

Christ in the Commandments

Use alone or as a companion
to our **Write Through the
Bible** curriculum!



A family study of the Ten Commandments

By Luke Gilkerson

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INTRODUCTION

As parents, there are different ways we can help our children understand the Word of God. The first, and probably most common way, is by giving them a broad understanding of Scripture. By reading through major Bible stories and events, year after year, we give them “the big picture” of the Bible from beginning to end. This is vital for them to develop a Biblical worldview.

Second, we can spend time drilling deep to specific books or passages. We teach our children the value of contemplating a single word or phrase, showing them just how rich the Bible can be. This models for our children the art of studying the Bible in all its fullness and teaches them to pause and reflect all the words God has inspired.

This family devotional is an example of the second way. It will help your children grasp the rich truths contained in Exodus 20:1-21.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY

There are at least a couple ways you could use this family devotional.

You could spend 30 days in a row, working through one lesson each day. This will immerse your children in the passage.

You could spend 30 weeks doing one lesson each week. You might choose to do this over the duration of one school year.

I would suggest using not one, but both of these approaches, particularly if you will be memorizing this passage of Scripture. Spend 30 days going through this study to acquaint your family with the text prior to memorizing the text. This will help them understand why you are memorizing it. Then, use the Bible study weekly throughout the year to study this Scripture at a slower pace and reinforce the lessons that were already covered once. Repetition is the mother of learning.

Make it a Goal to Memorize

Over the next several months or throughout an entire school year, make a commitment to memorize all of Exodus 20:1-21 as a family.

There is great benefit to memorizing Scripture, and an added benefit to memorizing a lengthier text like this. Memorizing a whole chapter or longer passage gives our children a sense of context. They can begin seeing how to interpret the Bible, seeing how to read a whole section of Scripture in context.

Memory Method: Using Scripture Memory Cards

One of the best ways to move Scripture from short-term to long-term memory is to use a Charlotte Mason-style "memory box."

Become a subscriber at <http://intoxicatedonlife.com/freebies/> and you'll get access to free printables. There Exodus 20:1-21 is divided into manageable sections (2-3 verses) on individual index cards.

You'll also find free printable tabbed dividers to help organize all your cards. You'll find...

- A tab marked "Daily"
- A tab marked "Odd Days" and another marked "Even Days"
- Weekly tabs (a tab for each day of the week)
- Monthly tabs (tabs numbered 1-30)

Here's how it works:

