



--- DIGGING DEEPER INTO THE **TEN** COMMANDMENTS ---

BIBLE STUDY &
PERSONAL REFLECTION

DIGGING DEEPER INTO THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Bible Study and Personal Reflection

For further study, explore our series
God's Boundaries for Abundant Living

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*Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture quotations
are taken from the New International Version.*

GETTING STARTED: HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

1. CHOOSE THE RIGHT TIME AND PLACE.

Pick a time when you are at your best—mentally, emotionally, and physically. For many people, this is in the morning, before the day starts. Pick a place where you can be relatively free from interruptions and distractions. Consider leaving your phone behind or in airplane mode.

2. START WITH PRAYER.

Make prayer more than a formality, because it's a necessity! Without God's help, you won't hear His voice. Ask God to remove distractions so that you can clearly hear His voice.

3. WORK THROUGH THE QUESTIONS AT YOUR OWN PACE.

Each section focuses on a single commandment and contains several questions. These questions are just a springboard to get you thinking about the Ten Commandments. Answer them at your own pace and be ready to go slow and take your time with them. The goal is to spend meaningful time with God, not finish each session as quickly as possible. If a question doesn't make sense or you can't answer it, feel free to skip it. If your thoughts go down a path different from the question at hand, awesome! The point is to grow closer to Jesus, not finish a "homework assignment."

REFLECTION 1:

NO GODS BUT GOD - Exodus 20:2-3

I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me.

1. Read **Exodus 20:1-17** two or three times and make some general observations. For you personally, what is encouraging or inspiring? How are you challenged to live differently? What do you find confusing or difficult to understand?

2. In your own words, write a definition of *worship*. How would you explain worship to a friend?

3. Read **Exodus 6:6-8**. What promises did God make to the Israelites? How did God help Israel?



BIBLICAL BACKGROUND:

The Yoke of the Egyptians

Through the power of God, the Israelites lived peacefully in Egypt and experienced great prosperity for three hundred years. A new ruler of Egypt (possibly a foreign conqueror) chose not to honor Egypt's agreement with the Israelites because he feared their great numbers. The Israelites were enslaved and pressed into forced labor. Moses was born under this oppression, and God used him to lead the Israelites out from under the yoke of Egypt.

No Gods but God - Exodus 20:2-3

4. Read **Exodus 20:2**. In your opinion, why did God make this declaration before giving the Ten Commandments? How is this introduction significant?

5. In your own life, how has God worked powerfully for your benefit? How does thinking about God's faithfulness affect the quality of your worship?

6. What are some common "gods" that people worship today? Why do you think people choose these other objects of worship?

No Gods but God - Exodus 20:2-3

7. Whom do you rely on when things are tough? Where do you put most of your time, energy, and money? Whom are you trying to impress? Who or what is the center of your life?

8. Read **Psalm 81**. What does it teach you about worship? How does it challenge you to worship better?

REFLECTION 2:

NO WORSHIP BUT TRUE WORSHIP - Exodus 20:4-6

You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

1. How is the second commandment (**Exodus 20:4-6**) similar to the first, “*You shall have no other gods before me*” (**Exodus 20:3**)?

2. In your opinion, why is this second commandment needed? Since the first commandment is to have “no other gods,” why does God give us a further prohibition against idols?

3. When God says, “*You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything,*” does this mean Christians shouldn’t own or admire artwork? Explain why you feel the way you do. Which elements from the biblical text support your answer?

No Worship but True Worship - Exodus 20:4-6

4. In your opinion, why does God not want us to represent Him through an image? Read **Isaiah 40:18-19** and consider how it helps answer that question: *“With whom, then, will you compare God? To what image will you liken him? As for an idol, a metal worker casts it, and a goldsmith overlays it with gold and fashions silver chains for it.”*

5. Read **Psalms 115:4-8**: *“Their idols are silver and gold, made by human hands. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see. They have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but cannot smell. They have hands, but cannot feel, feet, but cannot walk, nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.”* In ancient times, idols were common. The second commandment set Israel apart as different from her neighbors. Based on this psalm, what is another reason God commands us to not worship an image?

6. Since God forbids the worship of images, why did He give Moses the Ten Commandments written on stone tablets? What is the difference between a symbol and an image? How can we know when a treasured symbol has become an image?

