

WEEK 1 — COMMANDMENTS 1–3 (place the appropriate part of the Decalogue in each service)

You shall have no other gods before me

You shall not make for yourself an idol

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain

Gospel - Matthew 4:1–11 - *The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness*

New Testament - Romans 5:12–21 - *Adam and Christ: sin and death contrasted with grace and life*

Theological Emphasis: Jesus resists false worship and lives in perfect faithfulness to the Father, fulfilling the Law where Adam and Israel failed.

WEEK 2 — COMMANDMENT 4

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy

Gospel - John 3:1–16 - *Jesus and Nicodemus: new birth by the Spirit*

New Testament - Romans 4:1–5, 13–17 - *Justification by faith, resting in God's promise*

Theological Emphasis: True Sabbath rest is found not in works or religious striving, but in trusting the promise of God fulfilled in Christ.

WEEK 3 — COMMANDMENT 5

You shall honor your father and your mother

Gospel - John 4:5–42 - *Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well*

Option: Luke 2:41–52 - *Jesus in the Temple as a boy*

New Testament - Romans 1:16–32 - *The power of the gospel and disordered worship*

Theological Emphasis: The command to honor parents forms the bridge between love of God and love of neighbor. Jesus embodies perfect obedience—honoring His earthly parents while remaining faithful to His heavenly Father—and restores dignity to those who have been dishonored.

WEEK 4 — COMMANDMENTS 6–8

You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal

Gospel - John 9:1–41 - *Jesus heals the man born blind*

Option A: Matthew 5:21–32 - *Anger, lust, and the heart*

New Testament - Ephesians 5:1–14 - *Walk as children of light*

Theological Emphasis: These commandments protect life, faithfulness, and provision. Jesus exposes the heart-level roots of violence and unfaithfulness and restores sight so we may see others rightly and live as children of light.

WEEK 5 — COMMANDMENTS 9–10

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor, You shall not covet

Gospel - John 11:18–44 - *The raising of Lazarus*

Option A: Luke 12:13–34 - *The rich fool and treasures of the heart*

New Testament - Romans 6:15–23 - *From slavery to sin to freedom in righteousness*

Theological Emphasis: Falsehood and covetous desire flow from hearts enslaved to sin and discontent. Jesus exposes misplaced trust and reorders our desires, freeing us to live in truth, gratitude, and resurrection life.

Questions

1 – Could we include something for children / families?

2 – Could we do the relevant commandment with the response “Lord incline our hearts...”

3 – Does this grouping make sense?

THE DECALOGUE

Celebrant God spoke these words and said:
I am the Lord your God.
You shall have no other gods but me.

People Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Celebrant You shall not make for yourself any idol.
People Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Celebrant You shall not take the Name of the Lord your God in vain.
People Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Celebrant Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.
People Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Celebrant Honor your father and your mother.
People Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Celebrant You shall not murder.
People Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Celebrant You shall not commit adultery.
People Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Celebrant You shall not steal.
People Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Celebrant You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
People Lord, have mercy upon us,
and incline our hearts to keep this law.

Celebrant You shall not covet.
People Lord, have mercy upon us, and write all these,
your laws, in our hearts, we beseech you.

EXODUS 20:1-17t; DEUTERONOMY 5:6-21t

WEEK 1 — COMMANDMENTS 1–3

You shall have no other gods before me

You shall not make for yourself an idol

You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain

Gospel - Matthew 4:1–11 - *The temptation of Jesus in the wilderness*

New Testament - Romans 5:12–21 - *Adam and Christ: sin and death contrasted with grace and life*

Theological Emphasis: Jesus resists false worship and lives in perfect faithfulness to the Father, fulfilling the Law where Adam and Israel failed.

LEADER GUIDE

1. Welcome & Icebreaker (10–15 minutes)

Icebreaker Question:

- What's something people today look to for security, identity, or control?
- When you're stressed, where do you instinctively turn for comfort?
- What do people in our culture treat as "ultimate"?

Transition:

"The first three commandments go straight to the center of worship — who or what we trust most. And in Matthew 4, we see Jesus tested in exactly those areas."

2. The Old Testament Commandments (Exodus 20:1–7)

Read Exodus 20:1–7 aloud.

Remind the group:

These commands begin with grace:

"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt..."

Obedience flows from redemption.

Commandment 1

"You shall have no other gods before me."

- "Before me" means "before my face" — God sees all rival loyalties.
- This command establishes exclusivity in covenant relationship.
- It protects worship — the heart's ultimate allegiance.
- God is not one option among many; He is the only true God.
- The sin beneath every sin is misplaced worship.

