**Listen in Community**

Small Group Study

**Overview**

*God had promised to make Abraham’s descendants a great nation. He had called them out of Egypt and separated them from the gods and practices of the Egyptians. The Israelites must now learn to become a nation that will reflect the character of the one true God to the nations around them. God called Moses up on a mountain where He gave him the laws by which they are to live. This will become the moral guide they must follow in order to reflect the character of a holy God.*

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| First time leading *Listen* for Adults? Check out the [Facilitator Guide](https://0b769b0ed3569ef9d18b-f88d8272f61086866d50d048b43ef630.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/sites/biblengagementproject/Listen_Facilitator_Guide.pdf). |

**Engage**

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| **QUESTION**What is a rule your parents had that you didn’t like as a kid, but you understand better now as an adult? |

God’s plan was for His people, Israel, to be a holy nation. He set them apart so that they might show the world that God, the “I AM” of the burning bush, is the one true God. If they were to be the nation that represented Him to the world, then they must reflect His character to the world. But they, like us, sometimes struggled to live up to God’s standard.

**Watch**

As we watch this video, consider this question:

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| **QUESTION**Which is easier for you: to genuinely love God or to love others? |

**Consider**

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| *Seventeen-year-old Mallory had begun her first dating relationship. One day after she had left for a date, Mallory’s parents asked her younger sister, Zoe, what she thought of Mallory’s boyfriend. Zoe responded by telling her parents that she had five rules for the boyfriend. When her parents asked her what the five rules were, she proceeded to hold up her fingers and count to five as she drew them into a fist.* *After they finished laughing, they asked her where on earth that she had seen that. You see, Zoe was a big fan of the Peanuts comic strip. She had previously seen Lucy Van Pelt, in similar fashion, tell her younger brother Linus her five reasons for why he should do something.* *Unlike Lucy, who was trying to bully Linus, Zoe was speaking from a heart of love and protection for her older sister. Similarly, out of an abundance of love, God gave His people rules for their protection. The first ten have come to be known as The Ten Commandments.* *You see, the Israelites had lived in the land of the pharaohs for a long time. As such, they had been surrounded by a culture of worshipping many gods. The Egyptians believed that each of those gods provided them with something they needed (fertility, rains, harvests, etc.). God knew that this was deeply ingrained in the Hebrew people and would lead them into the same evils that it had led the Egyptians.* *So, God took Moses up onto a mountain and gave him the standards by which the people should live. These standards would retrain them to reflect the character of a loving God, rather than that of the Egyptians and their many gods.*  |
| **QUESTION**Have you or someone you know been a part of a different religion, sect, or cult that worshipped other gods? Tell us about it. |

**What the Bible Says**

Let’s look at what we know God says in His Word, the Bible.

**Love God**

Read [Exodus 20:1–7](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ex20.1-7).

No other gods, no carved images to worship, and use His name respectfully: These three commandments tell us how we can show our love for God. When Jesus was talking to the religious leaders of His day, He summed up these three commandments like this: “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all of your mind.” ([Matthew 22:37](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt22.37))

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| **QUESTION**The Bible tells us that we are so valuable to God that He numbers the very hairs on our head ([Matthew 10:30](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt10.30)). Think about people you love that deeply. Without mentioning anyone specific, share how it makes you feel to be disregarded or disrespected by those you love most. |

**Rest and Remember**

Read [Exodus 20:8–11](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ex20.8-11).

The fourth commandment also relates to how we worship God. However, we’ll look at it separately, so that we can explore it a little more deeply. We are told that the Sabbath is not only a day set apart for the Lord, but also a day of rest for us. Jesus, when asked about the Sabbath, said that it was created by God to meet the needs of people. ([Mark 2:27](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mk2.27)) God knew that we would need a reminder to set aside time for the Lord our God and for rest.

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| **QUESTION**What are the usual symptoms of lack of rest in your life? |

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| **QUESTION**How can we honor God on the Sabbath? |

**Love Others**

Read [Exodus 20:12–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ex20.12-17).

Even those outside the church know that it’s wrong to murder, lie, cheat, steal and commit adultery. Texas A&M University, a secular institution, has an honor code that says, “Aggies don’t lie, cheat, or steal, or tolerate those who do.” However, Jesus, in His famous Sermon on the Mount, cut right to the heart of the matter. He declared that not only is murder wrong, but also the hate that has the potential to lead to the murder. Likewise, He said that not only is adultery wrong, but also the lustful thoughts that lead to adultery. After all, every sinful action is preceded by a sinful thought, and every loving action is preceded by a loving thought. ([Matthew 5:21–30](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt5.21-30))

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| **QUESTION**What secular institutions do you know of that uphold the biblical principles mentioned in [Exodus 20:12–17](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ex20.12-17)? |

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| **QUESTION**In what ways have you seen the world begin to justify going against these biblical principles? |

**Afraid to Approach**

Read [Exodus 20:18–20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ex20.18-20).

In [Exodus 19:10–13](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ex19.10-13), God had given very specific instructions for how the people could approach Him. However, the thunder, lightning, and smoke proved too intimidating. The people didn’t have the benefit of the same intimacy with God that Moses enjoyed. You see, when you know God’s heart and loving intentions, it’s easier to accept His holiness as part of the package.

