

BIBLE STUDIES FOR LIFE®

ADULTS Daily Discipleship Guide

FALL 2020 | CSB

STUDY 1:

*After God's Own Heart:
A Fresh Look at the
Ten Commandments*

STUDY 2:

*All In:
A Life of Commitment*



GOD'S UNFAILING PROMISE

We've messed up. You have. I have. We all have. And no matter how good our intentions or efforts are, we can't make up for the wrong we've done.

The Bible uses a much stronger word—sin—to describe how we have failed to live according to God's perfect standard (Romans 3:23). The result of our sin is death (Romans 6:23).

Thankfully, we don't have to stay in this condemned state. In spite of our sin and rebellion against God, He loves us and made a way for us to be forgiven and receive a new, eternal life, freed from the consequences of our sin. That way is Jesus Christ, who paid the penalty of our sin and brokenness with His own death (John 3:16; Romans 5:8). When we turn away from our sin in repentance and turn to Christ in faith, He gives us a new life, freed from the penalty of sin. We're made new in Him (2 Corinthians 5:17).

God's unfailing promise—His commitment to us—is the best guarantee we can be offered. "For everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved" (Romans 10:13).

To receive a new life in Christ, you can pray a prayer like this:

"Dear God, I know I am a sinner. I believe Jesus died on the cross to forgive me of my sins and rose from the dead to give me new life. I'm sorry for all the wrong I've done and ask You to forgive me. I now accept Your gift of eternal life. Thank You for Your love, forgiveness, and a new life in Jesus Christ. From this day forward, I choose to follow You. In Jesus' name, Amen."

Share your decision to follow Jesus with a pastor or those in your Bible study group. Be baptized as an expression of your faith. Get involved in a church that will help you grow in your faith.

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COMMENTARY

Dig deeper into Scripture with the *Bible Studies for Life: Advanced Bible Study*. This resource features in-depth Bible exposition on the passages studied in this book.



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Bible Studies for Life: Daily Discipleship Guide often lists websites that may be helpful to our readers. Our staff verifies each site's usefulness and appropriateness prior to publication. However, website content changes quickly so we encourage you to approach all websites with caution. Make sure sites are still appropriate before sharing them with students, friends, and family.

USING THE DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

Your *Daily Discipleship Guide* is full of tools to help you grow as a disciple. But like any tool, you have to use it to get the benefit.

GROUP TIME

Use these pages when studying with a group. The **Group Time** pages help the group leader introduce a Bible passage and move you toward acting on the truths discovered.

DAILY STUDY

Use the **Daily Study** pages to go deeper into God's Word, building on your group's study experience. Engage in daily Bible study, record your thoughts, reflect on the questions, and take action.

TALK IT OUT

Use the **Talk It Out** section at the end of each session to hold yourself and others accountable by meeting in a smaller group of same-sex individuals. Share with the smaller group what God has been teaching you through the group time and your personal daily Bible study.



Use this resource every week, even when you're unable to attend your group's Bible study. Missing a group Bible study doesn't excuse you from being engaged daily with God through His Word. Use the *Daily Discipleship Guide* to move forward in your spiritual growth.

Want this resource on your phone or tablet for when you are on the go? Purchase an eBook in the *Bible Studies for Life App* (available through iOS App Store and the Google Play Store) or at LifeWay.com.

STUDY INTRODUCTIONS

AFTER GOD’S OWN HEART: A FRESH LOOK AT THE TEN COMMANDMENTS

Ethics and morals have become skewed in our world today. People want to live life on their own terms, but God has given us a succinct and clear path to follow through the Ten Commandments. Unfortunately, too many people see these Commandments as a negative list of don’ts, but obeying these Commandments leads to a rich and full life. Jesus distilled the Ten Commandments down to love for God and others (Matthew 22:37-40). When we live lives of Christ-centered love, we will be living out the heart of the Ten Commandments.

We’re going to take a fresh look at the Ten Commandments. We’re not going to focus so much on the things we’re not to do, but we will see what obedience frees us to do and be in Christ. Along the way, we’re going to look at David, a man after God’s own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), as his life serves as the backdrop for a greater understanding of just how to live a life pleasing to God.