Discussion:

- Why would this command matter so deeply to Israel?
 - Surrounded by polytheistic cultures.
 - Covenant relationship requires exclusivity.
 - Idolatry leads to moral and social collapse.
 - What are modern "other gods"?
 - Success, comfort, politics, romance, control, self-expression.
 - Often good things turned ultimate.
 - Where are you tempted to divide your loyalty?
 - Look for subtle trust-shifts.
 - Fear often reveals functional gods.
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Commandment 2

"You shall not make for yourself an idol..."

This command governs how God is worshiped.

- Israel must not reshape God into manageable forms.
- Idolatry reduces the infinite God into something controllable.
- We may not carve statues — but we create mental distortions.
- An idol is a god we can predict, control, or use.

Discussion:

- Why is it dangerous to reshape God into our image?
 - We domesticate Him.
 - We lose transcendence and holiness.
 - We justify ourselves.

- How do people today “remake” God?
 - “God just wants me happy.”
 - Ignoring parts of Scripture.
 - Selective obedience.

Commandment 3

“You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain.”

“Name” represents character and authority.

- “In vain” means empty, trivial, false, or misrepresenting.
- This includes false oaths — but goes deeper.
- To bear God’s name means to reflect Him accurately.
- Israel bore His name before the nations.

Discussion:

- How can God’s name be taken in vain beyond profanity?
 - Hypocrisy.
 - Claiming God supports what He does not.
 - Using faith for reputation or power.
- Where might Christians today misrepresent God?
 - Harshness without truth.
 - Truth without love.
 - Cultural nationalism.

Transition to the New Testament

“If the first three commandments call for perfect worship, who has actually done this? Adam failed. Israel failed. We fail. But Matthew 4 shows us someone who does not fail.”

3. Epistle Reading — Romans 5:12–21

Read the passage aloud.

Discussion

- What does this passage teach about Adam’s failure?
 - Sin entered through one man.
 - Death spread to all.
 - Representation: Adam as covenant head.
- What does it teach about Christ?
 - Second Adam.
 - His obedience brings righteousness.
 - Grace abounds beyond sin.
 - Christ succeeds where Adam failed.
- How does this connect to the first three commandments?
 - Adam chose autonomy (another “god”).
 - Christ perfectly obeys the Father.
 - Where sin multiplies, grace multiplies more.

Emphasize:

Jesus doesn’t merely forgive idolaters — He replaces Adam as our representative.

4. Gospel Reading — Matthew 4:1–11

Read the temptation narrative slowly.

Frame it:

- Jesus in wilderness = Israel in wilderness.
- 40 days = 40 years.
- Tested in hunger, identity, and worship.

Discussion

- What is Satan really tempting Jesus to do?
 - Distrust the Father’s provision.
 - Redefine sonship.
 - Seek glory without the cross.
 - Worship another for power.
- Which commandments are at stake here?

- - Command 1: “Worship me.”
 - Command 2: reshape God’s plan.
 - Command 3: misuse divine sonship.
- How does Jesus respond?
 - - Quotes Deuteronomy.
 - Submits to Scripture.
 - Refuses false worship.
 - Trusts the Father completely.
- How is Jesus the true worshiper?
 - - No divided loyalty.
 - No distorted worship.
 - No misuse of God’s name.
 - Perfect faithfulness under pressure.

Make this explicit:

In the wilderness, Jesus fulfills Commandments 1–3 perfectly. Where Adam grasped, Jesus trusts. Where Israel grumbled, Jesus submits.

5. Gospel Integration (10–15 minutes)

- How does seeing Jesus obey perfectly change how we read the Law?
 - - The Law shows His righteousness.
 - The Law drives us to grace.
 - We obey from acceptance, not for it.
- How does grace free us from idol-driven fear?
 - - We no longer need false saviors.
 - Security rests in Christ’s obedience.
- What would worship look like flowing from gratitude rather than guilt?
 - - Joyful obedience.
 - Integrity in public and private.
 - Speech that honors God.

6. The Four Questions

1. What does this passage teach us about God?
2. What does this passage teach us about people?
3. How does this passage point to Jesus and the Gospel?
4. What should I do in response?

Encourage specific responses.

7. Prayer Prompts

Structure prayer in four movements:

Confession

Lord, we confess that we often trust other gods...

Thanksgiving

Jesus, thank you for perfectly obeying where we failed...

Transformation

Holy Spirit, reorder our loves...

Intercession

Help us reflect true worship in our homes, church, and work...

Close with the Lord’s Prayer.