No Worship but True Worship - Exodus 20:4-6

7. The Bible clearly affirms personal responsibility. **Deuteronomy 24:16** says, *"Parents are not to be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their parents; each will die for their own sin."* In your opinion, what is the point of the contrast between God punishing people and Him showing them love? Based on this scripture, what does a person do that invites God's punishment or love?

8. For you personally, how is the second commandment significant? As you live out your faith, what impact does it make? Does this teaching highlight an attitude or habit you need to change?



BIBLICAL BACKGROUND:

The Jealousy of God

Jealousy is the intense demand for exclusive possession or devotion. In the original language of the Old Testament (Hebrew), the word for "jealous" ranges in meaning from "be zealous for" to "be envious of." Human jealousy is not the same as God's jealousy. Our envy is focused on things that do not belong to us. As the creator of the universe, God's jealousy is for what is already His. Finite language often falls short in its attempt to explain an infinite God, so it can be difficult to see God as jealous. However, the significance is clear: God is not indifferent to us — He loves us with an intensity that can be described as jealousy.

REFLECTION 3:

NEVER ABUSE MY NAME - Exodus 20:7

You shall not misuse the name of the LORD your God, for the LORD will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

1. In the original language, the word for “misuse” (also translated as “take in vain”) has a wide range of meanings. What are some common ways that people misuse or dishonor God’s name?

2. God certainly isn’t looking for human approval, so why does it matter if people misuse or dishonor His name?

3. **Deuteronomy 6:13** says, “*Fear the LORD your God, serve him only and take your oaths in his name.*” Why are many oaths for public office taken in the name of God? What purpose does this serve?



BIBLICAL BACKGROUND:

What’s in a Name?

The name of God stands for so much more than a mere word. Like a picture, the name of a thing represents the thing itself. The name of God stands for His character, nature, authority, and teaching. Essentially, this commandment is concerned with God’s reputation. When His name is misused, His renown is weakened and people form false opinions about Him and His plans for the world.

Never Abuse My Name - Exodus 20:7

4. This commandment carries a severe consequence: *"The LORD will not hold anyone guiltless."* Why do you think this is significant? Does this mean God won't forgive people who misuse His name?

5. Pastor Chip Ingram, author and founder of Living on the Edge, has said, "Our use of God's name in word, thought, or deed will reflect our view of God and our relationship with Him." Respond to this statement.

6. This commandment assumes people will use God's name correctly. What does it look like for a person to honor God's name?

Never Abuse My Name - Exodus 20:7

7. Take a quick inventory of your life: How well do you represent the name of God? Do people know you are a Christian? Are your good deeds done in His name?

8. Read **Isaiah 50:10**: “*Who among you fears the LORD and obeys the word of his servant? Let the one who walks in the dark, who has no light, trust in the name of the LORD and rely on their God.*” Practically speaking, what would it look like for you to trust and rely on the name of the LORD?

REFLECTION 4:

REMEMBER THE SABBATH - Exodus 20:8-11

Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

1. According to Merriam-Webster's dictionary, the word *remember* means to "vividly bring to one's recollection or to relive." Why does God call us to "remember" the Sabbath? Why not just say, "Keep the Sabbath holy"?

2. The word *Sabbath* literally means "to cease." Based on this scripture, what is God calling us to stop on the Sabbath? In your opinion, what is the ultimate purpose of the Sabbath?



BIBLICAL BACKGROUND:

Holy

To make something holy sets it apart for a special purpose. In the Old Testament, many objects in the temple were set apart from common use for worship. Remembering the Sabbath means setting that day apart from all the other days in the week, dedicating it to God.

Remember the Sabbath - Exodus 20:8-11

- 3.** What are some personal barriers in your life that keep you from honoring the Sabbath? What are some of your common distractions?

- 4.** Throughout history, people have made the Sabbath a burden by making it all about the rules. What does it look like for you to have meaningful boundaries for the Sabbath without going overboard? How can you honor God with the Sabbath without becoming legalistic?

- 5.** Respond to this statement from Chip: "Many people work not because they want to provide for their family but because they are hiding from their family."

Remember the Sabbath - Exodus 20:8-11

- 6. Psalm 92** was written specifically for the Sabbath. Verses 1 and 2 read, *"It is good to praise the LORD and make music to your name, O Most High, proclaiming your love in the morning and your faithfulness at night."* In your life, what are some specific reasons you can praise God? Recently, how has He shown you His love and faithfulness?

