



The Ten Commandments:
NCPC Community Groups
Fall 2011

Below is the schedule of community events through December.

- Please note the date your community group serves at the Joshua Center.
- Regarding CG material, each group ultimately determines its own pace.
- Finally, please note that during special events on Oct. 7th and Nov. 4th., all CGs should suspend normal plans and attend these events.

September

7-9: Intro, read and discuss excerpt from
40 Questions about Christians and Biblical Law

14-16: Commandment 1

21st: Joshua Center (Streeterville and Parents groups)

21-23: Commandment 2

28-30: Commandment 3

October

5-6: CGs OFF

7th: NCPCC Community Group Olympics

8th: NCPCC Golf Outing: The Pemberley

12-14: Commandment 4

15th: NCPCC Apple Picking

19th: Joshua Center (West Loop and Near North groups)

19-21: Commandment 5

26-28: Commandment 6

November

2-3: CGs OFF

4th: NCPCC Game Night

9-11: Commandment 7

16th: Joshua Center (both South Loop Groups)

16-18: Commandment 8-9

20th: NCPCC Turkey Bowl

23-25: OFF (Thanksgiving)

30-2: Commandment 10

December

1-2: Commandment 10

7-9: Reflection

16th: NCPCC Ice Skating

21st: Joshua Center (misc)

NCPCC Community Groups

Near North

Wednesdays 7:30 pm

John Sung: john.sung@sbcglobal.net

Dave Yang: dave.yang79@gmail.com

West Loop

Thursdays 7:30 pm

Simon Yoo: simyoo@yahoo.com

Laura Kolb: laura.kolb@gmail.com

Location Varies (Parents)

Thursdays 8:00 pm

Chad Pirotte: chad.pirotte@gmail.com

Glo Pirotte: glohsu@gmail.com

South Loop

Fridays 8:00 pm

Andy Kang: andyskang1977@gmail.com

Cassie Chong: casarinechong@yahoo.com

Jeannie Rhee: jeannie.rhee@gmail.com

Streeterville

Fridays 7:30 pm

Jeff Lee: morehimlessme@gmail.com

Jeff Yu: jeffrey.jyu52579@gmail.com

South Loop

Fridays 7:30 pm

Anne Yang: anneyang1@gmail.com

Jay Ro: rojk79@gmail.com

Location Varies (Family)

Fridays 6:30

Kyle Kim: ji_kyle@hotmail.com

Robert Fong: fong.robert@gmail.com

The following excerpt is taken from:

Thomas Schreiner. *40 Questions About Christians and Biblical Law*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2010; pp. 25-31

Was the Mosaic Covenant Legalistic?

In order to answer this question, the word *legalism* must be defined. By *legalism* I refer to the idea that human beings can earn or merit right standing with God. Clearly, the Mosaic covenant was not legalistic in this sense. The structure of the covenant features the grace of God. The first fourteen chapters of Exodus describe God's redemption of his people from Egyptian bondage. Their redemption is an act of divine grace and cannot be ascribed to the obedience of Israel. The Lord did not choose Israel because of her righteousness, for nothing inherent in Israel commended her as a nation before the Lord. As Deuteronomy 9:4-5 says,

Do not say in your heart, after the LORD your God has thrust them out before you, "It is because of my righteousness that the LORD has brought me in to possess this land," whereas it is because of the wickedness of these nations that the LORD is driving them out before you. Not because of your righteousness or the uprightness of your heart are you going in to possess their land, but because of the wickedness of these nations the LORD your God is driving them out from before you, and that he may confirm the word that the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

Since the Lord did not bring Israel into the land because of her accomplishments but despite them, it is clear that Israel was saved by virtue of God's mercy. Moses clarifies earlier in Deuteronomy why the Lord chose Israel to be a people for himself in one of the most important texts in the Pentateuch. In Deuteronomy 7:6-8 we read,

For you are a people holy to the LORD your God. The LORD your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the LORD set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples, but it is because the LORD loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers, that the LORD has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

The Lord elected Israel because of his love for her, and the reason given for the Lord's love is his love. In other words, no quality in Israel endeared the nation to the Lord. The Lord set his sovereign love upon Israel because it was his good pleasure to do so. Observing the Ten Commandments did not constitute the basis upon which Israel would gain life. Israel was rescued by the Lord from Egypt and borne upon eagles' wings (Exod. 19:4). Before the Ten Commandments were given, the Lord declared, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery" (Exod. 20:2). The giving of the law *followed* the salvation of Israel, and hence such obedience signified Israel's grateful *response* to the redemption accomplished by the Lord. There is no basis in the text for the idea that Israel's obedience *established* a relationship with the Lord. The Lord took the initiative in rescuing his people, and they were called upon to respond with faithful obedience.