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

(Questions Only)

Icebreaker

- What's something people today look to for security, identity, or control?
 - When you're stressed, where do you instinctively turn?
-

Exodus 20:1–7

- Why would these commands matter so deeply to Israel?
 - What are modern “other gods”?
 - Where are you tempted to divide your loyalty?
 - How do people today “remake” God?
 - How can God's name be taken in vain beyond profanity?
 - Where might Christians today misrepresent God?
-

Romans 5:12–21

- What does this passage teach about Adam's failure?
 - What does it teach about Christ?
 - How does this connect to the first three commandments?
-

Matthew 4:1–11

- What is Satan really tempting Jesus to do?
 - Which commandments are at stake here?
 - How does Jesus respond?
 - How is Jesus the true worshiper?
-

Integration

- How does seeing Jesus obey perfectly change how we read the Law?
 - How does grace free us from idol-driven fear?
 - What would obedience look like flowing from gratitude rather than guilt?
-

Final Reflection

1. What does this passage teach us about God?
 2. What does this passage teach us about people?
 3. How does this passage point to Jesus and the Gospel?
 4. What should I do in response?
-

WEEK 2 — COMMANDMENT 4

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy

Gospel - John 3:1–16 - *Jesus and Nicodemus: new birth by the Spirit*

New Testament - Romans 4:1–5, 13–17 - *Justification by faith, resting in God's promise*

Theological Emphasis: True Sabbath rest is found not in works or religious striving, but in trusting the promise of God fulfilled in Christ.

LEADER GUIDE

1. Welcome & Icebreaker (10–15 minutes)

Icebreaker Questions:

- When do you feel most exhausted — physically, emotionally, spiritually?
- What do you usually do to “rest”? Does it actually restore you?
- Do you find it harder to stop working or to stop worrying?

Transition:

“The fourth commandment introduces something beautiful and countercultural — rest. But Scripture will show us that the deepest Sabbath rest is not merely a day off... it is a settled trust in God's finished work.”

2. The Old Testament Command — Exodus 20:8–11

Read Exodus 20:8–11 aloud.

Remind the group:

The Sabbath is rooted in creation before Sinai. This is not merely ceremonial — it reflects God's rhythm.

Understanding the Command

- “Remember” implies intentionality — Sabbath doesn't happen accidentally.
- “Keep it holy” means set apart — distinct from ordinary time.
- Grounded in God's creation rest (Genesis 2).
- Israel's weekly rest proclaimed trust in God's provision.
- In Deuteronomy 5, Sabbath also remembers redemption from Egypt.
- Sabbath was about identity: You are not slaves.

Sabbath confronts:

- Self-sufficiency
 - Productivity as identity
 - Anxiety-driven work
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Discussion

- Why would Sabbath be radical for Israel?
 - - Former slaves in Egypt — endless labor.
 - Trusting God for provision instead of constant toil.
 - Rest was an act of faith.
- What does Sabbath reveal about God?
 - - He is Creator.
 - He provides.
 - He does not need our constant labor.
 - He delights in communion.
- What does Sabbath reveal about us?
 - - We drift toward control.
 - We fear scarcity.
 - We equate worth with productivity.
 - We struggle to trust.

Transition:

“But even Israel turned Sabbath into performance. By Jesus' day, rest had become religious striving.”

3. Epistle Reading — Romans 4:1–5, 13–17

Read the passage aloud.

Frame it:

Paul contrasts works and faith — effort and promise.

Discussion

- How was Abraham declared righteous?
 - - Not by works.
 - Not by earning.
 - By faith.
 - He trusted God’s promise.
- What does Paul mean when he says faith is “counted” as righteousness?
 - - Legal declaration.
 - Imputed righteousness.
 - A gift, not wages earned.
- How does this connect to Sabbath?
 - - Sabbath rest mirrors justification by faith.
 - We cease striving to justify ourselves.
 - We trust God’s promise instead of our performance.
 - Faith is spiritual rest.

Key phrase to emphasize:

“To the one who does not work but believes...” (Romans 4:5)

That is Sabbath language.

4. Gospel Reading — John 3:1–16

Read the passage slowly.

Nicodemus represents religious effort and moral striving.

Discussion

- Who is Nicodemus?
 - - Pharisee.
 - Teacher of Israel.
 - Religious insider.
 - Morally serious.
- What confuses him?
 - - New birth by the Spirit.
 - Cannot control or manufacture it.
 - Salvation not achieved but received.
- How does this connect to Sabbath?
 - - New birth is not earned.
 - The Spirit moves — not human effort.
 - Rest begins when we stop climbing and receive grace.
- What does John 3:16 show us about God’s initiative?
 - - God loved.
 - God gave.
 - Whoever believes.
 - Eternal life as gift.