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How This Study Supports the Discipleship Plan (page 178): Build Relationships. We have no greater way to build good relationships than what we find in the Ten Commandments. In the briefest and clearest of statements, God has revealed the way to relate to Him and others.

ALL IN: A LIFE OF COMMITMENT

You’re going to see one word come up over and over again in this study: *commitment*. Jesus spent three years fulfilling His earthly ministry, and during those three years He talked a lot about commitment. In fact, Jesus made it clear that commitment was a key part of being a follower of Christ. In the Gospels, we see many examples of people who followed Jesus because of what they hoped He could offer them, but they weren’t truly committed to following Him, no matter what. And when Jesus encountered those people, He consistently challenged them to “count the cost” of following Him. In this study, we’re going to look at the call on the Christian life to be committed to Christ, His Word, the church, prayer, worship, and His mission.

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How This Study Supports the Discipleship Plan (page 178): Seek God. A full commitment to Christ means we intentionally and continually seek after God and the things of God. As we deepen our walk and commitment to Christ, it only deepens our desire to seek Him, know Him, and please Him.



1

Place God First

THE BIBLE MEETS LIFE

Have you ever felt disappointed? Frustrated? Hurt? Confused? We all have. Life comes with issues—and these issues can show up in so many ways. When enough issues arise, life begins to feel like one big mess.

A man visited a doctor because his entire body hurt. From the top of his head to the bottom of his feet, he felt pain. Every single place he touched brought great pain to him.

The doctor looked him over and said, “Well, this is odd. I don’t see anything wrong.” He proceeded to ask the man to touch different places on his body. Each time the man touched a different place on his body, he cried out in pain. After a few minutes of this, the doctor diagnosed the problem. “Sir,” the doctor said, with a bit of a sigh, “you have a dislocated finger.”

While it felt like everything was wrong, only one thing was wrong. It’s true for our lives as well. Even though it may seem like everything in life is a mess, the solution comes down to three words: *Put God first*. This one action affects everything.

GROUP TIME

THE POINT: God is to have _____ in every aspect of life.

We're to put God first because He alone is God.

That statement covers much more than we may realize. Of course, most of us would say, "God is first in my life," but is He? For some people, what is "first" in their lives is money, their careers, pleasure, social media, sports, a person, or a special possession. When we give to anyone or anything the devotion, authority, and worship God alone deserves, the Bible describes that with one word: *idolatry*.

FIRST PLACE

Use the space below to record the biggest ways you spend your time and other resources each day. How much of your time and resources typically go to God?

ENGAGE

Exodus 20:1-4 ¹ Then God spoke all these words: ² I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery. ³ Do not have other gods besides me. ⁴ Do not make an idol for yourself, whether in the shape of anything in the heavens above or on the earth below or in the waters under the earth.

God is to be first because He alone is _____ .

Before God gave the Ten Commandments, He first reminded the Israelites what He had done for them. "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the place of slavery" (v. 2). Before God handed down any commands, He reminded the Israelites of the redemption and freedom He had provided. Their gratitude to Him for what He had done was to serve as their foundation for putting Him first. Not fear. Not bondage. Not mandated worship. No, in the context of gratitude for the freedom He gave them, God was calling them to honor Him first.

Psalm 16:1-4a ¹ Protect me, God, for I take refuge in you. ² I said to the LORD, “You are my Lord; I have nothing good besides you.” ³ As for the holy people who are in the land, they are the noble ones. All my delight is in them. ^{4a} The sorrows of those who take another god for themselves will multiply.

God is to be first because He alone is _____ and completely _____ .

When David said he had “nothing good besides” (v. 2) God, he wasn’t making a blanket statement that everything was terrible. Rather, he was highlighting an important distinction: God alone is good. Thus, God alone is the originator of all else that is good as well. Based on this truth, we know two things:

- ▶ Good has one Source: God.
- ▶ If something is not good, it doesn’t come from God.

