

**Overview**

It is suggested that you follow the studies in the following order to fit in with the sermon series in the Tas Valley. However, your cell may need to do things differently according to your own circumstances or to fit in a social or outreach event:

Week beginning 22nd May Laws of Love Written in Stone

 29th May God First

5th June Hold to the Truth

12th June Prosper with a Clear Conscience

19th June Find True Contentment

26th June Manage your Anger

3rd July Keep peace with your parents

10th July Stop Driving yourself crazy

17th July Affair Proof your relationships 24th July Take God Seriously

For each of the studies, there are loads more ideas and background information in the Just 10 The Ten Commandments Study Guide by J John. If you are using the DVDs instead of the bible study, these take 45 mins and will take up a good chunk of your cell time. Include a short act of worship – Witness may be inviting others to watch with you – if not, make sure you plan another way of reaching out as your Witness over the 10 weeks.

1. **Laws of Love Written in Stone / God First**

**WELCOME**

Share a meal together

Retell the story of Moses on Mount Sinai interactively (Maybe use a children’s bible)

**WORD**

1. Read the 10 commandments in Exodus 20. Each take one and match it up with the title of the studies in this series (see the overview). Try to explain in your own words why you think these two things may fit together in practice.
2. Personally speaking, which commandment do you think is the hardest to keep – and why.
3. Pray for each other specifically over what you have shared that you may each be strengthened to understand, value and keep the commandment which you most struggle with
4. For multigenerational cells: Make two large “tablets of stone” and write the 10 commandments on them in modern language. Ask your Sunday Church if they can be displayed there.

**WITNESS**

Pray for anyone you are going to invite to your cell meetings this term.

**WORSHIP**

Praise God for the wisdom of his commands. S

2 **Hold to the Truth**

**WELCOME**

Together, try to find as many words/ phrases in the English language which are used for “not telling the truth” eg. lying, being economical with the truth....

**WORD**

Read Exodus 20.16

Is this only about making false accusations in court... or might it also extend to not speaking up in someone else’s defence?

“All lying potentially involves hurting other people” Discuss this statement. If you think it is true – how might false statements about ourselves hurt others?

Read James 3.1-12 & John 8.31-32

What bit of this strikes you most?

What bit of this is the hardest to keep?

Why is it hard to tame the tongue?

If you can do so without gossiping or making someone they know look bad, tell the group about a time when you have been hurt by another person’s words,

Do you think we treat words too lightly?

How does the truth set people free?

**Hold to the Truth cont**

**WITNESS**

Could you as a group commit yourselves to having a rule that you will not say something unless it had passed the THINK test?

**T** – Is it true?

**H** – is it helpful?

**I** – is it inspiring

**N** – Is it necessary?

**K** – Is it kind?

Discuss the questions – are they the right ones? How could the group respond kindly but firmly if someone says something that does not fit with these questions?

If you have time pray for truth and integrity in public life.

**WORSHIP**

Jesus said “If you obey my teaching, you are really my disciples. You will know the truth and the truth will set you free”

Spend some time speaking out truths about God in worship.... just remembering who he is and what he has done for you. (If you find it easier, write some of these truths down first as a group and then get people to read them in a time of praise) Finish with a prayer of thanks for the freeing power of truth in all areas of life.

3..**Prosper with a Clear Conscience**

**WELCOME**

Who owns what

Collect pictures of as many recognisable corporate logos as you can. Have a quiz in multiage teams to see which team can identify the most logos.

Ask people what the point of the logos is – ie they mark something as belonging to a company or organisation (or as being made by that company)

If God had a logo – what would he put it on?

**WORD**

Read Exodus 20.15 and Luke 19.1-10

What different kinds of stealing can you think of? Make a list. (The following bible passages illustrate some and you may want to think of modern day equivalents - Exodus 22.25-27; Leviticus 19.13; Deuteronomy 19.14; Isaiah 10.1-2; Amos 5.11; Amos 8.4-6)

What makes people want to steal?

If we steal, what does that say about our relationship with God?

If we have stolen something, what should we do about it? (Think about the example of Zacchaeus)

4. **Prosper with a Clear Conscience cont**

Stealing from God?

Read Malachi 8.8

 *“Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me!” “But you ask, ‘what do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?’ “*

*“You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me.”*

What do you think the tithes and offerings are which are due to God today? If we don’t give to God’s work, in proportion to our income, are we in some way cheating God?

If you need to arrange a cell meeting where people can have more information on Christian giving.

Prayer

Pray for each other in any struggles or questions you have keeping this commandment.

