

BASIC BIBLE THEMES

SESSION 2: LAW

STUDENT

Background Scripture: Matthew 19:16-20; Galatians 5:6; 6:2; James 1:2-5

1. Engage Interest

- What is the “sickness” of society that this picture or headline illustrates?

- What moral law do you think it violates?

2. Explore the Word

- Matthew 19:16-20
- Galatians 5:6; 6:2
- James 1:2-5

- What do these verses reveal to us about God?
- How does this scripture relate to today's society?
- What does this passage say to the Church?
- What can we learn from this scripture that will make us better disciples?
- How can we state this passage in our own words in one sentence?

3. Examine Life

- Living rightly requires religious roots.

- Religion as the source of morality has been replaced with personal feelings and societal programs.

- Only one out of three Christians surveyed believe faith should shape his or her lifestyle.

- Too many “believers” are like chubby physicians who tell their patients to lose weight.

- Today’s youngsters think mainly about their own feelings and frustrations.

- The most perilous threat to the free society today is neither political nor economic. It is the poisonous, corrupting culture of relativism.

- Real freedom emerges through self-discipline and integrity.
- Good relationships need boundaries, limits, “dos and don’ts.”
- As we wonder how to decide what's right and wrong, what's good and bad, we discover that Jesus Christ is the answer to humanity's deepest hunger for truth.
- Pastors, parents, teachers must reclaim their rightful responsibilities to point out and teach moral values, wresting them from television talk shows, movie stars, politics, and street gangs.

4. Exercise Your Faith

- Based on what you have discovered in today's session, write a recipe for living righteously with God.

LESSON SUMMARY

“Let's face it,” says Ann Landers, “[Our culture] is sick.” The sickness whereof she speaks is a plague of immorality. From the urbane white-collar con artists to urban teenagers “wilding” and “tagging,” something has subverted our morality. Yet, exactly what has happened is generally more confused than clarified by television, newspapers, or congressional hearings.

An ancient explanation rooted in the Christian tradition claims that our sickness stems from failing to know the truth of our own moral nature. Embedded in human nature is an abiding reality—an ethical vein. Doing right, we live according to its structure; doing wrong, we violate its essence. We humans share a common nature: living creatures designed in God's image and likeness, animated by our Creator, coded to live out His standards. So, living rightly requires religious roots. Forsaking the vision of our divinely designed character, we forgo the capacity to do good. Religion as the source of morality has been replaced with personal feelings and societal programs.

One of the keys to understanding what has happened resides in the values that emerged in the 1960s, a decade that was devoted to “little else but sex and rights-- specifically, how to get more of each.” Since then, we've been swept along by an avalanche of collapsing moral standards.

Boundaries Create Freedom's Context

With the 10 “words” in Exodus 20, the God who had delivered His people from slavery set forth principles whereby folks live in relationship with Him. To know God is to enjoy the freedom that grows out of faithfulness, and this is the only true liberty there is, the freedom that comes from living by vows. Real freedom emerges through self-discipline and integrity, through doing the truth, through living in the truth.

Responsibilities Firm Up the Boundaries

The key to personal dignity is the self-sufficiency that comes through taking responsibility, through accepting and carrying through obligations—in short, through self-discipline. To live well, to live maturely, to live freely demands self-discipline. Others may force us to do right, but only self-discipline, freely embraced, enables us to be righteous, to be good. Ultimately, self-discipline is moral—doing what's right because it's good.

That, really, is what the Ten Commandments are all about. They are not endless rules with penalties for failure; they're 10 principles to live by. Ten ways to maintain fellowship with God. Ten words to be kept so as to behold His manifest presence. Ten boundaries to respect in order to nurture a loving union with our Maker. They are 10 steps to freedom!