The gracious character of the Mosaic covenant is supported by the structure of the covenant. Many scholars have argued that the Mosaic covenant represents a suzerain-vassal treaty in which Yahweh is the great suzerain and Israel the vassal.' In such treaties the historical prologue, which recounts what the suzerain has done to benefit his vassals, precedes the covenant stipulations and the covenant curses. In the same way, the Lord recounts in the covenant structure what he has done for Israel (historical prologue) in delivering them from Egypt and preserving them from their enemies before he gives them covenant stipulations (the law). The Lord also promises them covenantal blessings if they obey or threatens them with covenantal curses if they disobey. The pattern established in the Mosaic covenant, which is redemption followed by obedience, functions as a type or pattern for New Testament believers. Believers have been redeemed through the work of Christ, and they respond to his saving mercy with grateful obedience. Such grateful obedience, under both the Mosaic covenant and the new covenant established by Jesus Christ, is not legalistic, for there is no idea that such obedience earns or merits salvation under either the old covenant or the new. The obedience of believers flows from faith and is a thankful response to God's saving work in Christ.

The following excerpt is taken from:

Thomas Schreiner. *40 Questions About Christians and Biblical Law*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2010; pp. 25-31

The common covenant pattern (obedience as a result of salvation) that exists between the Sinai covenant and the new covenant does not lead to the conclusion that the covenants are the same in every respect. The Mosaic covenant was not legalistic, and yet the new covenant and old covenant are not to be leveled out so that no differences are posited between the covenants.

We shall pursue this matter further as we explore the theology of the law in the Scriptures. What is emphasized here is that there is no warrant for saying that the Mosaic covenant is legalistic.

SUMMARY

The notion that the Mosaic covenant is legalistic is not borne out by a careful reading of the biblical text. The giving of the law was not the basis upon which the Lord entered into covenant with Israel. The giving of the law followed (and does not precede) God's great redemption of Israel from Egypt. The call to obey the Lord functions as a response to the Lord's saving his people from Egypt.

Reflection Questions

1. How would you define *legalism*?
2. How does the structure of the Mosaic covenant show that it was not legalistic?
3. If someone preaches the Ten Commandments, are they guilty of legalism?
4. How do we proclaim the importance of obedience without falling into legalism?
5. If the Mosaic covenant is not legalistic, then does it follow that all the covenants are the same?

Does the Old Testament Teach That Salvation Is by Works?

Occasionally, especially in popular circles, one runs across the idea that the Old Testament teaches a different way of salvation, as if salvation were gained through works in the Old Testament but by faith in the New Testament. Virtually all scholars agree that there is no warrant for this idea. When Paul wants to support the idea that justification is by faith, he appeals to the life of Abraham (Rom. 4:1-25; Gal. 3:6-9) and David (Rom. 4:6-8), finding in Genesis 15:6 the truth that it was Abraham's faith that was counted to him as righteousness. Abraham was an idolater (Josh. 24:2) and ungodly (Rom. 4:5) before his salvation, and hence he trusted in God to save him. It is quite instructive that both Abraham and David are mentioned in Romans 4. Clearly, salvation was by faith for Abraham, who lived before the law. Some might think that salvation was obtained by another means for David who lived under the law. But Paul makes it abundantly clear that David also was righteous by faith and not by his moral excellence.

Since Paul argues from the Old Testament itself for the truth that salvation is by faith, there is no basis for thinking that salvation can be obtained by any other means in the Old Testament. The reference to David is perhaps particularly important since he lived under the law. The law does not introduce a new era in which salvation is obtained in a different way than it was in the time of Abraham. On the contrary, both Abraham and David were saved in the same way. They trusted that the Lord would save them in spite of their sin.

It should also be noted that both Paul and the author of Hebrews appeal to Habakkuk 2:4 to support the idea that righteousness comes by faith (Rom. 1:17; Gal. 3:11; Heb. 10:38). Habakkuk threatens judgment for Judah, which had blatantly violated God's law. The Lord promised that he would use the Babylonians to inflict his wrath upon his people. Still, in the midst of the judgment that was coming, those who put their faith in the Lord and trusted in him would live (Hab. 2:4). Habakkuk 3 recalls exodus themes as it

The following excerpt is taken from:

Thomas Schreiner. *40 Questions About Christians and Biblical Law*. Grand Rapids: Kregel Publications, 2010; pp. 25-31

portrays the judgment and salvation of God, but even in the midst of judgment to come, in which fig trees would not blossom and vines would be barren of fruit, those who trusted in Yahweh would find their joy in him. They would look to the Lord as their strength. To look to the Lord for strength and joy is just another way of saying that one trusts in the Lord. Habakkuk acknowledges that Israel had failed to keep the law (Hab. 1:4), and thus their only hope was a new exodus in which the Lord would save his people. Those who put their trust in the Lord would enjoy his saving work.