Emphasize:

Nicodemus represents religious restlessness.

Jesus offers spiritual rest through rebirth.

5. Gospel Integration (10–15 minutes)

Bring the threads together:

- Sabbath teaches us to stop working for identity.
- Romans 4 teaches us to stop working for righteousness.
- John 3 teaches us to stop striving for new life.
- Christ fulfills Sabbath by finishing the work we could not.

Discussion:

- Where are you tempted to justify yourself by performance?
 - - Career.
 - Parenting.
 - Church involvement.
 - Moral record.
- How does justification by faith feel like rest?
 - - Freedom from comparison.
 - Freedom from fear.
 - Acceptance before obedience.
- What would it look like to practice Sabbath as an act of trust rather than obligation?
 - - Delight instead of duty.
 - Worship instead of productivity.
 - Presence instead of distraction.

Clarify:

Sabbath is not laziness.

It is embodied trust in God's completed work.

Christ says, "It is finished."

That is ultimate Sabbath.

6. The Four Questions

1. What does this passage teach us about God?
2. What does this passage teach us about people?
3. How does this passage point to Jesus and the Gospel?
4. What should I do in response?

Encourage application to both:

- Weekly rhythms.
- Heart posture.

7. Prayer Prompts

Structure prayer around rest.

Confession

Lord, we confess our restless striving and self-justification...

Thanksgiving

Jesus, thank you that righteousness is a gift, not wages...

Surrender

Holy Spirit, teach us to trust and stop striving...

Intercession

Help our church become a people marked by joyful rest...

Close with the Lord's Prayer.

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

Icebreaker

- When do you feel most exhausted — physically, emotionally, spiritually?
 - What do you usually do to “rest”? Does it actually restore you?
 - Do you find it harder to stop working or to stop worrying?
-

Exodus 20:8–11

- Why would Sabbath be radical for Israel?
 - What does Sabbath reveal about God?
 - What does Sabbath reveal about us?
-

Romans 4:1–5, 13–17

- How was Abraham declared righteous?
 - What does it mean that faith is “counted” as righteousness?
 - How does this connect to the idea of Sabbath rest?
-

John 3:1–16

- What confuses Nicodemus?
 - What does Jesus say about new birth?
 - How does John 3:16 describe God’s initiative?
 - How does this connect to true rest?
-

Integration

- Where are you tempted to justify yourself by performance?
 - How does justification by faith feel like rest?
 - What would it look like to practice Sabbath as an act of trust?
-

Final Reflection

1. What does this passage teach us about God?
 2. What does this passage teach us about people?
 3. How does this passage point to Jesus and the Gospel?
 4. What should I do in response?
-

WEEK 3 — COMMANDMENT 5

You shall honor your father and your mother

Gospel - John 4:5–42 - *Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well*

Option: Luke 2:41–52 - *Jesus in the Temple as a boy*

New Testament - Romans 1:16–32 - *The power of the gospel and disordered worship*

Theological Emphasis: The command to honor parents forms the bridge between love of God and love of neighbor. Jesus embodies perfect obedience—honoring His earthly parents while remaining faithful to His heavenly Father—and restores dignity to those who have been dishonored.

LEADER GUIDE

1. Welcome & Icebreaker (10–15 minutes)

Icebreaker Questions:

- What is one lesson you're grateful your parents (or guardians) taught you?
- When you hear the word "authority," what emotion comes to mind?
- What makes honoring someone difficult?

Transition:

"The fifth commandment shifts from direct worship of God to how that worship shapes our closest human relationships. It teaches us how to live under authority — and how to reflect God's heart in our families and communities."

2. The Old Testament Command — Exodus 20:12

Read Exodus 20:12 aloud.

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

Understanding the Command

- "Honor" (Hebrew *kabed*) literally means "to give weight to."
- It implies respect, obedience (in youth), and care (in adulthood).
- This command includes a promise — stability and flourishing.
- It anchors society in generational faithfulness.
- It is the first command dealing directly with human relationships.
- Parents represent delegated authority under God.

This command protects:

- Family structure.
 - Transmission of faith.
 - Social stability.
-

Discussion

- Why do you think this command comes first in the "love your neighbor" section?
 - - Family is the training ground for all relationships.
 - Authority begins in the home.
 - Worship shapes family life.
- What does this command reveal about God?
 - - He is Father.
 - He establishes order.
 - Authority is not arbitrary — it reflects His character.
- What does this command reveal about us?
 - - We resist authority.
 - We struggle with pride.
 - We are shaped deeply by family wounds.

