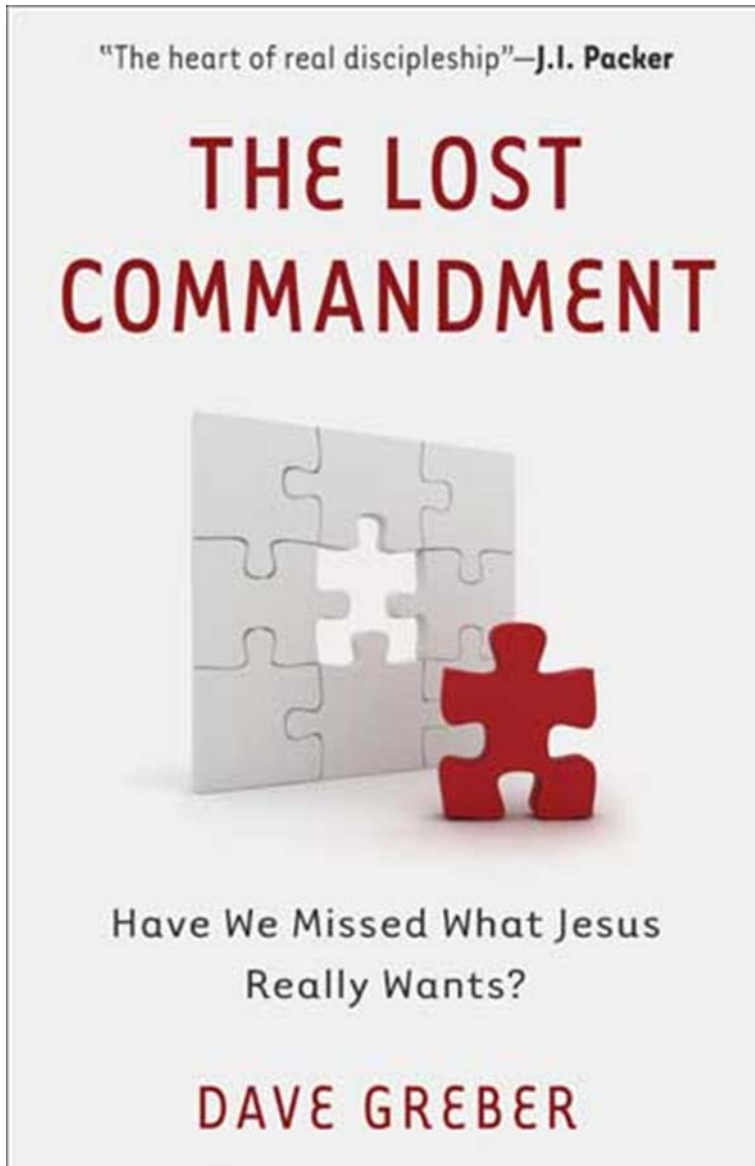


Small Group Study Questions



An
8-Week Study
on
**The Lost
Commandment**

by Dave Greber

Week 1

- Theme:** Complete Joy in Christ Alone
- Reading:** PART 1—Joy: The Surprise of Christ’s Love
Introduction, Chapter 1
- Purpose:** To understand and emotionally relate to what Jesus said would bring joy to him and to us
- Dilemma:** Neither the world, nor our human nature, leads us toward true joy

Key Verses

“⁹As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. ¹⁰If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.”

—John 15:9–12

Week 1 Questions



Explain:

What does the word “remain” mean in these verses? How did Jesus say we remain in his love?

Why do you think it brings joy to Jesus and to us when we obey Jesus’ command to love others as he us has loved us?



Illustrate:

Have you experienced a situation in which you did or had something that is commonly thought to bring joy, but you did not feel joy? Describe what happened and how you felt.

Can you give an example of when you or others have experienced joy after loving others as Jesus has loved us? Describe the situation and the emotions that you experienced.



Apply:

What must we do in order to obey Jesus’ command?

What concerns do you have about your ability to obey Jesus’ command, and how might God help you to address those concerns?

Week 2

- Theme:** Nothing Less Than the Best
- Reading:** PART 1—Joy: The Surprise of Christ’s Love
Chapter 2: More Costly Than Gold
- Purpose:** To understand how the Lost Commandment differs from the Golden Rule, and why it matters
- Dilemma:** We tend to settle for what we are used to, even if it is second best

Key Verses

^{13:34}“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. . . . ^{14:21}Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves me. He who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love him and show myself to him.” . . . ^{15:10}If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father’s commands and remain in his love. ¹¹I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. ¹²My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. . . . ¹⁷This is my command: Love each other.

