

Small Group Guide: Living by God's Standards

Opening Prayer

Begin your group time by asking God to open your hearts to His Word and help you understand how to live according to His standards, not out of obligation, but out of love and gratitude for what He's done.

Icebreaker

Share a time when you tried to do something on your own strength and failed, only to succeed when you relied on God's help.

Key Scripture References

Revelation 22:10-21

Exodus 19-20

The Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17)

Main Themes

1. God Rewards Faithfulness

The sermon emphasizes that Jesus is coming with rewards for those who serve Him faithfully—not as a bonus, but as genuine payment for stepping out in faith.

2. Holiness Means Separation

Holiness isn't perfection; it's choosing to step away from our natural tendencies and align ourselves with God's character and will.

3. The Commandments Are God's Insights

The Ten Commandments aren't burdensome rules but God's loving insights into how life works best—like spiritual laws of gravity.

4. Grace Doesn't Eliminate Responsibility

Being saved by grace doesn't mean we ignore God's standards; it empowers

us through the Holy Spirit to live them out.

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Message

Revelation's Warning and Promise: The sermon mentions that Jesus says "I know your deeds" to the churches. How does knowing God watches everything you do make you feel? Does it bring comfort or concern? Why?

The Israelites' Promise: In Exodus 19:8, the people said, "We will do everything the Lord has said." Have you ever made a promise to God that you struggled to keep? What happened?

Commandments as Insights: The pastor described God's commandments as "keys of insight" rather than burdensome rules. How does this perspective change the way you view God's standards?

Personal Reflection

Holiness in Daily Life: The sermon gave an example of giving \$20 to a homeless man as a moment of holiness—stepping away from natural selfishness. When was the last time you experienced a "holy moment" where you acted against your natural inclination?

Idols and Priorities: God says to have no other gods before Him. What are some modern "gods" (career, money, comfort, approval) that compete for first place in your life?

The Sabbath Principle: God commands rest one day a week. How well do you honor this principle? What prevents you from resting and trusting God with your time?

Application

Serving vs. Being Served: The sermon emphasized that Christ came to serve, not be served. Where do you currently serve in the church or

community? If you don't, what's holding you back?

Using God's Name: How seriously do you take the command not to misuse God's name? In what ways might we use His name "in vain" beyond just cursing?

Truth-Telling: The ninth commandment is about honest testimony. In what areas of life are you most tempted to shade the truth or withhold parts of it?

Key Takeaways

God's laws are for our benefit, designed like spiritual gravity to help us thrive

Holiness is choosing God's way over our natural way, moment by moment

Serving God isn't a prison sentence—it's discovering how close God will be when we do what we can't do without Him

Grace empowers obedience; it doesn't excuse disobedience

Our choices affect others—sin hurts everyone around us, not just ourselves

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose ONE of the Ten Commandments that you struggle with most and:

Write it down and post it where you'll see it daily

Pray specifically about it each morning

Ask God to show you one practical way to honor this command

Share your progress with an accountability partner or the group next week

Group Activity Options

Option 1: Commandment Audit

Go through each commandment as a group
Honestly discuss which ones are hardest for your generation/culture
Pray specifically for strength in those areas

Option 2: Gratitude Exercise

Like the Israelites remembering their deliverance from Egypt, share how God has "brought you out of slavery" (addiction, sin patterns, destructive relationships, etc.)

Write these testimonies down to remember God's faithfulness

Option 3: Service Planning

Identify a need in your church or community

Plan a group service project for the next month

Commit to serving together, remembering we serve because Christ first served us

Closing Reflection

Read together Revelation 22:12-13:

"Behold, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to everyone according to what he has done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End."

Silent Reflection (2-3 minutes):

Ask God to reveal one area where you've been living by your own standards instead of His

Commit that area to Him in prayer

Group Prayer:

Pray for each person's specific struggles with God's standards

Thank God that His commandments are given in love, not to burden us

Ask for the Holy Spirit's power to live holy, separated lives

Pray for your church to be a "kingdom of priests and a holy nation" in your community

Before Next Week

Read Exodus 20-24 (the rest of God's laws and the people's response)

Journal about one way you saw God reward your faithfulness this week

Memorize one of the Ten Commandments that speaks most to your current situation

Leader Notes

Be prepared for honest discussions about failure and struggle with God's standards

Emphasize grace and the Holy Spirit's power, not legalism

Share your own struggles to create a safe environment

Don't let the group become political when discussing how the nation has moved away from God's standards—keep focus on personal application

Celebrate stories of victory and faithfulness, no matter how small