- 7.** This commandment isn't just addressed to us personally; it also speaks to our influence over those around us, such as children, servants (or workers), and even animals. Does this mean we shouldn't have our children do chores on Sunday or make employees work on the Sabbath? Explain why you feel the way you do. How does **Colossians 2:16** speak to this issue?

- 8.** How do you specifically practice the Sabbath principle? What do you do to refresh your body, spirit, and soul on a weekly basis? What steps might God want you to take to live a more enjoyable, holy, and stress-free life?

REFLECTION 5:

A WORD TO FAMILIES IN AN AGE OF CHAOS - Exodus 20:12

Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the LORD your God is giving you.

1. Why does God make the family such a high priority?

2. Based on your experience, what kinds of things or people often receive honor in our culture? How does this align with God's design for how we ought to show honor?

3. Paul writes in **Ephesians 6:1-3**, "*Children, obey your parents in the LORD, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother . . . so that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth.'*" This is the first commandment that comes with a promise from God. Why would God make this promise to us?



BIBLICAL BACKGROUND:

Honor

In Hebrew (the original language of the Old Testament), the word for "honor" is also translated as "glorify." The literal translation is "heavy" or "to be given weight." To honor your parents is to value and respect them, to speak well of them, to lift them up, and to give weight to their position. This commandment is important because it lays the foundation for family, respect for authority, and human development. Healthy families build healthy people.

A Word to Families In an Age of Chaos - Exodus 20:12

4. Read **1 Timothy 5:4**: *"If a widow has children or grandchildren, these should learn first of all to put their religion into practice by caring for their own family and so repaying their parents and grandparents, for this is pleasing to God."* In what ways do you feel good about how you are "honoring" your parents? Which aspects need some attention?

5. Does honoring your parents mean obeying them no matter what they want? Explain why you feel the way you do.

6. If you have children and don't feel they are honoring you, how do you think God wants you to respond?

REFLECTION 6:

STOP THE VIOLENCE - Exodus 20:13

You shall not murder.

1. Why did God give the command to not murder? What is the significance of this commandment?

2. **Job 14:5** says, “*A person’s days are determined; you [God] have decreed the number of his months and have set limits he cannot exceed.*” All life is sacred. The moment we start saying, “This life has value, that life doesn’t have value, this life does, that one doesn’t,” we are on a slippery slope. How does the command to not murder apply to such issues as abortion, suicide, and active euthanasia?



BIBLICAL BACKGROUND:

Murder

The original meaning for this word means the premeditated and intentional taking of a life. It does not refer to accidental death, killing in self-defense, killing an animal, capital punishment, or just wars.

Stop the Violence - Exodus 20:13

3. Read **Matthew 5:21-24**: *“You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘You shall not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with a brother or sister will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to a brother or sister, ‘Raca,’ is answerable to the court. And anyone who says, ‘You fool!’ will be in danger of the fire of hell. Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.”* What do you find shocking or surprising about this teaching?

4. In **Matthew 5:21-25**, there is a noticeable progression in consequences, beginning with being subject to judgment, then being in court, and ending with danger from the fire of hell. Based on the text, what actions lead to each consequence? What differences do you see when you compare these actions?

5. What are some things people do that make you really angry—not just minor annoyances, but actions that build resentment in you?

Stop the Violence - Exodus 20:13

6. What are some destructive things you have said in the past month, either out of anger or with the intent to hurt someone's reputation? When are you most tempted to speak poorly of others and "assassinate" their character?

7. Murder begins with unresolved anger. Based on Jesus's teaching in **Matthew 5:23-24**, relational harmony is so important that we should interrupt our worship of God to make things right. In your life, where do you need reconciliation? What can you do to make things right?

REFLECTION 7:

NO SECOND-RATE SEX - Exodus 20:14

You shall not commit adultery.

1. What is God's motivation in limiting sex to heterosexual relationships within the boundary of marriage?

2. How does the world's valuing of sex and sexuality clash with God's design? List at least three or four examples.

3. Read **Ephesians 5:3**: "*Among you there must not be even a hint of sexual immorality, or of any kind of impurity, or of greed, because these are improper for God's holy people.*" Why do you think sexual immorality and greed are mentioned together? How are they similar?