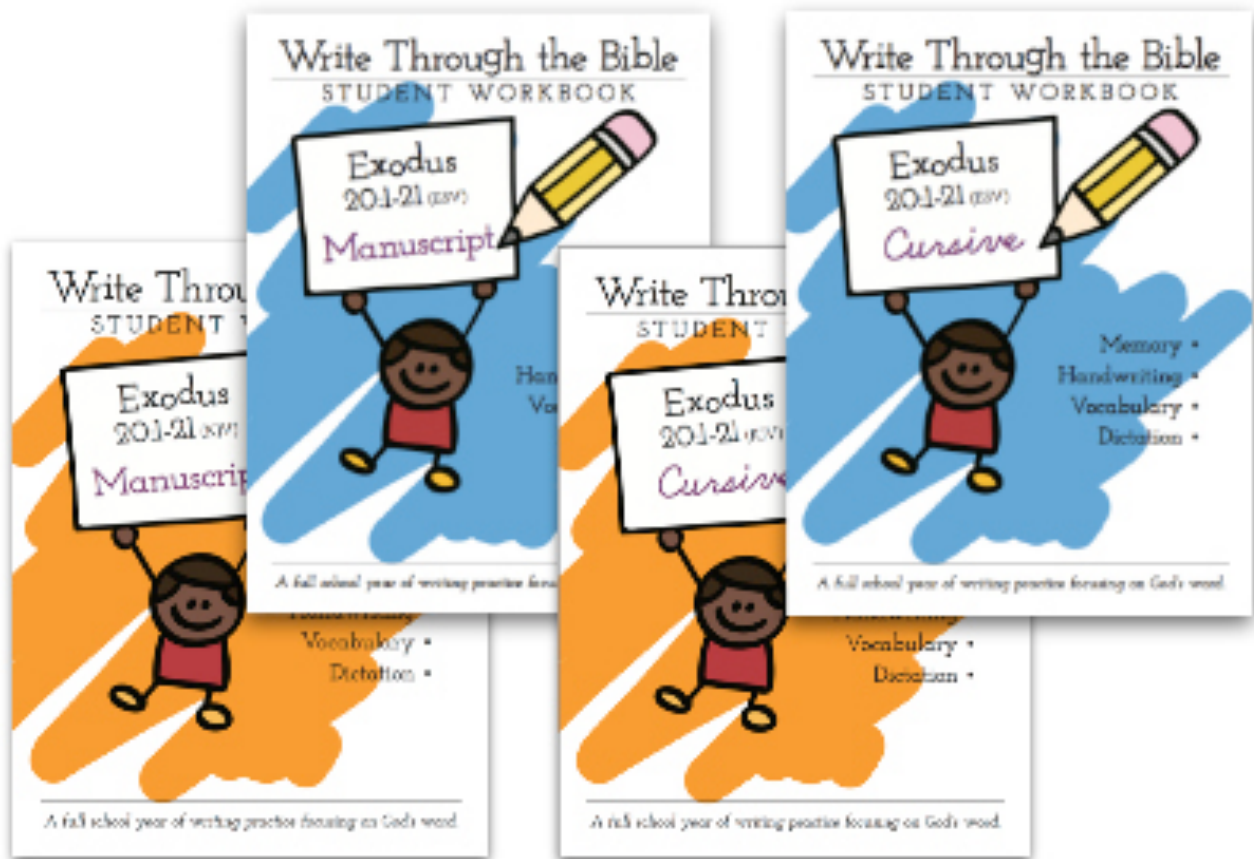
1. Place all your tabbed dividers into the box in order.
2. Start by placing the first Philippians card behind the "Daily" tab. Review this card with your child daily, having him or her recite it aloud every day.
3. Once your child can quote an entire card from memory with ease, move it back to either the "odd" tab or "even" tab. Then, only review that card on odd or even dates of the month.
4. Once your child continues to quote the card without help for a couple weeks, move it back to one of the weekly tabs.
5. If they can quote the card several weeks in a row without help, then move it back to one of the monthly tabs.
6. As cards move out from behind the daily tab, add new cards to the daily memory time.

Use Handwriting to Teach

In Deuteronomy 17:18-19, the kings of Israel were commanded to write out for themselves a copy of the law of Moses so that they could read it all the days of their lives. God clearly sees value in not only reading the Bible daily, but also in copying the text of the Bible by hand.

A good way to reinforce Scripture memory (and practice handwriting skills) is to copy Bible passages by hand. **As a companion to this Bible study, you can get a copy of our Exodus 20 version of *Write Through the Bible*, available at <http://intoxicatedonlife.com/product-tag/10-commandments/>.**

These workbooks take 131 days to complete, about one school year, and combine the disciplines of handwriting, dictation, vocabulary, and Bible memory into one daily activity. The *Write Through the Bible* downloadable workbooks are available in both manuscript and cursive and in either KJV or ESV translations.



How This Study Approaches the Ten Commandments

The Ten Commandments have always served as a mirror for God's people to see their own sinfulness. Next to God's perfect, righteous standards, none of us measure up. As we meditate on the Ten Commandments, our consciences awaken to our need for God's grace. This is one of the primary goals of this study: to help your children see their need for the grace of Christ.

But the Ten Commandments are also a window to see Christ. Jesus lived out the commandments perfectly. Jesus embodies the commandments. In this study, as each commandment is discussed, your kids will learn how each commandment points to Christ, the One we are called to emulate and worship.

A Note About Sabbath Controversies

In this book, I deliberately avoid talking about Sabbath practices and teachings that differ from church to church. The chapters about the fourth commandment do not focus on whether we are obligated to celebrate the Sabbath under the New Covenant, whether we are to do it on Saturday or Sunday, whether Sunday should be considered a "Christian Sabbath," whether the Sabbath should start at sundown or midnight, or what practices and activities should be avoided on the Sabbath.

These are all worthy questions Christian families and churches should address, but in this family devotional, the emphasis is on principles laid down in the Sabbath command: the importance of work, rest, worship, and how the Sabbath is a shadow of the ultimate rest Christ will bring to His people. Families can feel free to supplement the lessons about the Sabbath with teachings from their own church traditions.