I argued in the previous question that the Mosaic covenant was not a legalistic one, and thus it is a complete distortion to understand it as advocating salvation by works rather than by faith. The law was given after the Lord had redeemed his people from Egypt, and hence their obedience was a response of love to the grace of God. Therefore, we have further evidence that the Mosaic covenant itself does not represent a different way of salvation.

Hebrews 11 confirms our understanding of salvation in the Old Testament, emphasizing with its long list of Old Testament saints who received a reward from him that they pleased God because of their faith (v. 6). For example, Abel's sacrifice, rather than Cain's, was acceptable because of his faith (v. 4). Noah also became an heir of righteousness because of his faith in God's promise, which expressed itself in building the ark (v. 7). So too, Abraham's obedience stemmed from his faith (v. 8). In the same way, Moses and the people of Israel exercised faith in leaving Egypt and in offering the Paschal lamb (vv. 23-29), recognizing therein that God saves. The life of Rahab shows that salvation is by faith rather than works, for her life as a prostitute clearly disqualified her to be saved on the basis of her works (v. 31). Indeed, all of those who pleased God in Israel did so by faith (vv. 5-6, 33-38).

SUMMARY

The testimony of Scripture is quite clear on this matter. Salvation in both the Old Testament and the New Testament is by faith. Works are not conceived of as the basis or foundation of one's salvation in either the Old Testament or the New Testament. There is one way of salvation in both Testaments: faith in the God who promises to save his people.

Reflection Questions

1. Does the Old Testament teach salvation by works?
2. What evidence is there in the lives of Abraham and David that salvation has always been by faith?
3. How does the book of Habakkuk as a whole support salvation by faith?
4. What is the role of faith and obedience in Hebrews 11?
5. Does true faith always lead to obedience?

1

Exodus 20:1-3 ¹And God spoke all these words, saying, ²"I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery. ³"You shall have no other gods before me.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the significance of verse 2. What perspective does this statement provide for the following commandments? How does this affect the motive for obedience?

2. From the quote below, which of the three statements most aptly defines v. 3?

"Does this mean that other gods can be tolerated as long as Yahweh was given priority? Or, while acknowledging there are other gods, is this a demand that Israel worship only Yahweh? Or are we to understand this command the way it has been traditionally understood, as denying the existence of all other gods except Yahweh?" (David Noel Freedman, *The Nine Commandments*, p. 23)

3. According to Matthew 6:19-24, money is a god. What is it about money and materialism that controls us and lures us into "believing" in it?

Matthew 6:19-24 ¹⁹"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. ²²"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are good, your whole body will be full of light. ²³But if your eyes are bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness! ²⁴"No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.

4. In addition to money, what other "modern" gods are deeply imbedded in our lives? Why do we often seemingly find these gods more attractive, more powerful, or more alluring than Yahweh?

Reflection Questions

1. What have you learned about your nature through this study?

2. How has God's redemption in Christ persuaded you to seek Him first?

3. In what ways can NCPC, collectively, make strides to be more faithful in this area?

2 Exodus 20:4-6 ⁴ "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. ⁵ You shall not bow down to them or serve them, for I the LORD your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me, ⁶ but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

Discussion Questions

Most of us realize that making idols with our own hands is not necessarily a struggle that we would deal with today. Times have definitely changed, but there are still objects, hopes, and ambitions in our lives to which we devote ourselves. An "idol," especially in contemporary culture, is definitely more than just some wooden or stone statue. Tim Keller defines "idolatry" in the following way:

[An idol] is anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give you what only God can give. A counterfeit god is anything so central and essential to your life that, should you lose it, your life would feel hardly worth living. An idol has such a controlling position in your heart that you can spend most of your passion and energy, your emotional and financial resources, on it without a second thought... An idol is whatever you look at and say, in your heart of hearts, "if I have that, then I'll feel my life has meaning, then I'll know I have value, then I'll feel significant and secure." There are many ways to describe that kind of relationship to something, but perhaps the best one is worship (Tim Keller, *Counterfeit Gods*, xvii-xviii).

1. In light of the above definition, what are some idols that we have in our own life? Are we "bowing down to them and serving them"?
2. What does "jealousy" mean? Explain what it means that God is a jealous God. Is there something in our lives that might be eliciting a jealous response from God?
3. Discuss the disparity between those who hate God and those who love God in v.5. What does hating God look like? What does loving God look like?

Reflection Questions

1. What have you learned about your nature through this study?
2. How has God's grace in Christ empowered you to overcome your idols?
3. In what ways can NCPC, collectively, get rid of the idols that suppress this church from kingdom growth?

3

Exodus 20:7 ⁷ "You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

Discussion Questions

It was commonly understood that because of fear for what might happen to them, the Jews never used God's name in conversation or in writing. The term, *Yahweh*, which is used rather freely today, was never spoken of then because this was God's proper name. Instead, they would use the term *adonai* or *elohim* to speak of God (David Freedman, *The Nine Commandments*, p. 49).