No Second-Rate Sex - Exodus 20:14

4. In your opinion, what are the effects of the impurity that happens as a result of sexual immorality?

5. In his message about this commandment, Chip listed six facts about sex:

1. Free sex is costing us plenty!
2. Sex outside marriage, under any circumstance, is sin.
3. God is pro-sex! He invented it.
4. Cheaters never win.
5. We don't "fall" into sexual sins; we "slide" into them.
6. Adultery is not the unpardonable sin.

Which one of these facts is most challenging for you personally? Why?

6. Read **Proverbs 6:30-32**: *"People do not despise a thief if he steals to satisfy his hunger when he is starving. Yet if he is caught, he must pay sevenfold, though it costs him all the wealth of his house. But a man who commits adultery has no sense; whoever does so destroys himself."* What is the point of the comparison between stealing and adultery?

No Second-Rate Sex - Exodus 20:14

- 7. Read 1 Thessalonians 4:3-8:** *"It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; that each of you should learn to control your own body in a way that is holy and honorable, not in passionate lust like the pagans, who do not know God; and that in this matter no one should wrong or take advantage of a brother or sister. The LORD will punish all those who commit such sins, as we told you and warned you before. For God did not call us to be impure, but to live a holy life. Therefore, anyone who rejects this instruction does not reject a human being but God, the very God who gives you his Holy Spirit."* In your opinion, why does God want us to be sanctified? What is God's purpose in making us holy?

- 8.** What are some situations that trigger lust or impure thoughts? When is it difficult for you to exercise self-control?



BIBLICAL BACKGROUND:

Sanctified

Sanctification is the process by which a person becomes more holy—which is to say, set apart from what is common for special use. God is holy in that He is separate from everyone and everything in the universe. We are called to become more like Him—different from the sinful, imperfect world around us. Sanctification does not give us the right to judge others. Thomas à Kempis writes, "Wherefore, if you see another sin openly or commit a serious crime, do not consider yourself better, for you do not know how long you can remain in good estate. All men are frail, but you must admit that none is more frail than yourself" (*The Imitation of Christ*, p. 4).

No Second-Rate Sex - Exodus 20:14

9. Read **Matthew 5:27-28**: *"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart."* Why did Jesus extend this commandment? Why does He call us to a higher standard?

10. Read **Matthew 5:29-30**: *"If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell."* What kind of extreme measures can you take to live in obedience to this teaching from Jesus?

REFLECTION 8:

DON'T TAKE IT - Exodus 20:15

You shall not steal.

1. Chip mentions three root causes of stealing: greed, laziness, and pride. Which one do you think most often motivates people to steal? Why? Which one, if any, do you struggle with?

2. In your opinion, why did God give this command? What is He protecting?

3. Read **Proverbs 10:2** (GNT): “*Wealth you get by dishonesty will do you no good, but honesty can save your life.*” How does this scripture speak to the old saying “The end justifies the means”?

Don't Take It - Exodus 20:15

4. Read **Ephesians 4:28**: *"Anyone who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with their own hands, that they may have something to share with those in need."* According to this scripture, what is the purpose of work? How does stealing interrupt this purpose?

5. Read **Job 24:16-17**: *"In the dark, thieves break into houses, but by day they shut themselves in; they want nothing to do with the light. For all of them, midnight is their morning; they make friends with the terrors of darkness."* Stealing happens in secret with the hope of never getting caught. How does stealing harm the thief even if he or she isn't caught? What are the negative consequences of breaking this commandment?

6. Read **Romans 2:21**: *"You who preach against stealing, do you steal?"* Why is it easy to justify and rationalize taking something that doesn't belong to you?



BIBLICAL BACKGROUND:

Steal

Essentially, the Hebrew word for "steal" means to take what belongs to another without consent or knowledge. This includes more than just grabbing or taking. Stealing also refers to cheating, bribing, extorting, or withholding something that is due to another. If caught, the thief was required to pay back double (Exodus 22:7), and, in some cases, more than double (Exodus 22:1).

Don't Take It - Exodus 20:15

7. In your opinion, what does it mean to steal from God?

8. Read **Malachi 3:8-11**: *“Will a mere mortal rob God? Yet you rob me. But you ask, ‘How are we robbing you?’ ‘In tithes and offerings. You are under a curse—your whole nation—because you are robbing me. Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,’ says the LORD Almighty, ‘and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it. I will prevent pests from devouring your crops, and the vines in your fields will not drop their fruit before it is ripe,’ says the LORD Almighty.”* Based on this scripture, what does it mean to steal from God?