Important pastoral note:

Acknowledge that this command is complex for those with broken or abusive family histories. Honor does not

mean enabling sin or ignoring harm. Honor may sometimes mean setting boundaries while still refusing hatred.

3. Epistle Reading — Romans 1:16–32

Read selected portions (especially vv. 18–25, 28–32).

Frame it:

Paul shows what happens when worship becomes disordered.

Discussion

- What is the root problem described in this passage?
 - - Suppression of truth.
 - Exchange of worship.
 - Idolatry leads to moral collapse.
- How does disordered worship affect relationships?
 - - Breakdown of natural affections.
 - Rebellion against authority.
 - Social fragmentation.
- How does dishonoring parents fit into this picture?
 - - Paul lists “disobedient to parents” (v. 30).
 - Family breakdown reflects deeper spiritual disorder.
 - When God’s authority is rejected, all authority destabilizes.

Key connection:

Commandment 5 flows from Commandments 1–4. When God is dishonored, human authority fractures.

Emphasize:

The gospel (v.16) is the power of God — not merely to forgive individuals, but to reorder disordered loves.

4. Gospel Reading — John 4:5–42

This passage expands the meaning of honor beyond family systems.

Read selected sections.

Discussion

- Who is the Samaritan woman socially?
 - - Ethnic outsider.
 - Theologically suspect.
 - Morally compromised.
 - Socially marginalized.
- How has she likely experienced dishonor?
 - - Multiple marriages.
 - Cultural exclusion.
 - Gender vulnerability.
 - Religious marginalization.
- How does Jesus treat her?
 - - Speaks directly to her.
 - Reveals truth gently but clearly.
 - Offers living water.
 - Restores dignity.
- How does this connect to Commandment 5?
 - - Honor reflects God’s image in others.
 - Jesus restores dignity to the dishonored.
 - True honor flows from knowing the Father.

Bridge insight:

When we know God as Father, we begin to see others not as rivals or burdens, but as image-bearers.

Optional Gospel — Luke 2:41–52

If used, focus on:

- Jesus remains in the Temple.
- He prioritizes His Father’s house.
- Yet returns and is submissive to Mary and Joseph.

- Jesus perfectly balances earthly and heavenly authority.
- He honors His earthly parents (v. 51).
- Yet ultimate allegiance belongs to the Father.

He fulfills Commandment 5 perfectly.

5. Gospel Integration (10–15 minutes)

Bring it together:

- Disordered worship leads to disordered families.
- Dishonor flows from idolatry.
- Jesus honors perfectly.
- Jesus restores the dishonored.
- Through the gospel, we are adopted into the Father’s family.

Discussion:

- Where do you struggle with honoring authority?
 - - Parents.
 - Church leadership.
 - Government.
 - Workplace.
- How does knowing God as Father reshape how we see authority?
 - - Authority is accountable to God.
 - Not all authority is ultimate.
 - We obey God above all.
- How can we show honor even when relationships are broken?
 - - Refuse slander.
 - Pray for them.
 - Set healthy boundaries.
 - Seek reconciliation where possible.

Emphasize: The gospel does not erase wounds — but it gives a new identity that frees us from bitterness.

6. The Four Questions

1. What does this passage teach us about God?
2. What does this passage teach us about people?
3. How does this passage point to Jesus and the Gospel?
4. What should I do in response?

Encourage reflection both upward (toward God) and outward (toward family and authority).

7. Prayer Prompts

Confession

Father, we confess our pride and rebellion...

Healing

Lord, bring healing where family wounds still ache...

Transformation

Teach us to honor others as image-bearers...

Intercession

Strengthen families in our church and community...

Close with the Lord’s Prayer.

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

(Questions Only)

Icebreaker

- What is one lesson you're grateful your parents taught you?
 - When you hear the word "authority," what emotion comes to mind?
-

Exodus 20:12

- Why does this command bridge love of God and love of neighbor?
 - What does it mean to "honor" someone?
 - What does this command reveal about God?
 - What does it reveal about us?
-

Romans 1:16–32

- What is the root problem described in this passage?
 - How does disordered worship affect relationships?
 - Why does Paul include "disobedient to parents" in his list?
-

John 4:5–42

- How has the Samaritan woman experienced dishonor?
 - How does Jesus treat her?
 - What does this teach us about true honor?
-

Integration

- Where do you struggle with honoring authority?
 - How does knowing God as Father reshape how we see authority?
 - How can we show honor even when relationships are broken?
-

Final Reflection

1. What does this passage teach us about God?
 2. What does this passage teach us about people?
 3. How does this passage point to Jesus and the Gospel?
 4. What should I do in response?
-

WEEK 4 — COMMANDMENTS 6–8

You shall not murder, You shall not commit adultery, You shall not steal

Gospel - John 9:1–41 - *Jesus heals the man born blind*

Option A: Matthew 5:21–32 - *Anger, lust, and the heart*

New Testament - Ephesians 5:1–14 - *Walk as children of light*

Theological Emphasis: These commandments protect life, faithfulness, and provision. Jesus exposes the heart-level roots of violence and unfaithfulness and restores sight so we may see others rightly and live as children of light.

