

The Story Adult Study Guide

For the Week of October 13, 2013

Chapter 5: “New Commands and a New Covenant”



Key Events: God gives his law, God’s covenant with Israel, the golden calf

Key Character: Moses (see *The Story* page 488 for character descriptions)

Bible Reference for this Chapter: Exodus 19-20, 24-25, 32-34, 40

Upper Story = God is present and working in the world to bring about the salvation of souls.

Lower Story = God is present and working in my life every day to strengthen my faith in his plan and promises.

3 Lessons : Guidelines on how we treat _____ and _____ =

God makes a place to stay =

Sin must be atoned for =

NOTE: The Bible does not assign numbers (1 to 10) to the commandments, thus numbering variations exist. The most common variation involves how the 1st and 2nd and the 9th and 10th commandments are numbered.

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS

1. In your own words, give a simple summary statement for commands 1-4 (bottom of page 61) and commands 5-10 (top of page 62). In what way are God’s commands *rules*, and in what way are they *opportunities*? Rules vs. opportunities – what difference does it make how we view God’s commands?
2. The term “covenant” is used throughout this chapter. Describe the meaning and types of covenants. Describe the covenant between God and Israel stated on page 59.

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3. Read Moses’ appeal on behalf of the Israelites at the top of page 65. Explain this situation – did God need the history lesson and Moses’ plea in order to relent? How does this apply to you in your life?

GOLDEN CALF

4. How did God use the golden calf debacle to shape the Israelites? What does God and his Word say to us when we sin?

TABERNACLE

5. On page 67, it states, "The LORD would speak to Moses face to face, as one speaks to a friend." How is it possible for us to have that kind of relationship with the Lord?

MORE APPLICATIONS

6. Two attributes of God are demonstrated in chapter 5: God's justice and God's mercy. Define these two attributes. Describe how these two attributes come together in the person of Jesus Christ.
7. Moses' face was radiant after speaking with God. How can we demonstrate a radiance that flows from God's presence in our lives?
8. Upper Story = God is present and working in the world to bring about the salvation of souls. Lower Story = God is present and working in my life every day to strengthen my faith in his plan and promises. Please share messages of personal comfort, hope, and encouragement you received from chapter 5.

Prayer Suggestions

- Repent of sin daily, and trust in the forgiveness won for me by the sacrifice of Jesus.
- Thank God for his law, which serves as my guide to love God and live for Jesus.
- Ask God to draw me into a close relationship with him through the Word and prayer.

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Study Guide Helps

NOTE: One numbering version combines “You shall have no other gods” and “You shall not make yourself an image . . .” into the 1st commandment, and separates the two coveting statements into the 9th and 10th commandments. Another version separates the first two statements into the 1st and 2nd commandments, and combines the two coveting statements into the 10th commandment.

1. (see Matthew 22:37-39) A simple summary of commands 1-4 can be stated “place God first over everything and everyone,” and commands 5-10 can be stated “place others before self” (a version of the golden rule). The commands serve as do’s-and-don’ts rules to curb sin and keep people on the right path. The commands also serve as opportunities for expressing love and thanks to God who loved us first in Jesus. Our view makes a difference, and it flows from the heart. If the commands are viewed as mere rules, the heart motivation is based on obligation, guilt, and fear of punishment – *I have to obey God*. If the commands are viewed as opportunities, the heart motivation is based on faith in Jesus and the desire to please God out of love for him – *I want to obey God*. For Christians who have a sinful nature (old self) and the Spirit of God through faith (new self), both motivations influence us.
2. A covenant is a formal agreement between two or more parties; other related terms include promise, contract, treaty, pledge. A covenant may be one-sided (unilateral) – one party makes a pledge/promise with no obligation for the other party to fulfill. A covenant may be two-sided (bilateral) – both parties make a pledge/promise and both have a conditional obligation to fulfill. The covenant stated on page 59 (Exodus 19:3-8) is commonly referred to as the Sinaitic Covenant (given on Mt. Sinai) between God and Israel and is two-sided – God pledged to be Israel’s God and bless them if/under the condition that the Israelites obeyed God’s law and remained faithful to him. God’s gospel promise to send a Savior is a one-sided covenant, commonly called the New Covenant.
3. God was true to his grace and will apart from the Israelites’ sins and Moses’ intervention – he hadn’t forgotten his promises. God presented Moses the opportunity to step up as leader of Israel and grow in his role and faith. God provided experiential training and used the incident for Moses to reflect on God’s promises. This wouldn’t be the last time Moses would appeal for Israel.
4. God disciplined the Children of Israel when they sinned. He called them to repentance. “Whoever is for the Lord, come to me” (page 66) – they were called to proclaim their allegiance to God or proclaim their rejection. Those who defied God were removed from Israel (3000). The rest repented, were forgiven, and God renewed his promise with his people. God speaks to us when we sin: “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.” (Acts 3:19)
5. As special and unique as Moses’ relationship with God was, every Christian is called into a personal, close relationship with God through Jesus. Regular and on-going communication is key – God speaks to us in his Word and we speak to God in prayer (just like Moses). In good times and bad, the intimacy we have with God flows from our connection to Word and Sacrament.
6. In situations like the golden calf incident, God demonstrated his justice and mercy. God’s justice = in his holiness, he demands perfection and atonement (reparation) for sin. God’s mercy = in love, he has compassion on us and forgives us. God’s justice and mercy come together in Jesus. Jesus satisfied God’s demand for perfection by living a perfect life, and becoming the atonement (paying the punishment) for sin. God’s mercy was satisfied by forgiving mankind’s sin through Jesus. The Son of God’s perfect life and sacrificial death substituted for mankind. (see Romans 3:21-26)
7. A Christian’s radiant life is described in Romans 12 (excerpts): *in view of God’s mercy, offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God . . .*⁹ *Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good.*¹⁰ *Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.*¹¹ *Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.*¹² *Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.*¹³ *Share with the Lord’s people who are in need. Practice hospitality.*¹⁴ *Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse.*¹⁵ *Rejoice with those who rejoice; mourn with those who mourn.*¹⁶ *Live in harmony with one another. . .*
8. Answers will vary. Consider/discuss elements of chapter 5 that relate to our daily walk of faith.

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