**WORSHIP & WITNESS**

The opposite to stealing is giving. Plan something that you can give to others together (this may be time or money or your skills) - or think of something already planned and pray for God’s blessing on it.

During a song – take up a private giving collection. This may be money – or more likely give people time to think and commit to paper something they intend to give away – again it may be time or skills or material things. Offer it to God by collecting in a suitable container. (Afterwards keep it private by burning or shredding the paper)

**5 Find True Contentment**

**WELCOME**

Coveting is desiring in your heart something that you don’t have. Share a few things which you covet /are tempted to covet with the group.

**WORD**

Read Exodus 20.17 The examples given of things not to covet are from ancient times. Do any need updating – if so what would the modern day equivalents be?

Read Luke 12.13-21 where Jesus is asked to intervene in an inheritance dispute:

1. How in verses 14& 15 does he specifically reply to the request?
2. What does Jesus say real life does not consist of? What do you think he would say it does consist of?
3. What does the rich man in the parable promise himself that his wealth will give him? What does he overlook? What danger does this suggest is attached to covetousness

**WITNESS AND WORSHIP**

What has challenged you most? Pray for each other about anything you need to put into practice.

The opposite to coveting and a good antidote is gratitude. How can your cell be an encourage of the gratitude attitude among yourselves and further afield?

Focus today’s time of worship on thanking God for the blessings of what you do have.

6. **Manage your anger**

**WELCOME**

3 negative ways in which we are tempted to handle anger

- the maniac – exploding

- the mute – bottling it up

- the manipulator – “don’t get angry get even”

Which one are you most tempted by?

**WORD** *Thou shalt not kill. Exodus 20.13*

**Genesis 4.1-12**

* How does Cain respond to God’s rejection of his offering?
* In v 7 what imagery is used for sin? What does this passage seem to imply about the danger of anger?
* Who was Cain really angry with? So why did he murder Abel?
* The commandment not to murder is connected to the biblical teaching about each human being made in God’s image (Genesis 1.26-27). How else should the idea that all human beings are made in God’s image affect our treatment of other people?

**Matthew 5.21-26**

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 **21**"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' **22**But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca,' is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.

 **23**"Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, **24**leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

**Manage your anger cont.**

Being angry is not always wrong. God and Jesus are sometimes described as angry in the bible. But how we deal with anger will be judged:

What does Jesus’ application of this commandment say about harsh words and thoughts?

According to verses 23-25, which takes priority worship or right relationships? Why?

**WORSHIP & WITNESS**

**Pray**: Share with each other (maybe in pairs or threes) about anger which you are finding it difficult to deal with or any situation where you need to seek forgiveness or reconciliation - pray for each other. You may find it helpful to pray specifically through one or more of the practical pointers for dealing with anger:

* Ask yourself what is causing you to get angry? (often it is to do with your expectations being disappointed in an area where you have needs)
* Try to see the full picture
* How would Jesus react in this situation?
* Seek a way to express your anger without crushing others.
* Is there anything you need to change yourself?

Finish with worship. Sing or meditatively listen to a song which celebrates God’s steadfast love and patience.

“The Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” Psalm 145.8

7 **Keep peace with your parents**

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**WELCOME**

“To dwell above with those we love

There it will be glory

To dwell below with those we know

Now, that’s another story”

Ask one or two people to come prepared to say what they found hardest about honouring their parents.

OR

Discuss one of the scenarios on pgs 65-67 of the Just 10 study guide.

**WORD**

**Read Exodus 20.12 and discuss some of the following questions:**

1. What promise does the commandment say follows from honouring our parents? Why do you think this connection is made?
2. Are there limits to obeying our parents? What are they
3. How can we still honour a parent if they are behaving badly or we cannot do what they want?
4. When Jesus died, he asked one of his disciples to care for his mother. What responsibilities does the church have towards people who have no children who can care for them?
5. How can parents make it easier for their children to obey this command?
6. Think of something you feel you can do this week to obey this commandment (or support others to do so)? If you feel able to, share it with the group and ask for their prayers.

**Useful passages which you may want to look up as background:**

**Matthew 15.1-9:** Jesus criticises a practice where people could dedicate money to God which should have been given to parents – they could get the money back later.