LEADER GUIDE

1. Welcome & Icebreaker (10–15 minutes)

Because the content is heavy, begin gently.

Icebreaker Questions:

- When have you realized you were wrong about someone?
- What does it mean to “see” someone clearly?
- Why do people so easily misjudge others?

Transition:

“Commandments 6–8 protect life, marriage, and property — the basic structures of human flourishing. But Jesus shows us that the real issue is not just behavior — it is the heart.”

2. The Old Testament Commands — Exodus 20:13–15

Read the three commandments aloud.

Short and direct.

Commandment 6 — You shall not murder.

Protects the sanctity of life.

- Rooted in the image of God (Genesis 9:6).
- Murder is the ultimate devaluing of another person.
- Protects dignity and justice.

Discussion:

- Why does human life carry such weight in Scripture?
 - Image-bearing.
 - God is giver of life.
 - Life is not ours to dispose of.
 - What forms can “murder” take beyond physical violence?
 - Dehumanization.
 - Hatred.
 - Character assassination.
 - Indifference to suffering.
-

Commandment 7 — You shall not commit adultery.

Protects covenant faithfulness.

- Marriage reflects God’s covenant love.
- Adultery fractures trust and community.
- Sexual faithfulness is not repression — it is protection.

Discussion:

- Why is covenant faithfulness so central to Scripture?
 - God describes His relationship as covenant marriage.
 - Faithfulness mirrors God’s character.
 - How does culture redefine faithfulness today?
 - Self-fulfillment over covenant.
 - Desire over promise.
 - Redefinition of sexuality.
-

Commandment 8 — You shall not steal.

Protects provision and trust.

- Theft violates another’s labor.

- Implies God as ultimate provider.
- Stealing includes exploitation and injustice.

Discussion:

- Why is stealing more than taking objects?
 - Withholding wages.
 - Exploiting systems.
 - Taking credit.
 - Wasting entrusted resources.

Bridge Insight:

These commandments protect **life, love, and livelihood** — the basic goods of society.

Transition: “But Jesus tells us the problem is not merely external behavior — it is spiritual blindness.”

3. Gospel Reading — John 9:1–41

Read selected portions.

Frame it: This is a story about sight — physical and spiritual.

Discussion

- Who is blind in this story?
 - The man physically.
 - The Pharisees spiritually.
 - The disciples misunderstand suffering.
- How does the crowd treat the blind man?
 - As a theological problem.
 - As an object of speculation.
 - As morally suspect.
- How does Jesus treat him?
 - Stops.
 - Sees him.
 - Touches him.
 - Restores him.
- What does blindness symbolize?
 - Misjudging others.
 - Self-righteousness.
 - Moral superiority.
 - Failure to see image-bearers.

Key connection: Violence, adultery, and theft begin when we fail to truly “see” others as image-bearers.

Jesus restores sight — not just to eyes, but to hearts.

4. Optional Reading — Matthew 5:21–32

If used, emphasize Jesus intensifying the Law.

Discussion

- How does Jesus deepen “You shall not murder”?
 - Anger.
 - Contempt.
 - “Raca.”
 - Reconciliation prioritized.
- How does Jesus deepen “You shall not commit adultery”?
 - Lust.
 - Objectification.
 - Heart-level desire.
- What is Jesus exposing?
 - The root.
 - Sin beneath behavior.
 - The need for new hearts.

Make this clear: External compliance without transformed sight is not righteousness.

5. Epistle Reading — Ephesians 5:1–14

Read the passage aloud.

This is the positive vision.

Discussion

- What does it mean to “walk as children of light”?
 - Identity before behavior. Imitate God.
 - Live visibly different lives. Fruit of light: goodness, righteousness, truth.
- How does Paul connect sexuality and light?
 - Sexual sin thrives in darkness.
 - The gospel brings exposure and healing. Light reveals and restores.
- How does this passage relate to Commandments 6–8?
 - Protect life through goodness. Protect marriage through purity.
 - Protect provision through integrity. Light produces justice.

