

The Ten Commandments

Living Within God's Boundaries

Member's Guide

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About the Author

Dr. Jimmy Ray Lee is the founder and president emeritus of Living Free Ministries, Inc. He is the author of *Understanding the Times* and several small group studies published by Living Free Ministries. Under the direction and guidance of Dr. Lee, Living Free Ministries produced Living Free—a high impact, video-based training. This training helps churches develop Christ-centered small groups that deal with the contemporary problems that people face today.

Dr. Lee is the founder and honorary chairman of Project 714 (now known as National Center for Youth Issues), a chemical prevention/intervention program for schools. He also founded an inner-city ministry called Ark Ministries that reached 600 to 700 young people weekly. He started the Chattanooga Teen Challenge and served as its president for three years. Jimmy served as Nashville Teen Challenge executive director during its formative years.

In 1983 he was awarded the "Service to Mankind Award" presented by the Highland Sertoma Club in Hixson, Tennessee.

*In memory of Hugh O. Maclellan, Sr.,
a Christian gentleman who practiced
and encouraged others to follow the
words of Jesus, “Love the Lord your
God with all your heart and with all
your soul and with all your mind
and with all your strength. . . . Love
your neighbor as yourself” (Mark
12:30-31).*

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Contents

	Page
Introduction	i
Session 1 — No Other Gods	1
Session 2 — No Idols	6
Session 3 — No Misuse of the Lord's Name	12
Session 4 — Keep the Sabbath Holy	16
Session 5 — Honor Your Father and Mother	21
Session 6 — You Shall Not Murder	26
Session 7 — You Shall Not Commit Adultery	31
Session 8 — You Shall Not Steal	37
Session 9 — You Shall Not Give False Testimony	42
Session 10 — You Shall Not Covet	47
Session 11 — Law and Grace	54
Selected Quotes	60
Plan of Salvation	61
References	62

Introduction

Welcome to *The Ten Commandments* group. The purpose of this group is to help each person gain a fresh awareness of the Ten Commandments and to practice them through the grace of Jesus Christ. The group should meet each week for one hour and fifteen minutes, but more time may be planned if necessary. The material is designed for eleven sessions. In addition to the ten commandments, we will present a final session discussing law and grace.

Our society can be described as one without boundaries and guardrails which has resulted in moral decay. People are searching for direction and purpose in a time when immorality is considered by many as normal.

What is the problem? We have replaced the Ten Commandments with human rules (which always change) and principles which have resulted in a nation that is searching its soul for a foundation. We are on a merry-go-round, treating the symptoms while the solution is staring us in the face.

What is the solution? We need to live within the boundaries of the Ten Commandments. With them written on our heart, God gives us the desire to seek His guidelines versus being under a legalistic code of behavior. “Stay always within the boundaries where God’s love can reach and bless you” (Jude 21 TLB). Abraham Lincoln said, “The only assurance of our nation’s safety is to lay our foundations in morality and religion” (Mead, p. 371).

In Exodus 19, we see how God prepared Moses and the children of Israel to receive the Ten Commandments. He reminded them from where He had brought them. He carried them “on eagles’ wings” and brought them to Himself (Exodus 19:4).

The law was written by God (Exodus 31:18). It reveals God’s standard for morality and love for His people. The Psalmist said, “Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law” (Psalm 119:18). The first four commandments deal with our relationship with God. The last six deal with our relationship with others. May we prepare our hearts to be blessed by living within God’s boundaries.

At the conclusion of the course, it is suggested that you inquire about opportunities to join another Living Free support group.

It is our prayer that through participating in and completing this study, you will have a greater understanding of the freedom you have in Christ by living within His boundaries.

May the Lord bless you and keep His hand on you.