A Note About Adultery

The seventh commandment about adultery naturally requires some conversation about marriage and intimacy. This study purposely avoids information about sex, giving discretion to parents about how much or little should be said according to the maturity of their children. Parents can feel free to supplement the conversation with more detailed information about sexual intercourse if they feel the timing is right.

Praying Through Psalm 119

Every lesson ends with a prayer based on the Scriptures. As each commandment is studied (lessons 3-24), I suggest reading through a small portion of Psalm 119 as part of your prayer. You'll see a suggested portion to read aloud during each prayer.

Psalm 119, the longest chapter of the Bible, is a celebration of God's law. It is important for our children not to have a negative perception of law. While the Bible speaks negatively of legalism, in both the Old and New Testaments, God is revealed as a law-giver. As Christians, we follow "the law of Christ" (1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 6:2). We follow his commands (John 15:14). As your family prays the text of Psalm 119, your children will sense the overwhelming love the psalmist has for God's law.

10.

Opening Thought:

Have you ever seen a really big thunderstorm? *(Have your kids share a time when they've seen a large storm, either in person, on TV, or in a movie. Ask them to describe how bright the lightning was and how loud the thunder was. Have your kids describe the storm in more vivid detail. If they can't remember a storm, describe one you have seen.)*

In the story we're about to read, God is going to create one of the most powerful storms ever. See if you can picture it in your mind as I read.

Scripture Reading: Exodus 19:9-19 and 20:1-2

Explanation: God tells his servant Moses that the people of Israel need to prepare themselves because He is about to visit them in a powerful way.

If you were about to meet a great and powerful king, you would want to wear your best clothes, not just your normal clothes. You would want to show him how much you respected him. That's what God wanted the Israelites to do: wash their clothes and be ready for His arrival.

God tells Moses to put up a boundary line around Mount Sinai. No one is allowed to approach the mountain, not even animals. This isn't going to be just an ordinary mountain anymore. It is about to become God's throne on Earth. No one is allowed to walk casually on the mountain. If anyone tries to cross the boundary line, Moses is instructed to kill the person immediately by shooting an arrow or stone at him.

Three days later, as the sun rises, they hear it: the sound of thunder. Everyone comes out of their tents and start walking toward the mountain. Gathering around the top of the mountain are thick, dark storm clouds. They can see the lightning getting brighter and hear the thunder getting louder. The entire mountain is covered in darkness. Behind the clouds they can see the mountain engulfed in flames. God has come down on the mountain, cloaked in fire, and the smoke from the fire mixes with the clouds. As the people get closer, they can feel the ground shaking violently. They also hear the sound of a loud trumpet blast. Like a king who has trumpeters announce his presence when he walks into a room, God is announcing His arrival.

Imagine the scene: the fire, the smoke, the dark clouds, the lightning, the thunder, the trumpet blast, the shaking ground. The Bible says as the people approach, they also start shaking. Have you ever been so scared that you physically shook? That's how scared they are.

Then they hear it: God's voice begins speaking. This is the only time in the whole Bible where God gathers a large group of people to listen to His voice out loud. Usually He speaks to prophets and they speak to the people for Him. Not this time. This time, God talks to the people Himself.

Questions for Your Kids:

1. How do think you would have felt standing at the foot of the mountain? (**Have your kids describe how they would feel? If they don't know, remind them just how destructive and powerful things like fire and lightning are.**)
2. Why do you think God is showing up in this powerful way? (**Have your kids think about why. Later on we learn it is because God wants them to fear Him and revere Him. He wants them to remember this day forever. God is great and powerful and can judge our sin, so we should treat Him with deep respect.**)
3. Did the people actually get to see God that day? (**No. They only saw the mountain wrapped in smoke and clouds. They only heard His voice.**)
4. If this is the only time in the Bible that God speaks out loud to a big group of people, do you think He's about to say something really important? (**Yes. Whatever God is about to say should really catch our attention.**)

Prayer: Your Word says that clouds and thick darkness are all around You. Righteousness and justice are the foundation of Your throne. Fire goes before You and burns up Your enemies on every side. Your lightning lights up the world; the earth sees and trembles. The mountains melt like wax before You. You are the Lord of all the earth (Psalm 97:1-5). You spoke from the midst of the fire on Mount Sinai. People heard it and lived to tell about it (Deuteronomy 4:32-33). We want to learn what You said. Help us to learn to fear You and respect You as they did. Amen.