1. According to David Noel Freedman, there are three traditional interpretations of the third commandment (*see below*). Of these three, discuss whether any of them fully articulate what it means to carry out the third commandment.

Traditional Interpretations

1. To use the name of God while cursing or swearing.
 2. To promise or swear something on the name of God, as if this promise makes what you are saying more serious than simply a basic promise.
 3. To refer to any use of God's name for common or profane purposes (cursing, lying, swearing, joking, regular conversation).
2. Is "using God's name in vain" referring strictly to the use of our tongue, or are there other ways beyond what we declare verbally in which we might "use" God's name in vain?
3. In the book of Job, there is an undeniable emphasis on "cursing" God both in our heart and with our lips (see. 1:5, 11; 2:5, 9). In 1:5, Job sacrificed offerings to God for each of his children because he feared that they "cursed God in their hearts." In fact, the very goal of Satan was to get Job to "curse" God, but we see at the end that Job does not sin with his lips or with his heart. Read Job 1:1-2:10. As you read this account, discuss what it means to curse God. Does this help in our understanding of what it means to "take the name of the Lord in vain"?
4. In Matthew 15:7-11, is there a connection between worshipping God in vain and the third commandment? Discuss.

Matthew 15:7-11 ⁷ You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you: ⁸ "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. ⁹ They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men." ¹⁰ Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. ¹¹ What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.'"

5. When we take the gospel of Jesus for granted, is that a modern-day parallel for "taking the Lord's name in vain"?

Reflection Questions

1. What have you learned about your nature through this study?
2. How has God's grace freed you to revere God's holy name?
3. In what ways can NCP, collectively, encourage one another to revere God?

4

Exodus 20:8-11 ⁸"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. ⁹ Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, ¹⁰ but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. ¹¹ For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

¹² "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the LORD your God has commanded you. ¹³ Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴ 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 manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. ¹⁵ Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the LORD your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

Discussion Questions

1. What are the differences between the passages above? What do the distinctions communicate regarding *why* we should observe the Sabbath?
2. Discuss this quote below regarding Sabbath observance.

Rest is not simply about stopping. When we stop from our work, what we are really doing is exhibiting a fundamental trust and faith in the goodness and praiseworthiness of God. Of course faith is not a guarantee of special divine favor. But we cannot delight in God's provision for us if we are at the same time worried about whether or not God cares for us. Sabbath rest is thus a call to Sabbath trust, a call to visibly demonstrate in our daily living that we know ourselves to be upheld and maintained by the grace of God rather than the strength and craftiness of our own hands. To enjoy a Sabbath day, we must give up our desire for total control. The pattern of our economy... makes such trust very difficult. Deep down, we all have difficulty with the idea that we live through the mercy of divine gift. We prefer to think that we live through the might and control of our own self exertion. Sabbath observance thus gives us the time and the space to take a look at what our work is finally about. Our temptation is to think that we live through our own effort and that the goods we enjoy are ours because we have earned and deserve them. A moment's reflection can quickly dispel that illusion... (Norman Wirzba, *Living the Sabbath*, pp. 37-38).

3. What does "Sabbath trust" look like in your life?
4. In light of the passages below, answer the following questions:
 - I. What did Jesus mean when he said, "Come to me, for I will give you rest"?
 - II. What did Jesus mean when he said, "The Sabbath was made for man and not man for the Sabbath"?
 - III. What did Jesus mean when he said, "The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath"?

Matthew 11:28 - 30 ²⁸ "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Mark 2:23-28 ²³ One Sabbath Jesus was going through the grainfields, and as his disciples walked along, they began to pick some heads of grain. ²⁴ The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath?" ²⁵ He answered, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need? ²⁶ In the days of Abiathar the high priest, he entered the house of God and ate the consecrated bread, which is lawful only for priests to eat. And he also gave some to his companions." ²⁷ Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. ²⁸ So the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath."

Discussion Questions (continued)

Colossians 2:13-17 ¹³ When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, ¹⁴ having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. ¹⁵ And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. ¹⁶ Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. ¹⁷ These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ.

5. Discuss this quote concerning Colossians 2:

To be covered by the blood of Christ means that we no longer have the weight of the law on our shoulders. This means that *all* of the law, including the fourth commandment, was fulfilled by Jesus Christ on our behalf, and, as a result, we are freed from the obligation to these commands. However, as I say this, nowhere in the NT will you find someone saying, "Because Christ died and rose again, you no longer have to rest"... Interestingly, however, as we page through the NT, all of the ten commandments are reiterated save one: the fourth Commandment. Why is this? Why is the fourth commandment no longer important in the NT? Our answer is found in Colossian 2:17. "Religious festivals, New Moon celebrations, Sabbath days, these are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality of which is found in Christ." The reason we don't have to obey the Sabbath anymore is because Christ is our Sabbath, he is our ultimate rest. When we neglect Christ, we are in essence neglecting the fourth commandment (Pirotte, *Rest*, sermon manuscript).