—John 13:34; 14:21; 15:10–12, 17

Week 2 Questions



Explain:

Jesus called his command “new.” What are the different meanings that we attach to the word “new?” What evidence do we have that when Jesus used the word “new,” his intended meaning was “replacement?” What evidence do we have to the contrary?

If we obey the Lost Commandment, does that satisfy our obligations under the Golden Rule? Does it work the other way around?



Illustrate:

Describe something that you do out of habit, even though you know there is (or might be) a better way? What emotions might cause you and others to act this way?

Describe a situation that illustrates the phenomenon of “group think,” where a group of people adopt a belief or course of action without meaningfully confronting conflicting evidence. What are the emotional forces that drive us toward group think? What are the dangers of succumbing to those forces? Can those forces be present in discussing whether Jesus intended to replace the Golden Rule with the Lost Commandment?



Apply:

How would your *attitude* have to change in order to put you in a frame of mind to obey the Lost Commandment?

Are you willing, as God gives you wisdom and strength, to obey the Lost Commandment?

Week 3

- Theme:** The Relationship that Changes Everything
- Reading:** PART 2—Relationship: The Invitation of Christ’s Love
Chapter 3: RSVP
Chapter 4: Enjoy Your New Self
Chapter 5: Shadow the Real VIP
- Purpose:** To understand, appreciate, and respond to Jesus’ invitation to have a personal relationship with him
- Dilemma:** We often don’t recognize how much we need to have a personal relationship with Jesus, or how the relationship changes our lives

Key Verses

²³Then he said to them all: “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. ²⁴For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will save it.

—Luke 9:23–24

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!

—2 Corinthians 5:17

Jesus gave them this answer: “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.”

—John 5:19

Week 3 Questions



Explain:

According to Luke 9:23–24, and Romans 10:9–10, what must we do to accept Christ’s invitation to have a personal relationship with him? What does it mean to be “saved” in the meaning of these Scriptures? What does it mean to take up our cross and follow Jesus?

In what sense are Christians new creations in Christ in the meaning of 2 Corinthians 5:17? Does that mean that we don’t ever sin? As Christians, what are we supposed to do when we sin?

How can we “shadow” Jesus by reading the Bible? How does “shadowing” Jesus reflect a proper relationship with him? How does it help us obey the Lost Commandment?



Illustrate:

How has your life been affected by relationships that are based on performance? How do such relationships affect our sense of security and confidence?

Jesus loves us for who we are, knowing exactly who we are, and invites us to be in a relationship with him that will last forever. How should this invitation affect our sense of security and confidence? Can you tell a story that illustrates this effect?

When do you find yourself relying on your own strength and wisdom, rather than on God’s? What usually happens when you rely on yourself rather than on God? What brings you back to relying on God?



Apply:

Have you accepted Jesus' invitation to a personal relationship with him by acknowledging that he died for your sins and pledging to follow him as your Lord? If not, what is stopping you?

Pray that the Lord show you how you can walk more closely to him, in a way that allows you to experience his love and joy more completely. What do you sense he is telling you to do or change?

Week 4

Theme: His Lordship Compels Our Mission

Reading: PART 3—Mission: The Determination of Christ's Love
Chapter 6: No Mission Impossible
Chapter 7: Leave No One Behind

Purpose: To prompt each of us to accept and live out our God-given mission, which is to allow the love of Christ to change us and our world

Dilemma: We tend to see our God-given mission as impossible or optional, and would really rather “stay home”

Key Verses

I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.

—John 14:12

Again Jesus said, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”

—John 20:21

Week 4 Questions



Explain:

What is a mission? How did the concept of mission affect Jesus' life? How does or should the concept of mission affect our lives?

How would you describe the mission or missions that all Christians have been given by Jesus? What Scriptures suggest these missions? Do all Christians have identical roles in accomplishing all of these missions?



Illustrate:

Tell a story that illustrates how efforts at personal change can be frustrating or discouraging. In light of the Key Verses and the reading for today's discussion, what do you sense the Holy Spirit is saying to you about how this frustration can be transformed into positive attitudes and actions?

Tell a story that illustrates Jesus' love being "paid forward" from one person to another. What was the impact of this act of love on you and on the people involved in the story?