Key insight: The Law restrains darkness. The Gospel creates light.

6. Gospel Integration (10–15 minutes)

Bring the strands together:

- Murder flows from hatred and dehumanization.
- Adultery flows from objectification.
- Theft flows from covetousness and distrust.
- All three grow from spiritual blindness.

Jesus:

- Sees clearly. Loves sacrificially.
- Honors bodies and dignity.
- Restores what sin distorts.

Discussion:

- Where do you struggle to see others rightly?
 - Political differences.
 - Sexual temptation.
 - Economic envy.
 - Bitterness.
- How does being seen by Christ change how we see others?
 - We are not self-made.
 - We are recipients of mercy.
 - Grace produces gentleness.
- What would it look like to live as children of light this week?
 - Speak life.
 - Practice faithfulness.
 - Practice generosity.
 - Seek reconciliation.

Emphasize: Jesus doesn't just forbid sin — He restores sight and forms a new people.

7. The Four Questions

1. What does this passage teach us about God?
2. What does this passage teach us about people?
3. How does this passage point to Jesus and the Gospel?
4. What should I do in response?

Encourage specific and relational application.

8. Prayer Prompts

Confession

Lord, forgive us for anger, lust, greed, and blindness...

Thanksgiving

Jesus, thank you for seeing us in mercy...

Transformation

Open our eyes to see others as image-bearers...

Intercession

Bring light into broken marriages, violent communities, and systems of injustice...

Close with the Lord's Prayer.

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

(Questions Only)

Icebreaker

- What does it mean to truly “see” someone?
 - When have you realized you misjudged someone?
-

Exodus 20:13–15

- Why does human life carry such weight in Scripture?
 - Why is covenant faithfulness so central to God’s design?
 - Why is stealing more than taking objects?
 - What do these commandments protect?
-

John 9:1–41

- Who is blind in this story?
 - How does Jesus treat the blind man?
 - What does spiritual blindness look like today?
 - How might blindness lead to violence, unfaithfulness, or injustice?
-

(Optional) Matthew 5:21–32

- How does Jesus deepen the commands about murder and adultery?
 - What is He exposing about the heart?
-

Ephesians 5:1–14

- What does it mean to walk as children of light?
 - What is the fruit of light?
 - How does identity shape obedience?
-

Integration

- Where do you struggle to see others rightly?
 - How does being seen by Christ change how you see others?
 - What would it look like to live as a child of light this week?
-

Final Reflection

1. What does this passage teach us about God?
 2. What does this passage teach us about people?
 3. How does this passage point to Jesus and the Gospel?
 4. What should I do in response?
-

WEEK 5 — COMMANDMENTS 9–10

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor, You shall not covet

Gospel - John 11:18–44 - *The raising of Lazarus*

Option A: Luke 12:13–34 - *The rich fool and treasures of the heart*

New Testament - Romans 6:15–23 - *From slavery to sin to freedom in righteousness*

Theological Emphasis: Falsehood and covetous desire flow from hearts enslaved to sin and discontent. Jesus exposes misplaced trust and reorders our desires, freeing us to live in truth, gratitude, and resurrection life.

LEADER GUIDE

1. Welcome & Icebreaker (10–15 minutes)

Icebreaker Questions:

- Why do people exaggerate or distort the truth?
- What is something you've deeply wanted but later realized wouldn't have satisfied you?
- Why is comparison so powerful in shaping how we feel?

Transition:

“The final two commandments turn inward. They deal with our words and our wants — what we say about others and what we secretly long for.”

2. The Old Testament Commands — Exodus 20:16–17

Read the two commandments aloud.

Commandment 9 — You shall not bear false witness.

- Originally courtroom language — protecting justice.
- Truthfulness sustains community.
- Lies distort reality and damage reputations.
- Protects neighbor's dignity and social trust.
- Includes gossip, slander, misrepresentation.

Discussion:

- Why is truth essential to community?
 - - Justice depends on truth.
 - Trust collapses without it.
 - God is a God of truth.
- How do we “bear false witness” today?
 - - Social media misrepresentation.
 - Half-truths.
 - Gossip.
 - Character assassination.
 - Self-justifying narratives.

Bridge insight:

False witness often flows from insecurity, fear, or envy.

Commandment 10 — You shall not covet.

- Moves from behavior to desire.
- Targets internal discontent.
- Coveting = inordinate desire for what belongs to another.
- Reveals that sin begins in the heart.
- Exposes the illusion that “If I had that, I'd be satisfied.”

Discussion:

- Why does God forbid desire itself here?
 - - Desire shapes action.
 - Sin begins internally.
 - God wants the heart.