Reflection Questions

1. What have you learned about your nature through this study?
2. What does it mean to rest in Christ, and how can we carry this out in our own lives today?
3. In what ways can NCPG, collectively, take strides to rest communally, and thus be different than the culture that surrounds us?

5

Exodus 20:12 ¹² "Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you.

Discussion Questions

The term honor, as used in the fifth commandment... connotes a child's respect for the parent's place in the social order... Honor requires that children protect a parent's dignity, attribute weight to a parent's counsel, acknowledge a parent's higher social position and respond appropriately to a parent's love and wisdom. Biblically, giving honor does not depend on a parent's worthiness or possession of positive parental attributes (Greg Jao, "Honor and Obey," *Following Jesus Without Dishonoring Your Parents*, p. 54) .

1. Discuss what "honor" means in light of the above quote and what honoring your parents looks like in your life.
2. Read the story below and discuss how cultural backgrounds shape our understanding of what honoring our parents looks like. Can you relate with the a story below? In what ways have you struggled to honor your parents?

Chris began our conversation with an apology and a nervous smile. "I always cry when I think about my kitchen-table encounters with my parents," she warned, "so don't be alarmed."

A bright, articulate and successful finance major at a private Midwestern university, Chris described her parents reaction to her decision to teach in the inner city after graduation instead of working in business. "Mom seemed so disappointed, and Dad just got angry. He kept telling me that I could support inner-city schools better if I were a successful businesswoman, that this is just a phase, and that I shouldn't be such a fanatic about my faith."

She looked up suddenly and added, "'I mean, my parents are Christians. They just don't understand. I worked for an inner-city mission this summer. I know that God wants me to be a teacher. And I know that it would kill my parents if I didn't go into business. After all, what would my aunties say?"

I sympathized with Chris's problem. My parents and I had argued about similar issues for the past six years. At my parents' request I had attended law school and was practicing law when I met Chris. However, I had believed all along that God wanted me to pursue student ministry with InterVarsity. We were at an impasse, just like Chris and her parents.

As we continued to talk, Chris revealed that past conflicts with her parents over schools, boyfriends and extracurricular activities had been played out at the kitchen table as well. "My non-Asian friends tell me I need to do what is right for me. And they tell me that I need to love Jesus more than I love my family. But the youth pastor at my home church says the Bible tells me to honor and obey my parents. My parents tell me what to do, and I always concede. My non-Asian friends think I'm crazy for letting them run my life. And I'm beginning to wonder if they're right."

She paused and rubbed a few tears from her eyes. "No one understands. Everyone is telling me to do something different. What should I do? (excerpt taken from Greg Jao, "Honor and Obey," *Following Jesus without Dishonoring Your Parents*, pp. 43-44).

Discussion Questions (continued)

3. Using the passages below, discuss the Biblical tension between honoring God and honoring parents.

Pro-parents passages

Exodus 21:15 ¹⁵ "Anyone who attacks his father or his mother must be put to death.

Exodus 21:17 ¹⁷ "Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.

Ephesians 6:1-3 Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ² "Honor your father and mother"-- which is the first commandment with a promise-- ³ "that it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth."

Colossians 3:20 ²⁰ Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.

Anti-parents passages

Luke 14:26 ²⁶ "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters-- yes, even his own life-- he cannot be my disciple.

Matthew 10:32-37 ³² "Whoever acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. ³³ But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven. ³⁴ "Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. ³⁵ For I have come to turn "a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law-- ³⁶ a man's enemies will be the members of his own household.' ³⁷ "Anyone who loves his father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves his son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.

4. In light of Mark 7:8-13, Discuss the idea of *corban* and how the leaders were using this "tradition" as an excuse to neglect their parents? Do we do the same?

Mark 7:8-13 ⁸ You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to the traditions of men." ⁹ And he said to them: "You have a fine way of setting aside the commands of God in order to observe your own traditions! ¹⁰ For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' ¹¹ But you say that if a man says to his father or mother: 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is *Corban*' (that is, a gift devoted to God), ¹² then you no longer let him do anything for his father or mother. ¹³ Thus you nullify the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And you do many things like that."

5. Read the quotes below and discuss the following question: What general provisional responsibilities should children have in "honoring" their parents?

The word "honor" means to treat someone with proper respect due to the person and their role. With regard to parents, at the very least, it means treating them with deference (Ex. 21:15, 17) and providing for them in their old age (Kenneth Harris, *ESV Study Bible Notes*, p. 176).