W elcome



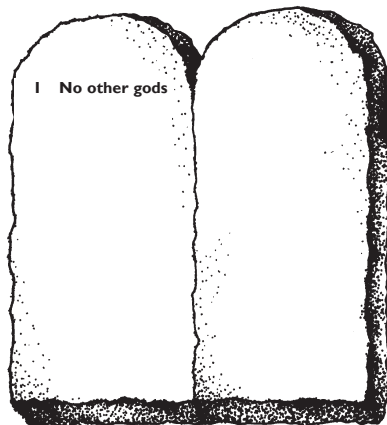
Personal Notes

Welcome to the Ten Commandments. We thank God for your participation. During this course, there will be suggested time alone with God in meditation, prayer, and scripture reading. This time is vital for spiritual growth in this group. We encourage you to be faithful in your devotion time with the Lord.

For this session, read Exodus 20 and Deuteronomy 5.

As a starter for this course, briefly share your name and what you are interested in about this course.

S elf-Awareness



The general goal of this session is to help each of us come face-to-face with the only and true God. The first commandment calls for an undivided faithfulness to God. Anytime this relationship with God is strained or sidetracked, this commandment is broken. Because we have been created in the image of God, this relationship is the very core of human need and therefore affects everyone.

Since God created us, there is a vacuum in the human heart that only God through Christ can fill. Ecclesiastes 1:1-10 describes everything as meaningless apart from God. To fill this emptiness, people often turn their worship to other gods (pleasure, power, the environment,

knowledge, sex, etc.) The New Age Movement, actually a new form of Baal worship, directly opposes the first commandment.

Describe a time you felt emptiness in your own personal life.

What are some “other gods” in our society?

What are some subtle ways “other gods” can enter our lives?

Our true God is sovereign over human history. Having created us, He knows what is best for now and in the future. Isaiah 29:16 states the relationship of God to man: “Shall what is formed say to him who formed it, ‘He did not make me’? Can the pot say of the potter, ‘He knows nothing’?”

In light of this verse, summarize the Ten Commandments in one sentence.



Biblical Narrative

Having led the children of Israel from Egyptian bondage and toward the promised land, God called for an audience with Moses upon Mt. Sinai. Knowing His people would need a foundation and boundaries for daily living, God presented the Ten Commandments as a guide for behavior.

With a thorough understanding of human behavior, He gave the first commandment because He knew His children would be tempted to serve other gods. Therefore, He said, “You shall have no other gods before me” (Exodus 20:3).

Exodus 20:1

“And God spoke all these words.”

What significance does the word “all” have to the Ten Commandments?

What in this verse indicates that these words have authority?

Exodus 20:2

God prefaces the Ten Commandments by reminding the children of Israel of the past.

What did He say concerning the past?

How has God provided for you in the past that helps you trust Him with the future?

Exodus 20:3

“You shall have no other gods before me.”

What does this verse say to you about rival gods?

Psalms 16:4

A caution is given to those “who run after other gods.”

What is this warning?

Psalm 53:1

Some say, "There is no God."

How does David describe this person?

Matthew 4:4

Jesus said that man lives "on every word that comes from the mouth of God."

What in this verse indicates that Jesus looked to the Word for His response to Satan?

In light of the temptation of Jesus (Matthew 4:1-11), what is our source of guidance for our conduct?

2 Corinthians 4:4

Paul describes "the god of this age."

How does this god affect people?

May we understand that:

1. The law renders one speechless and accountable before the almighty God (Romans 3:19).
2. No one can gain righteousness by observing the law (Romans 3:20).
3. The law gives us an awareness of sin (Romans 3:20).
4. It is only through Christ "that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:4). Also see Romans 7:14-8:3.

A**pplication**



Paul visited Athens and “was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols” (Acts 17:16). He observed them to be “very religious” and noticed their “objects of worship.” He “even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD” (vv22-23). Paul proclaimed to them the true and only God because they were worshipping “other gods.” The true God was unknown to them.

In view of Paul’s proclamation of God in verses 24-28, put into your own words the awesomeness and yet nearness of God.

Write a prayer about your desire to “reach out for him and find him” (v27) or to find out more about Him (see James 4:8).