- How does coveting affect relationships?
 - - Comparison.
 - Resentment.
 - Competition.
 - Theft and adultery begin here.

Key connection:

Commandment 10 reveals that the Law is spiritual — not merely external.

Transition:

“If falsehood and coveting come from enslaved hearts, we need more than restraint — we need resurrection.”

3. Epistle Reading — Romans 6:15–23

Read the passage aloud.

Frame it:

Paul describes two masters — sin or righteousness.

Discussion

- What imagery does Paul use to describe sin?
 - - Slavery.
 - Obedience to a master.
 - Wages (death).
- How does slavery to sin relate to falsehood and coveting?
 - - Lies protect idols.
 - Coveting drives compromise.
 - Sin promises freedom but enslaves.
- What changes in Christ?
 - - Transfer of masters.
 - Obedience from the heart.
 - Gift (eternal life).
 - New identity.

Emphasize:

Freedom in Christ is not autonomy — it is joyful allegiance to a new Lord.

4. Gospel Reading — John 11:18–44

Read selected portions.

Frame it:

Lazarus represents humanity in spiritual death.

Discussion

- How do Martha and Mary respond differently to Jesus?
 - - Martha: theological affirmation.
 - Mary: emotional lament.
 - Both grieving, both longing.
- What does Jesus reveal about Himself?
 - - “I am the resurrection and the life.”
 - Authority over death.
 - Compassion (He weeps).
 - Personal power.
- How does this connect to Commandments 9–10?
 - - Coveting flows from fear of loss.
 - Falsehood flows from insecurity.
 - Resurrection hope frees us from scarcity thinking.

- If Christ is life, we do not need to grasp.

Powerful connection:

Dead hearts grasp and lie.

Resurrected hearts trust and tell the truth.

Jesus calls Lazarus out — and commands others to “unbind him.”

The community participates in freedom.

Optional Reading — Luke 12:13–34

If used, focus on:

- The rich fool hoards.
- His security is in possessions.
- God calls him foolish.
- “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be.”

Coveting fuels accumulation.

- Anxiety reveals misplaced trust.
 - Jesus invites trust in the Father’s provision.
-

5. Gospel Integration (10–15 minutes)

Bring everything together:

- False witness protects idols.
- Coveting exposes discontent.
- Both flow from hearts enslaved to fear and comparison.
- Christ defeats death — the ultimate scarcity.
- Resurrection reorders desire.

Discussion:

- Where are you tempted to distort truth?
 - Protecting image.
 - Winning arguments.
 - Avoiding consequences.
- Where do you struggle with comparison or envy?
 - Social media.
 - Career.
 - Marriage.
 - Finances.
- How does resurrection hope change your desires?
 - Security beyond circumstances.
 - Gratitude replaces envy.
 - Truth flows from trust.

Emphasize: The Law exposes slavery. The Gospel raises the dead.

6. The Four Questions

1. What does this passage teach us about God?
2. What does this passage teach us about people?
3. How does this passage point to Jesus and the Gospel?
4. What should I do in response?

Encourage honest inward reflection.

7. Prayer Prompts

Confession

Lord, forgive us for falsehood and restless desire...

Thanksgiving

Jesus, thank you that you are resurrection and life...

Freedom

Break chains of comparison and insecurity...

Gratitude

Teach us contentment in your provision...

Close with the Lord’s Prayer.

PARTICIPANT GUIDE

(Questions Only)

Icebreaker

- Why do people distort the truth?
 - Why is comparison so powerful?
-

Exodus 20:16–17

- Why is truth essential to community?
 - How do we “bear false witness” today?
 - What is coveting?
 - How does coveting affect relationships?
-

Romans 6:15–23

- How does Paul describe slavery to sin?
 - What does freedom in Christ look like?
 - How does this relate to falsehood and envy?
-

John 11:18–44

- How do Martha and Mary respond to Jesus?
 - What does Jesus reveal about Himself?
 - How does resurrection connect to freedom from envy and falsehood?
-

(Optional) Luke 12:13–34

- What makes the rich man foolish?
 - What does Jesus say about treasure and the heart?
-

Integration

- Where are you tempted to distort truth?
 - Where do you struggle with comparison or envy?
 - How does resurrection hope change your desires?
-

Final Reflection

1. What does this passage teach us about God?
 2. What does this passage teach us about people?
 3. How does this passage point to Jesus and the Gospel?
 4. What should I do in response?
-

And with that, your series closes where it began:

The Law reveals the heart.

Christ fulfills the Law.

The Spirit forms a new people.