Although this word/commandment requires children to honor their parents in all sorts of ways large and small, there can be little doubt that its most basic insistence from the point of view of establishing a responsibility that might otherwise be shirked is to demand that children take care of their parents in their parents' old age, when they are no longer able to work for themselves, as well as to honor whatever their parents have prescribed by way of inheritance for their children (Douglas Stuart, *NAC Vol. 2: Exodus*, (electronic ed.)).

6. Discuss the quote below. How does the gospel free us to honor Christ while also honoring our parents?

The conflict between God's commands and our parents commands must be genuine and immediate before we refuse to obey our parents... Because our perceptions often are clouded by our own resentments, desires and passions, we need to engage in extensive prayerful reflection, thoughtful conversation with believers of various cultural backgrounds and ages, an in-depth and honest assessment of the issues and our desires, and a careful study of scripture before choosing to disobey our parents. (Greg Jao, "Honor and Obey," *Following Jesus*, pp. 53-54).

Reflection Questions

1. What have you learned about your nature through this study?
2. How has God's grace in Christ freed you so that you may honor your parents?
3. In what ways can NCPCC, collectively, encourage one another to be more faithful in this area?

6

Exodus 20:13 ¹³ "You shall not murder.

Discussion Questions

Matthew 5:21-26 ²¹ "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' ²² But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca, 'is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell. ²³ "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. ²⁵ "Settle matters quickly with your adversary who is taking you to court. Do it while you are still with him on the way, or he may hand you over to the judge, and the judge may hand you over to the officer, and you may be thrown into prison. ²⁶ I tell you the truth, you will not get out until you have paid the last penny.

1. According to Matthew 5:21-26, Jesus transcends the command "do not murder" by addressing a number of underlying motives that are equally as sinful as murder. What are some of these underlying motives, and discuss your own struggle with any of them.
2. What does Jesus prescribe to help us resist these darker heart motives?
3. Read the quote below and discuss Jesus' emphasis on reconciliation. What does this type of reconciliation look like today?

Leave your gift is a sharp command; there is something more urgent than completing the act of sacrifice. The worshiper is to leave the animal right there, in front of the altar, and *go*. The interruption of so solemn an act emphasizes the overriding importance of reconciliation. *First* has a time reference: "in the first place, before doing anything else." It is important that the worshiper get his priorities right, and the first thing to do is to effect reconciliation. He must take whatever steps are needed to restore harmony, and only when this is done may he come back and resume his offering. The act of sacrifice is not as important as the spirit in which it is done. (Leon Morris, *The Gospel According to Matthew*, electronic reference).

4. Discuss how God's justice leads us to love rather than to avenge.

Romans 12:18-21 ¹⁸ If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. ¹⁹ Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord. ²⁰ On the contrary: "If your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink. In doing this, you will heap burning coals on his head." ²¹ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

5. Discuss the passage below. How does the gospel help us to actively fight these underlying motives (i.e. anger, unforgiveness, hatred) that render us just as guilty as a murderer? Why is love so necessary in all cases?

1 John 3:14-16 ¹⁴ We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. ¹⁵ Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him. ¹⁶ This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

Reflection Questions

1. What have you learned about your nature through this study?
2. How has God's grace in Christ freed you from bitterness, hatred, and the desire to avenge?
3. In what ways can NCPCC, collectively, encourage one another to be more forgiving?

7 Exodus 20:14 ¹⁴ "You shall not commit adultery.

Discussion Questions

Matthew 5:27-32 ²⁷ "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' ²⁸ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹ If your right eye causes you to sin, 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. ³⁰ And if your right hand causes you to sin, 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. ³¹ "It has been said, 'Anyone who divorces his wife must give her a certificate of divorce.' ³² But I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, causes her to become an adulteress, and anyone who marries the divorced woman commits adultery.

1. According to Matthew 5:27-32, Jesus transcends the command "do not commit adultery" by addressing a number of underlying heart-actions that are equally as sinful as adultery. What are some of these internal actions?
2. What does Jesus prescribe to help us resist these darker heart motives? Is he serious, or using hyperbole? Consider the quote below in your discussion.

These two verses speak hyperbolically...to underline the gravity of Jesus's teaching in lust. Sin must be avoided even if radical sacrifice is required. Lust must be treated with utmost seriousness because it can cause a person to be thrown into hell... Since evil arises in the heart (Matt 15:19; Gen. 6:5, 8:21; Jer. 17:9), amputation cannot cure it, and so it should go without saying that these two commands are hyperbolic. But the hyperbole shocks the reader with the real point: it is better to deal decisively with lust than be thrown into hell because of it (David Turner, *ECNT Matthew*, Pp. 170-171).