It’s important to note that what we experience may not always feel good or seem good. But Scripture assures us that all things will be used for good when we love God and put Him first (Romans 8:28-29). God’s power and might can turn any table and flip any script toward His intended purposes of good. But the promise in Romans 8:28-29 doesn’t apply to every situation. It applies to those “who love God” and live “according to his purpose” (v. 28).

Psalm 16:9-11 ⁹ Therefore my heart is glad and my whole being rejoices; my body also rests securely. ¹⁰ For you will not abandon me to Sheol; you will not allow your faithful one to see decay. ¹¹ You reveal the path of life to me; in your presence is abundant joy; at your right hand are eternal pleasures.

God is to be first because He alone is the way to _____ life.

David knew that “the path of life” (v. 11) was God Himself. God showed him (and still shows us) the path of life on earth through His guidance, precepts, and directions. In another psalm David said, “I rejoice in the way revealed by your decrees as much as in all riches. I will meditate on your precepts and think about your ways” (119:14-15).

God’s “way” is not merely one of many ways to eternal life. God’s way is *the only way* which leads to both “abundant joy” in the present and “eternal pleasures” (16:11). Jesus described the importance of knowing the way and choosing God’s way when He said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). Jesus doesn’t just know the way; He *is* the way.

LIVE IT OUT

How will you actively seek to put God first in your life?

- ▶ **Acknowledge.** If there is any area in your life where you don't put God first, confess that to Him. Ask for His forgiveness and help in putting Him first in your thoughts, words, and actions.

- ▶ **Begin.** Make a commitment to begin each day by putting God first. This will look different for each person, but it could mean saying a prayer when you first wake up, reading your Bible before you do anything else, or quoting a Scripture from memory before you pick up your phone in the morning.

- ▶ **Track.** Consider keeping a notepad or journal this week where you write down every time you sought to put God's perspective and His guidance first in your life. Ask God to help you turn to Him first, before any other source of instruction or encouragement.

TALK IT OUT

Want to go a step further? Gather with two or three Christ-followers of the same gender. Read Exodus 20:1-4; Psalm 16:1-4a,9-11, then use the following summary and questions for a deeper discussion.

Anything or anyone might be your "god." For some people, their god is money, their career, pleasure, sports, or a special possession. Unfortunately, these gods—those things we place above all else—are rampant in our society. The Bible calls this idolatry, giving to someone or something else the devotion and worship God alone deserves. God calls us to devote ourselves to Him because He alone is God.

How can we identify our priorities?

What truths about God motivate you to put Him first?

What steps can you take to prioritize God each day?

DAY 1: God is sovereign; He rules over all things.

Read Exodus 20:1-4.

In our culture, we don't bow down to wooden idols or statues. Additionally, we don't declare our allegiance through rituals or sacrifice. And while the absence of those outward things is good, it can also be misleading. Because we don't physically and tangibly bow to sports, our career, pleasure, politics, social media, a person, or special possessions, we can naively think they aren't idols. We still can mistakenly believe that God is first in our lives. Yet countless idols exist in our culture. An idol is any person, place, thought, or thing that usurps God's rightful place in our lives.

God calls us to devote ourselves to Him first because He alone is God. In Him alone is found true life, both in this world and in the world to come. As King, He sits over all. He rules over all. He governs all. The agenda of God's kingdom is the visible manifestation of His rule over every area of life. God's rules stand apart from the rules of other kings and leaders. God's rules aren't rooted in power, manipulation, or greed; God's rules are rooted in His love. As 1 John 4:19 states, "We love because he first loved us." He calls us to love Him because we're loved by Him. Loving God includes aligning all of life under His kingdom rule.

In the space below, list a few things that you consider to be priorities in your life. Do any of these over-consume your time and attention? Ask God to help you reorder your priorities in a way that will honor Him.

DAY 2: God is trustworthy in all circumstances.

Read Psalm 16:1-4a.