**Mark 3.20-21; 31-35:** An occasion when Jesus didn’t do what his family wanted

**Matthew 10.32-39:** Following Jesus can involve rejection from family members

**John 19.23-27:** Jesus makes provision for his mother

**Ephesians 6.1-4:** Duties for children and parents

**WORSHIP AND WITNESS**

1. Play some quiet music and prayerfully reflect on God as the best parent. Spend some time thanking God for his love and discipline and guidance.
2. Now prayerfully reflect on your relationships with your parents:
3. What is there to thank God for? Thank God now.
4. What areas are there which need forgiveness or healing. Pray about this.
5. Share with each other one thing you hope to do in the coming week in response to this week’s study.
6. Plan an event to which you can invite friend – for example go to Shotesham’s “In his presence” concert.

8. **Stop driving yourself crazy**

**WELCOME**

Do you or have you ever kept a regular Sabbath (ie. *an entire day, one out of seven for feasting and resting and worship and play*)? If you have, share the benefits and challenges you have experienced with the group. If you haven’t, what benefits do you imagine you might experience from keeping the Sabbath in this way?

**WORD**

**Read – Exodus 20.8-11**

**Read Mark 2.23-3.5** *Some Pharisees in Jesus’ day had remembered Sabbath as a day – but not as an attitude. For them Sabbath was a marker of their national identity – like the food laws and the temple. It was a practice which said, “I am a Jew and not one of those horrible Roman overlords”. Unfortunately, this emphasis, had caused them to forget the heart of Sabbath: As Jesus strolled through the cornfields with his disciples, these Pharisees it seems were looking to catch him out. As they watch them casually pluck a few ears of corn, they pounce – that’s threshing, a forbidden “melachah”(act of work)! Why are you doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath!! Ironically, by the end of the story, these Pharisees are using their Sabbath time to plot Jesus death.*

**Consider some or all of the following questions:**

1. What positive attitudes and values (eg. stopping, enjoying, playing) do you associate with a good Sabbath. Make a list.
2. Christian writer Mark Buchanan commented on keeping Sabbath in the 21st centuary: “The only things you should not do on the Sabbath are the things which have to be done” – in other words, Sabbath is about letting go of control of our lives and enjoying God for a day without worrying about necessary tasks: What things would you have to stop doing in order for your Sabbath to be this sort of effective time of celebration and rest.
3. What do you think Jesus meant when he said, “The Sabbath was made for humankind, not humankind for the Sabbath”?
4. That human beings should do whatever they feel like on the Sabbath
5. That the Sabbath is for human beings to receive God’s blessings
6. What is the difference between a “holy Sabbath” and a “day off” in the sense in which a day off is usually understood in our society?
7. Does it matter if Christians keep the Sabbath on Sunday instead of Saturday?
8. What other difficulties exist in keeping a Sabbath day for you and your church? How could you overcome these?
9. How can you personally keep the Sabbath command more closely to the way Jesus did. Share your thoughts or plans with the cell and pray for each other.

**WORSHIP**

Enjoy a time of praise together.

**WITNESS**

Plan a time of fun and relaxation eg. going to the cinema or a bonfire night and invite some friends who don’t usually go to a cell

9. **Affair proof your relationships**

**NB – If you have particular people and situations in mind as you discuss and pray over these issues, please take extra care not to gossip: Don’t share names or make identifiable people’s circumstances known unless they have asked you/ given you permission to do so.**

**WELCOME**

Bring out a gift wrapped box of chocolates and explain that you have bought it for your wife/ mother /friend etc... Unwrap it and offer it round: “She won’t mind she’s very easy going”. How do people react? Wrap the box up again.

Discuss: What is the link between offering around someone else’s gift and adultery?

**WORD**

The teaching of Jesus revolutionsised the basis of marriage and sexual morality. This was partly to do with his teaching on marriage but also to do with the way he raised the staus of women who had been seen as the possession of their male kin.

**Read Matthew 5.27-32**

* What does Jesus do with this commandment? Why does he point the finger at the thought rather than the action?
* By telling people to pluck out their eye, Jesus suggests radical sacrificial action against lust. On this basis if a married man finds himself attracted to his secretary at work – what should he do?

**Read Mark 10.1-11**

* What was God’s original purpose for marriage?
* What attitude to sex and marriage is Jesus seeking from his followers?

**WORSHIP**

**Pray** About any personal issues that arose out of the study

 For the strengthening of marriages

For those going through family break down

For those who are single but would like to be married

For the ministry of the church in all of these areas

**Praise** God for his faithfulness. You may wish to sing or listen to songs such as “Faithful One”

**WITNESS**

Continue your planning and praying about the social event you began to plan last week. (Plan a time of fun and relaxation eg. going to the cinema or a bonfire night and invite some friends who don’t usually go to a cell)

10. **Take God Seriously**