3. In Matthew 5:31, Jesus connects divorce with adultery. Why? In your discussion, consider Matthew 19:3-11.

Matthew 19:3-11 ³ Some Pharisees came to him to test him. They asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any and every reason?" ⁴ "Haven't you read," he replied, "that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female,' ⁵ and said, 'For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? ⁶ So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate." ⁷ "Why then," they asked, "did Moses command that a man give his wife a certificate of divorce and send her away?" ⁸ Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard. But it was not this way from the beginning. ⁹ I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery." ¹⁰ The disciples said to him, "If this is the situation between a husband and wife, it is better not to marry." ¹¹ Jesus replied, "Not everyone can accept this word, but only those to whom it has been given.

Discussion Questions (continued)

4. Biblically, human marriages are living re-enactments of the gospel relationship between God and his people. Read both Jeremiah 3:1-14 and Ephesians 5:22-33. What do these passages communicate about God's purpose and intention for His people?

Jeremiah 3:1-14 "If a man divorces his wife and she leaves him and marries another man, should he return to her again? Would not the land be completely defiled? But you have lived as a prostitute with many lovers-- would you now return to me?" declares the LORD. ² "Look up to the barren heights and see. Is there any place where you have not been ravished? By the roadside you sat waiting for lovers, sat like a nomad in the desert. You have defiled the land with your prostitution and wickedness. ³ Therefore the showers have been withheld, and no spring rains have fallen. Yet you have the brazen look of a prostitute; you refuse to blush with shame. ⁴ Have you not just called to me: 'My Father, my friend from my youth, ⁵ will you always be angry? Will your wrath continue forever?' This is how you talk, but you do all the evil you can." ⁶ During the reign of King Josiah, the LORD said to me, "Have you seen what faithless Israel has done? She has gone up on every high hill and under every spreading tree and has committed adultery there. ⁷ I thought that after she had done all this she would return to me but she did not, and her unfaithful sister Judah saw it. ⁸ I gave faithless Israel her certificate of divorce and sent her away because of all her adulteries. Yet I saw that her unfaithful sister Judah had no fear; she also went out and committed adultery. ⁹ Because Israel's immorality mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood. ¹⁰ In spite of all this, her unfaithful sister Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in pretense," declares the LORD. ¹¹ The LORD said to me, "Faithless Israel is more righteous than unfaithful Judah. ¹² Go, proclaim this message toward the north: "'Return, faithless Israel,' declares the LORD, 'I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful,' declares the LORD, 'I will not be angry forever. ¹³ Only acknowledge your guilt-- you have rebelled against the LORD your God, you have scattered your favors to foreign gods under every spreading tree, and have not obeyed me,'" declares the LORD. ¹⁴ "Return, faithless people," declares the LORD, "for I am your husband. I will choose you-- one from a town and two from a clan-- and bring you to Zion.

Ephesians 5:22-33 ²² Wives, submit to your husbands as to the Lord. ²³ For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior. ²⁴ Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit to their husbands in everything. ²⁵ Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her ²⁶ to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, ²⁷ and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. ²⁸ In this same way, husbands ought to love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. ²⁹ After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it, just as Christ does the church-- ³⁰ for we are members of his body. ³¹ "For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh." ³² This is a profound mystery-- but I am talking about Christ and the church. ³³ However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband.

5. If marriage truly is a re-enactment of the gospel relationship between God and his people, then why is adultery and divorce such a BIG deal? What is the act of adultery and divorce ultimately communicating?

Reflection Questions

1. What have you learned about your sinful nature through this study?
2. How does God's grace in Jesus Christ free us from the deceitful lure of adultery, lust, and divorce?
3. In what ways can NCPC, collectively, become sexually pure as a community?

8

Exodus 20:15 ¹⁵ "You shall not steal."

Discussion Questions

1. What does it mean to steal? Have you ever stolen anything? What are subtle, unrecognized acts of stealing that our culture accepts as okay?
2. If Jesus would have addressed internal motives regarding stealing in his Sermon on the Mount, what actions do you think he would have addressed? (i.e. selfishness, hoarding. etc).
3. Discuss Ephesians 4:28, particularly the tension/relationship between stealing, work, and generosity.

Ephesians 4:28 ²⁸ He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

4. What does stealing ultimately communicate about our trust in God?
5. How does the gospel of Jesus Christ free us from the temptation to steal?

9

Exodus 20:16 ¹⁶ "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor."

Discussion Questions

1. Although the basic act of lying is implicit within this commandment, what form of lying is the commandment actually focusing on? Consider the verses below in your discussion.

Exodus 23:1-3; 6-8 "Do not spread false reports. Do not help a wicked man by being a malicious witness. ² "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd, ³ and do not show favoritism to a poor man in his lawsuit... ⁶ "Do not deny justice to your poor people in their lawsuits. ⁷ Have nothing to do with a false charge and do not put an innocent or honest person to death, for I will not acquit the guilty. ⁸ "Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the righteous.