Apply:

Name two or three specific steps that you will now take, with God's help, to walk out your mission.

Are you willing to invite someone to encourage you to live a missional life, and to hold you accountable to your commitment to the mission(s) that you identified? Who will you invite? When will you invite them?

Week 5

Theme: Above All, Love Is Humble

Reading: PART 4—Humility: The Heart of Christ’s Love
Chapter 8: No One Died and Made Us King
Chapter 9: The Last Come First

Purpose: To understand both intellectually and emotionally why and how humility is at the heart of a Christian’s relationship with God and others

Dilemma: We tend to consider ourselves more important than we should, to the detriment of our relationships

Key Verses

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped . . . He humbled himself.

—Philippians 2:5–6, 8

Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.”

—Mark 9:35

Week 5 Questions



Explain:

Define humility. How did Jesus' life evidence his humble attitude toward both God and others?

Describe how our lack of humility can interfere with our relationship with God and others.

In what way does someone's response to adversity demonstrate their humility, or lack of humility, toward God?



Illustrate:

Do you know someone whose humility toward others demonstrates their love of Jesus? Describe in detail an instance in which this person demonstrated humility. How did this demonstration of humility affect you and others emotionally? How did it affect your perception of God?

Describe an instance in which someone's humble reaction to adversity caused them to draw closer to God, or in which someone's less-than-humble reaction to adversity seemed to have the opposite effect. Particularly when talking about the less-than-humble reactions, if you are not talking about yourself, be careful to change names and generalize facts to prevent the person from being identified (unless you have permission to share the story).



Apply:

Describe one way in which you tend not to act with humility in your relationship with others.

What would you like the members of the group to pray to help you face your struggle with humility?

Week 6

- Theme:** Following Christ Beats Leading Ourselves Every Time
- Reading:** PART 5—Obedience: The Power of Christ’s Love
Chapter 10: Love Letters from God
Chapter 11: Ask and It’s Yours
Chapter 12: Show Them How It’s Done
- Purpose:** To stir in us a passionate desire to obey Christ out of love for him, and to teach others by example to do the same
- Dilemma:** We tend to want to do what seems best to us, rather than discover and do what Jesus wants

Key Verses

But if anyone obeys his word, God’s love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: Whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did.

—1 John 2:5–6

You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

—John 14:14

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ.

—1 Corinthians 11:1

Week 6 Questions



Explain:

How do you react to the word “obey?” What are the negative and positive connotations of the word?

How does obedience to Jesus demonstrate our love for him? Does obedience to or submission to others also demonstrate love for them? Give some examples. How do we know when obedience or submission to others would go beyond what God would want us to do?

How do we discern what God wants us to do in a given situation or decision? How does beginning our discernment with the Lost Commandment help guide us?



Illustrate:

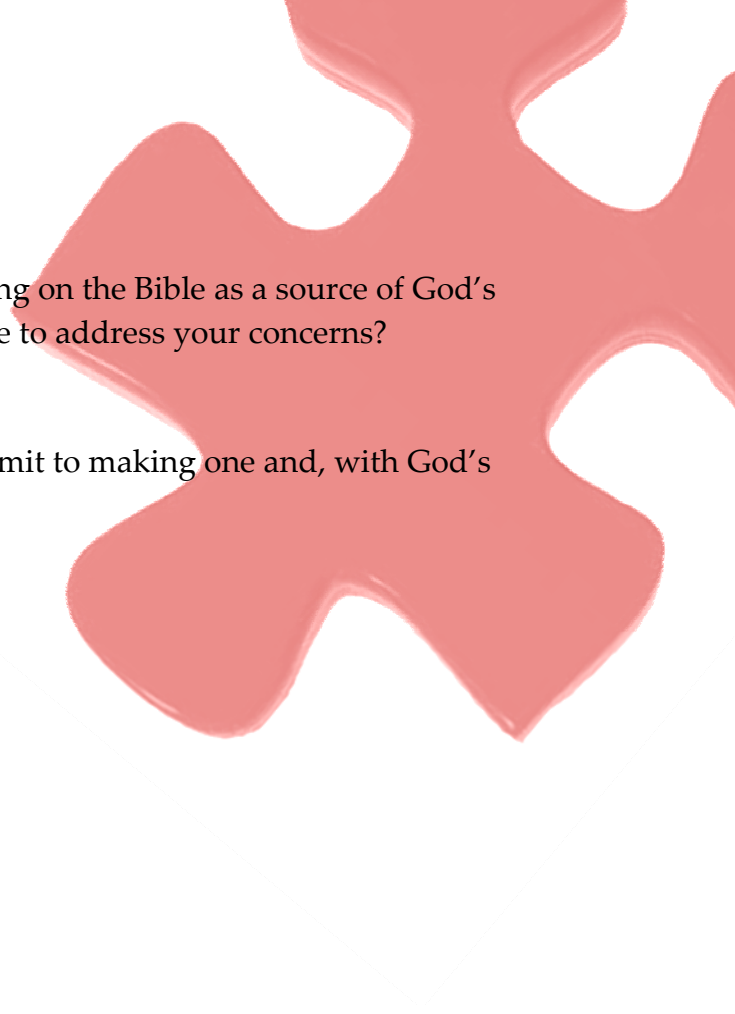
Describe a situation in which you sensed God speaking to you very personally and lovingly through the Bible or in prayer? How did you feel about God in that moment?

