God's laws, we are guilty and He has the authority to punish us. – He has perfect knowledge of our thoughts, feelings, and actions – We cannot erase all the bad things by trying to do a few good things. – We are much worse than we think Romans 3:10-12 – "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away, they have together become worthless; there is no one who does good, not even one."	At the beginning of these lessons, we said that we would be studying the foundational issues and main themes of the Bible. This is one of the wonderful things about the Bible: these main themes are consistent all the way through the Bible. The fact that God is holy and righteous and demands a high price for sin (death) is one of the foundational themes.
<u>Things to Think About</u> • The entire human race has two problems: 1. Adam's sin resulted in death (physical and spiritual). For him and for all humans. 2. We have all broken God's law and are guilty. We all deserve punishment. God is a perfect judge, and we stand silent before Him (without defense). • We each have these two problems – big problems. • The BIG Question: How can a God of perfect justice punish sin and forgive sin?	By now, you should have noticed that the entire human race is in trouble. We have two kinds of trouble: 1) Adam's sin resulted in death. Death for Adam and death for all humans. 2) We have all broken the Ten Commandments and are guilty before God, deserving severe punishment. We have a problem – a big problem. Is there any hope for humanity? Is there any hope for you? When we read the Bible, we certainly see that there is "bad news" for all people here! And since God is a God of perfect justice, how could He possibly forgive such sinful people? This week, think about these two big problems we each face: death and judgment.
<u>One Final Verse:</u> Exodus 34:6,7 – "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. Yet He does not leave the guilty unpunished;"	