2. What possible motives would cause us to lie about the character or actions of another?
3. Does this commandment include prohibitions against gossip, slander, unwholesome talk, and other uses of the tongue that we regularly commit on an everyday basis?

Discussion Questions (continued)

4. Read Ephesians 4:25-32 and discuss how it addresses both the motives and actions of the tongue. How does the tongue, which manifests the true nature of our heart, affect our relationship with the Holy Spirit? What does it mean to “grieve” the Spirit?

Ephesians 4:25-32 ²⁵ Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. ²⁶ "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, ²⁷ and do not give the devil a foothold. ²⁸ He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need. ²⁹ Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. ³⁰ And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. ³¹ Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. ³² Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

5. Read James 3:2-13. In what ways do you use your tongue to break the 9th commandment?

James 3:2-13 ² We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. ³ When we put bits into the mouths of horses to make them obey us, we can turn the whole animal. ⁴ Or take ships as an example. Although they are so large and are driven by strong winds, they are steered by a very small rudder wherever the pilot wants to go. ⁵ Likewise the tongue is a small part of the body, but it makes great boasts. Consider what a great forest is set on fire by a small spark. ⁶ The tongue also is a fire, a world of evil among the parts of the body. It corrupts the whole person, sets the whole course of his life on fire, and is itself set on fire by hell. ⁷ All kinds of animals, birds, reptiles and creatures of the sea are being tamed and have been tamed by man, ⁸ but no man can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison. ⁹ With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse men, who have been made in God's likeness. ¹⁰ Out of the same mouth come praise and cursing. My brothers, this should not be. ¹¹ Can both fresh water and salt water flow from the same spring? ¹² My brothers, can a fig tree bear olives, or a grapevine bear figs? Neither can a salt spring produce fresh water. ¹³ Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom.

6. Discuss this statement: “Christians are ambassadors for Christ. Because of this, when we use our tongues to tear down our neighbor, we are, at the same time, falsely testifying about the goodness of God in our lives.”

Reflection Questions

1. What have you learned about your sinful nature through this study, particularly when it comes to your tongue?
2. In what ways has God’s grace in Christ empowered you to control your tongue?
3. In what ways can NCPC, collectively, use our tongues in ways that build Christ’s community up rather than tearing it down?

10

Exodus 20:17 ¹⁷ "You shall not covet your neighbor's house. You shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor."

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss your responses to the quote below.

To "covet" means to intensely crave, to lust, or to set your desire on an object. That object doesn't have to be material; it can be a person, a philosophy, a status, or even another god. In the context of the Decalogue, to "covet" means that you are not content with what you have, but instead, you seek contentment by possessing what others have, thinking that acquiring these objects will bring you ultimate satisfaction. Taking this idea a step further, John Piper defines it this way: "Coveting is desiring anything other than God in a way that betrays a loss of contentment and satisfaction in him." This command to **not covet** is uniquely distinguished from the other nine commandments because it is the only command that addresses internal thoughts and motives. The first nine commands address external actions that we should either do or not do. Coveting, however, is solely an internal action. Just because it's internal, however, doesn't mean it's less destructive or less egregious. On the contrary, it is the most important command to obey, because our external actions are first ignited by our internal desires. In order for us to worship another god other than Yahweh, at some point we have to internally desire that idol which we think will bring us contentment. When we steal, we have to covet after that object first. When we commit adultery, it is the intense lust that arises within our heart first, that causes us to commit sexual sin. In short, the breaking of every single commandment is deeply rooted in the tenth commandment (Pirrotte, *Desire*, sermon manuscript).

2. Reflecting on your own life, how prominent of a role does coveting play in your decision making? Consider the passages below in your discussion.

Matthew 15:19-20 ¹⁹ For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. ²⁰ These are what make a man 'unclean';

James 1:14-15 ¹⁴ but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death.

Jeremiah 17:9-10 ⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it? ¹⁰ "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."

3. How does our materialistic culture impact our personal acceptance and practice of coveting? Does the capitalistic value of consumption promote sin?

4. Read Luke 12:16-21. What role does greed (i.e. coveting more) play in our life? Does our life's philosophy closely parallel the man in this parable? What does it mean to be "rich toward God"?

Luke 12:16-21 ¹⁶ And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' ¹⁸ "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. ¹⁹ And I'll say to myself, 'You have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'" ²⁰ "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' ²¹ "This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God."

Discussion Questions (continued)

Discuss Hebrews 4:12-16. In what way does the gospel of Jesus empower us to have freedom from covetousness?

Hebrews 4:12-16 ¹² For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. ¹³ Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. ¹⁴ Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are-- yet was without sin. ¹⁶ Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Reflection Questions

1. What have you learned about your sinful nature through this study?
2. How has God's grace empowered you to be satisfied with what you have?
3. In what ways can NCPC, collectively, create a culture where the power of covetousness becomes weakened?