God is the Source of all good. If something isn't good, it doesn't come from God. However, notice I didn't say if something doesn't "seem" good, it doesn't come from God. A lot of things may not "seem" good to us, but God uses them to usher in good (Genesis 50:20). Yet because of our limited, finite understanding, Satan seeks to use these things to plant doubt in our hearts concerning God's goodness. The devil does this in a number of ways.

- ▶ In trials or difficulties, Satan wants us to focus on the pain rather than the purpose. Satan sought to confuse Paul by giving him a "thorn in the flesh" to torment him. Paul could have blamed God for the difficulty. Instead, Paul received the good that God intended: the perfecting of strength in his weakness (2 Corinthians 12:6-10).
- ▶ Satan seeks to plant doubts about the goodness of God by tempting us to develop a "victim mentality." After Satan struck down and destroyed all the people and things Job loved, he wreaked havoc on Job's health. Job's wife urged her husband to "Curse God and die" (Job 2:9). Yet Job remained steadfast, trusting in the goodness of God (42:1-6). Ultimately, "the LORD restored his fortunes and doubled his previous possessions" (v. 10).

Identify a circumstance in your life that you've considered "not good." Trust Him with this circumstance and ask Him to help you recognize how He is working in it.

DAY 3: God is the Giver of all good things.

Read James 1:17.

James tells us, "Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, who does not change like shifting shadows" (James 1:17). The original term for "coming down" (v. 17) is a present participle; this means that the "good and perfect" gifts God gives us are *continually* flowing to us. Whether it is the oxygen we breathe, the food we eat, the ability of our bodies to function, or the rain that nourishes the earth, God never pauses from giving good things to us. Have you ever thought about what would happen if God suddenly chose to clock out and take a ten-minute break? Even if it were just for a moment, our world would unravel. Remember: if something is good, its Source is God. If something doesn't "seem" good, the Source may still be God. Even when we encounter something that truly isn't good (evil), it only causes us to recognize the goodness of God all the more.

Take some time today to praise God for His unchanging nature. Thank Him for the good gifts you have received from Him.

DAY 4: We can fully depend on God to provide what we need.

Read Psalm 16:9-11.

Most of us go through our lives hoping we know where we're going. We spend money on fancy apps to help us navigate through the maze of life like a pro. Try visiting a foreign country or a location where road construction is taking place, however, and you can no longer depend on your apps. You'll quickly discover how important it truly is to know the way to where you're going. This principle certainly applies to where we're going in our lives—and for eternity.

When we remain in Jesus and align ourselves under Him (John 15:1-8), He takes us where we need to go. He opens those doors we didn't even have the ability to knock on previously. He overcomes the obstacles our emotions may have dug up. He calms the seas that look too difficult to face on our own. He is the way to abundant life on earth (John 10:10) and He is the way to eternal life (3:16).

Identify one decision that's weighing on your mind right now. Spend extra time in prayer for this today and wrap up by praising God for His past faithfulness.



DAY 5: Salvation is found in Christ alone.

Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.

Occasionally, I have the opportunity to ask people why God should allow them into heaven when they die. Far too many tell me He should let them in because they have kept the Ten Commandments. However, the Ten Commandments weren't given to be an entry point for eternity. While it's true that God expects us to obey His commands, the ultimate purpose of the law is to show us our inability to keep those laws. In other words, it reveals our need for a Savior (Romans 7:7).

God has allowed a permanent sacrifice—Jesus Christ—to substitute for the punishment each of us deserves. “He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God” (2 Corinthians 5:21). God initiated a “credit transfer.” He took the perfect credit of Jesus’ righteousness and transferred His perfect credit score to each of us who receives it through faith in Him.

Does this mean we're to ignore and shun righteous living, as well as the commands of God? I'll let Paul answer that: “Absolutely not!” (Romans 6:2). But it does mean that we've been set free from legalism and condemnation through the gift of salvation in Jesus Christ. This allows us to willingly and gratefully pursue a life pleasing to God by placing Him first in our lives.

Memorize 2 Corinthians 5:21 as a reminder of God's gift of righteousness to those who are saved by faith in Him.

*“The LORD has established his throne in heaven,
and his kingdom rules over all.”*

PSALM 103:19