



## WEEK 3:

# IDENTIFY YOUR “COMMANDMENTS”

**Key Scriptures: John 3:3, 1 Corinthians 5:17,  
John 1:12-13, Ephesians 4:17-24**

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*“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*

– Jesus (John 3:3 ESV)

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*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.*

– Apostle Paul (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 5:17 ESV)

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*But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.*

- Apostle John (John 1:12-13 ESV)

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*Now this I say and testify in the Lord, that you must no longer walk as the Gentiles do, in the futility of their minds. 18 They are darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. 19 They have become callous and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity. 20 But that is not the way you learned Christ!— 21 assuming that you have heard about him and were taught in him, as the truth is in Jesus, 22 to put off your old self, which belongs to your former manner of life and is corrupt through deceitful desires, 23 and to be renewed in the spirit of your minds, 24 and to put on the new self, created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness.*

- Apostle Paul (Ephesians 4:17-24 ESV)







## WEEK 3: PRE-GROUP READING

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*“Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.”*  
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*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.* – Apostle Paul (1st Corinthians 5:17 ESV)

*But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.* – Apostle John (John 1:12-13 ESV)

Last week we talked about *Iceberg Moments*, in which our emotional reaction is bigger than outside events can explain. Something has hit us beneath the surface, in our interior “iceberg.”

One of the main causes of *Iceberg Moments* is when our unspoken expectations go unmet. For example, we may feel that a teacher, a boss, a friend, or a pastor should behave in a certain way toward us. It is an unspoken commandment that we understand about their role. When the person says something that violates our unspoken commandment, we will immediately experience an *Iceberg Moment*. The violation of our unspoken commandment is what struck us “beneath the surface.”

These unspoken commandments come from all kinds of sources. Our families of origin play a significant role in teaching us these commandments – as does the broader culture, media, and peer groups.

The Bible describes becoming a Christian as a spiritual rebirth through which we are adopted into a new family—Jesus’ family. We are given a new name, a new inheritance, and new brothers and sisters. And, in the Bible, we are given a new set of family commandments to guide our life.

But we come into our new family with all that we inherited from before—from our earthly family, our friends, and our culture. Often, we are not even aware of how deeply these influence our relationships with other people.

The extent to which we can identify and understand how these unspoken “commandments” have shaped us will determine, to a large degree, our ability to break destructive relational patterns and grow in love toward God and people.

Jesus invites all of us to identify the unspoken commandments that we hold and replace them with His life-giving word.





## WEEK 3: GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

Take some time to catch up and connect as a group. Pray to transition into discussion.

### Growing Connected

This week we are talking about unspoken “commandments.” If you could issue one “commandment” that all people should follow, what would it be? (e.g. people should use the left-lane only to pass, or no one should text after 9pm.)

### Bible Study

In Psalm 119, David rejoices and delights in the *rules of the Lord*.

Read aloud Psalm 119:13-14:

*13 With my lips I declare  
all the rules of your mouth.*

*14 In the way of your testimonies I delight  
as much as in all riches.*

#### 1. Why would David delight in God’s commands as much as in all his riches?

The Israelites came out of Egypt after four hundred years of slavery. They had been deeply shaped by Egyptian culture. They had other gods, lied, stole, coveted, and worked seven days a week. Although God delivered them out of Egypt, Egypt was still deeply imbedded in them. They now had to learn how to live as God’s new family. So God gave them new commandments – the Ten Commandments – to reshape them as his people. Note how God begins the Ten Commandments in Exodus 20: “I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.”

#### 2. What does this say about God’s reason for giving the Ten Commandments? Why would a God who liberates impose commandments?

The truth is that God gives commandments to point us toward right-living. Just like the Israelites, we are invited by God into a counter-cultural way of living. In Ephesians 4:22-24, Paul invites us to “put off our old self” and “put on our new selves” in Christ.

This means examining the “commandments” that we receive from the world around us – and replacing them where they conflict with the Word of God.

#### 3. Individually, work through the “Unbiblical Family Commandments” Tool of the Week on page 23. (10 minutes)

#### 4. What “commandments” have you inherited that may need to be replaced?





# WEEK 3: TOOL OF THE WEEK

**Key Principle: We can only change what we are aware of.**

## Examples of Unbiblical Family Commandments

<p><b>1. MONEY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Money is the best source of security.</li> <li>- The more money you have, the more important you are.</li> <li>- Make lots of money to prove you "made" it.</li> </ul> <p><b>2. CONFLICT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Avoid conflict at all costs.</li> <li>- Don't get people mad at you.</li> <li>- Loud, angry, constant fighting is normal.</li> </ul> <p><b>3. SEX</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sex is not to be spoken about openly.</li> <li>- Men can be promiscuous; women must be chaste.</li> </ul> <p><b>4. GRIEF AND LOSS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sadness is a sign of weakness.</li> <li>- You are not allowed to be depressed.</li> <li>- Get over losses quickly and move on.</li> </ul> <p><b>5. EXPRESSING ANGER</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anger is dangerous and bad.</li> <li>- Explode in anger to make a point.</li> <li>- Sarcasm is an acceptable way to release anger.</li> </ul>	<p><b>6. FAMILY</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You owe your parents for all they've done for you.</li> <li>- Don't speak of your family's "dirty laundry" in public.</li> <li>- Duty to family and culture comes before everything.</li> </ul> <p><b>7. RELATIONSHIPS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Don't trust people. They will let you down.</li> <li>- Don't ever let anyone hurt you.</li> <li>- Don't show vulnerability.</li> </ul> <p><b>8. ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHER CULTURES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Only be close friends with people who are like you.</li> <li>- Do not marry a person of another race or culture.</li> <li>- Certain cultures/races are not as good as ours.</li> </ul> <p><b>9. SUCCESS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Is getting into the "best schools."</li> <li>- Is making lots of money.</li> <li>- Is getting married and having children.</li> </ul> <p><b>10. FEELINGS AND EMOTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You are not allowed to have certain feelings.</li> <li>- Your feelings are not important.</li> <li>- Reacting with your feelings without thinking is okay.</li> </ul>
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**Look at the sample chart of unbiblical family commandments on the left.**

1. Circle two or three commandments you think have negatively impacted you.
2. Choose one commandment that you would most like to change. Put a star next to it.
3. Write down other "family commandments" you inherited below.

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Jesus gives us the opportunity for a new family culture to follow as we are "born again" (John 3:3) and become sons and daughters of God (John 1:12-13). No matter what commandments we have learned, Jesus invites us to put off our old selves and will enable us to put on our new self (Ephesians 4:22-24).

Above, you chose one commandment that you would most like to change. We invite you to ask God to remove this from you by completing the following prayer:

***Father, I have always believed... I know that you teach... take my old commandment from me and replace it with your truth. Amen.***