Obedience to others is easier within a relationship characterized by loving, Godly communication—written, oral, and non-verbal communication. Illustrate this principle with a story from your life.



Apply:

What is it about the concept of obedience to Jesus that you find most challenging or troubling? What guidance is God giving you about how to address these issues?



What reservations do you have about relying on the Bible as a source of God's guidance? What steps do you intend to take to address your concerns?

Do you have a reading plan? Will you commit to making one and, with God's help, following it?

Week 7

Theme: Forgiveness Makes Love Durable

Reading: PART VI—Forgiveness: The Strength of Christ’s Love
Chapter 13: Let It Go
Chapter 14: Get It Together
Chapter 15: Shuttle Diplomacy

Purpose: To compel us to forgive and reconcile with others as an expression of obedience and gratitude to God

Dilemma: The failures of others tempt us to ignore our own failures, and to forget God’s extravagant forgiveness of us through Christ

Key Verses

Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

—Colossians 3:13

First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift.

—Matthew 5:24

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.

—Matthew 5:9

Week 7 Questions



Explain:

How has God forgiven us through Christ? What would have happened to our relationship with God, had he not forgiven us in this way?

Must we forgive others? What Scriptures support your answer? How do we know whether we have truly forgiven someone else?

How do forgiveness and reconciliation relate to one another? List and describe the steps of reconciliation.



Illustrate:

How has unforgiveness affected you or people you love? Tell a story that illustrates the problem.

Describe what attempts you have made to reconcile with others whom you have offended, or who have offended you. What has been your emotional response to this process? Be careful not to reveal private information.



Apply:

Do you sense that God is telling you that you have work to do in the areas of forgiveness or reconciliation? How is he calling you to forgive or reconcile?

Identify one or more attitudes that you now ask God to help you change in order to help you forgive or reconcile with others. How would you compare and contrast these attitudes with the attitudes that Jesus has demonstrated toward you, in your relationship with him?

Week 8

- Theme:** Service Is an Essential Expression of Christ's Love
- Reading:** PART 7—Service: The Soul of Christ's Love
Chapter 16: Feet and Hands
Chapter 17: Dollars and Sense
Chapter 18: Who's Next in Line?
- Purpose:** To explore how we are to respond to Jesus' loving service in our lives
- Dilemma:** Our desire for personal comfort wars against our desire to serve

Key Verses

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

—John 13:14–15

Freely you have received, freely give.

—Matthew 10:8

Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

—Mark 6:31

Week 8 Questions



Explain:

In the gospel accounts, what are some of the ways that we see Jesus serving others by providing for their physical needs? What type of people did Jesus usually serve?

In what ways has God provided for your physical needs? In light of the Key Verses and the Lost Commandment, what does this suggest in terms of your response to God's provision?

How do we know when and when not to give time and money to others?



Illustrate:

What opportunities do you see in your life to serve others as Jesus has served you? How do you feel about these opportunities? How does Jesus' service to you affect your response?

Can you give an example from your own life of when you think you drew appropriate boundaries or set appropriate priorities, either by doing something, or declining to do something? Was this difficult for you? What led you to believe that the boundary or priority was appropriate?



Apply:

Thinking back to the P.L.A.C.E. factors discussed on p. 62 of *The Lost Commandment*, where do you think God would have you place your service emphasis?

What do you think you should do to improve your sense of Godly boundaries and priorities?