REFLECTION 9:

DECLARE WAR ON DECEIT - Exodus 20:16

You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

1. When is it easiest for you to speak falsely about others? What are the similarities and differences between slander and gossip?

2. Read **John 7:18**: “Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him.” Could the same be said about you? Are you a person of truth? What needs to change? Is there someone with whom you need to “come clean” in order to restore your integrity?

3. Respond to this statement Chip made: “Just like economies are built on money, relationships are built on trust.” Why do you agree or disagree?



BIBLICAL BACKGROUND:

False Testimony

This command is not just about telling the truth in legal proceedings, it is about telling the truth all the time. Slander, lying, deception, and idle talk erode the trust that is necessary for community life and close relationships.

Declare War on Deceit - Exodus 20:16

4. Read **Proverbs 10:9**: “*Whoever walks in integrity walks securely, but whoever takes crooked paths will be found out.*” Why are both “telling” and “living” the truth important? What is the impact of duplicity and deception in our lives?

5. When is it easiest for you to bend (or break) the truth? In what ways do you rationalize this behavior?

6. Chip lists seven common reasons that people lie. Which one of the following do you struggle with the most and why?

- Fear
- Hurt
- Insecurity
- Misguided protection
- Laziness
- Greed
- Habit

Declare War on Deceit - Exodus 20:16

7. How do you feel about people who deceive you? Describe a recent situation in which someone abused your trust due to deception.

8. Read **Ephesians 4:25**: *“Each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.”* Based on this scripture, why should we speak truthfully? What benefits have you experienced in a relationship with someone who speaks the truth?

REFLECTION 10:

WHY WE HAVE SO MUCH AND ENJOY IT SO LITTLE - Exodus 20:17

You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor.

1. Read **Proverbs 19:23**: *"The fear of the LORD leads to life; then one rests content, untouched by trouble."* How has the health of your spiritual walk influenced your levels of contentment?

2. Why is it wrong to covet something even if you don't steal it and you work to earn it?

3. Read **Luke 12:13-15**: *"Someone in the crowd said to [Jesus], 'Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.' . . . Then he said to them, 'Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions.'"* How can a person know when he or she has crossed the line from healthy desire to unhealthy greed?

Why We Have So Much and Enjoy It So Little - Exodus 20:17

4. In your life, what drives you to have an unhealthy desire for things you don't already own? What false beliefs influence this kind of behavior? Chip also raises the ideas of "more is never enough" and "when/then" thinking. Do either of these influence you?

5. Chip lists three keys to contentment. Which one do you identify with the most and why?

1. Stop comparing yourself with others.
2. Rejoice and give thanks for what you do have.
3. Share what you have to help others.

6. Read **Luke 3:11-14**: *"John answered, 'Anyone who has two shirts should share with the one who has none, and anyone who has food should do the same.' Even tax collectors came to be baptized. 'Teacher,' they asked, 'what should we do?' 'Don't collect any more than you are required to,' he told them. Then some soldiers asked him, 'And what should we do?' He replied, 'Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay.'"* In this passage, we see that a lack of contentment leads to extortion—abusing power to receive more. How does your personal discontentment get expressed in your life?

CONGRATULATIONS!

Now that you've finished, what's next? Here are a few ideas:

- 1. Take a moment to **celebrate your accomplishment****—it's a big deal! Look over your answers and thank God for how He's worked in your life.
- 2. We'd love to hear from you!** Let us know how this resource benefited you and we'll throw a mini-party in your honor. Visit **livingontheedge.org/story** to share your experience with us. If you have suggestions for how we can make it better, we'd love to hear those, too! Email us at info@lote.org.
- 3. Share this resource with a friend.** If you know others who could benefit from this resource, email it to them as a way to encourage their faith. Tell them what you liked about it to help motivate them to check it out.
- 4. Determine what's next for your personal devotional life.** Pick a book from the Bible and read it systematically, or head over to **livingontheedge.org** to find a new tool designed to help you grow.

To receive free resources from Living on the Edge, join our email list:
livingontheedge.org/broadcasts.

We're praying for you!
The Team at Living on the Edge