

Small Group Guide: THE TEN COMMANDMENTS - Be Free

Opening Question What is one "rule" you had growing up that you did not understand then, but appreciate more now?

Opening Prayer *God, thank You for bringing us together. Help us to understand Your Word not as a burden, but as a gift that leads us toward freedom, wisdom, and life. Open our hearts to trust You more deeply and to honor You in the way we treat others. In Jesus' name, amen.*

Key Takeaways from the Sermon

God's commands are not a condition of relationship, but confirmation of relationship. God rescued Israel first, then gave them the Ten Commandments. We do not behave our way into relationship with God - we believe and trust Him, and obedience follows.

Relationship comes before rules. When rules come before relationship, it becomes legalism or religion. God wants to be known first as Rescuer and Savior.

The first four commandments focus on honoring and depending on God. God is to be the center of our lives, not just one part of our lives.

The last six commandments focus on honoring people. Because every person is made in the image of God, we honor their family, life, marriage, property, reputation, and dignity.

As the family goes, so goes the nation. Pastor Dan emphasized that honoring father and mother matters because strong families help shape strong communities and cultures.

The command not to covet deals with the heart. God cares about our thoughts, desires, and attitudes because they shape our actions.

God's commands are meant to keep us free. The Ten Commandments are not given to restrict joy, but to protect us from the bondage and consequences of sin.

The core question is trust. Will we trust God's wisdom in our relationships, finances, work, marriage, thoughts, and daily choices?

Discussion Questions

1. **Read Exodus 20:12-17.** What do these commandments teach us about the value God places on other people?
2. Pastor Dan said the first four commandments focus on honoring God, and the last six focus on honoring people. Why do you think those two ideas are connected?
3. **Read Matthew 22:37-40.** Jesus summarized the law as loving God and loving your neighbor. How does this help us better understand the purpose of the Ten Commandments?
4. **Read Proverbs 4:23.** Why is guarding our hearts so important if our thoughts and desires often lead to our actions?
5. Pastor Dan described coveting as more than admiring something - it changes the way we feel toward someone. What are some ways people can recognize and deal with coveting before it affects relationships?
6. **Read Matthew 5:27-28.** Jesus moves the focus from outward behavior to inward thoughts. What does this teach us about the kind of transformation God wants in us?
7. **Read Exodus 20:18-20.** Moses says God gave His commands "to keep you from sinning." How does seeing God's commands as protection rather than restriction change the way we respond to them?
8. Pastor Dan ended by asking, "Are you going to trust Him?" What are some everyday areas where people may find it difficult to trust God's way over their own?

Practical Applications (Choose one or two.)

1. **Identify one area where you need to trust God more.** It could be your schedule, finances, relationships, work, parenting, or thought life. Pray specifically about that area this week.
2. **Practice honoring people intentionally.** Choose one person in your home, workplace, neighborhood, or church and look for a practical way to show respect, kindness, or encouragement.
3. **Guard your heart daily.** Pay attention to thoughts of comparison, resentment, jealousy, or entitlement. When they show up, bring them honestly to God in prayer.
4. **Review the Ten Commandments this week.** Read Exodus 20:1-17 and ask, "What does this reveal about loving God and loving others?"
5. **Choose trust over self-reliance.** In one decision this week, pause before acting and ask, "Am I trusting God's wisdom here, or just doing what seems right to me?"

Memory Verse for This Week

Matthew 22:37-39

"Jesus replied: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Closing Prayer God, thank You for loving us enough to guide us. Help us to see Your commands as a path to freedom, not as a burden. Teach us to trust You at the center of our lives and to honor the people around us because they are made in Your image. Give us wisdom to guard our hearts and courage to obey You this week. In Jesus' name, amen.