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| **QUESTION**Do you know someone that other people are afraid of, but because you know them well, you are not? |

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| **QUESTION**Have you ever had a relationship that started out as one of forced authority, but over time it became one of respect and friendship? |

**Reflect**

We began by asking about rules we didn’t like when we were kids. As children we were too immature to understand the loving intentions behind the rules. We saw them only as restrictions that limited what we wanted. In the same way, our relationship with God may start as one of authority. God is the Creator, I am the creation; therefore, I must obey.

As we know God more intimately, obeying Him becomes a joy. We find joy in knowing that He is taking care of us. We rejoice in offering Him our trust and obedience as an act of love. This is the relationship that God has wanted with people from the beginning.

**Listen to God**

The goal of ***Listen*** is not only to gain an understanding of God’s Word, but also to pause and listen to what God our Creator might want to say to us about what we have read and shared. Be silent for a few moments and reflect on the following questions. Choose the one that most resonates with what God is saying to you now. Then complete the others during Day 1 of your devotion time this week.

**Personal Reflection Questions**

*Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.*

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| **QUESTION**Think about the statement in [Matthew 10:30](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt10.30) that God numbers the very hairs on your head. How does it make you feel to know that your Creator and Father knows you so well and loves you so deeply? |

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| **QUESTION**How good are you at making time to rest and refresh yourself? What changes do you need to make in this area of your life? |

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| **QUESTION**In what area is the Lord speaking to you about submitting your thoughts before they lead you into sinful actions? |

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| **QUESTION**Who is someone in your life that you are afraid to disappoint because of their authority over you? Who is someone in your life that you are afraid to disappoint because of the respect and affection that you have for them? Which relationship means more to you? |

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| **QUESTION**Think about your relationship with the Lord. On a scale of 1–10, how much would you say that your obedience to His laws is based on His authority? How much is it based on wanting to show Him your trust and love? |

**Prayer Requests**

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| Note any requests from the group and remember to pray for them during the week. |

Before next time, continue to listen with the personal devotions.

**Did You Know?**

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| *Did you know that sets of written law were actually a common practice even centuries before the events of the Book of Exodus? The earliest known set is Hammurabi’s Code, a Babylonian written law code consisting of 282 laws covering all aspects of daily life. Although the Ten Commandments are the most well-known summation of God’s law, the full Law of God expands much farther than the Ten Commandments, with some laws, such as* [*Leviticus 24:19–21*](https://biblia.com/bible/leviticus/24/19-21)*, being direct parallels to the other law codes of the ancient world.**Provided by the Center for Holy Lands Studies**HolyLandsStudies.org* |

**Listen on Your Own**

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| *Listening to God is something we need to do every day. Before you begin each devotion, pray and ask God to speak to you through His Word. Record your answers to the following questions in the space provided or in your personal journal.* |

**Day 1**

Read [Exodus 20:1–20](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ex20.1-20).

Look back over the Listen in Community section and complete your responses to the Personal Reflection Questions. If time permits, read the Scripture too.

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| **QUESTION**What do you sense that God is saying to you? |

**Listen on Your Own**

**Day 2**

Read [Exodus 16:1–30](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ex16.1-30).

In our Community time, we looked at how Sabbath rest is a gift that God gives to man. However, it also requires a measure of faith to trust that God can multiply our six days of labor and make them more fruitful than an additional seventh day of labor worked in disobedience to God’s law.

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| **QUESTION**What were God’s instructions to the Israelites regarding the collection of manna? |

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| **QUESTION**In what ways did they disobey? |

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| **QUESTION**What does this passage teach you about human nature? |

**Listen on Your Own**

**Day 3**

Read [Matthew 22:34–40](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt22.34-40).

In our Community time we referenced what Jesus called the first and greatest commandment: “You must love the Lord you God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” ([Matthew 22:37](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Mt22.37)) Today, we will look at the second commandment Jesus gave.

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| **QUESTION**What did Jesus name as the second commandment? |

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| **QUESTION**Why do you think it’s so important to God that we show love to one another? |

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| **QUESTION**How can you show love to others today? |

**Listen on Your Own**

**Day 4**

Read [Psalm 19:1–14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ps19.1-14).

In this psalm, King David sings the praises of God’s commandments. He very poetically compares them to gold and sweet honey. The concluding verse ([Psalm 19:14](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ps19.14)) is worth committing to memory!

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| **QUESTION**Ask the Holy Spirit to speak and reveal the deep things of God to you ([1 Corinthians 2:10](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.1Co2.10)). Now read [Psalm 19](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ps19) again, more slowly than the first time. |

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| **QUESTION**Choose a verse or phrase that really stood out to you. Meditate on that verse for a moment. Ask God questions about its meaning. Is there something deeper than what you noticed the first time through? |

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| **QUESTION**What did God reveal to you about Himself and His commands today? |

**Listen on Your Own**

**Day 5**

Read [Psalm 119:1–40](https://ref.ly/logosref/Bible.Ps119.1-40).

In contrast to looking at the commandments as a set of rules and regulations by which God judges us, the psalmist describes his love for the commands as a means of pleasing God and living a blessed life.

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| **QUESTION**As you read this passage mark any verse or phrase that stands out to you. Now, go back and look at the things that you marked. Do any of them stand out more than the others? |

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| **QUESTION**Ask God what He is trying to show you today. Take two minutes to think on that verse and listen for an answer. |

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| **QUESTION**Write down what you believe that He is speaking to you. No one will see this but you. This is a great time to practice listening to the Lord. |