



# ***UPSTATE GROUP GUIDE***

*Through the Bible*

*March 3 - 9*

*Deuteronomy 5:6-21*

## *Things to Know*

### **Inside Out -**

Join us for 100+ community projects to live our faith Inside Out!

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## **Studying God's Word *In Community***

*Reminder. Seek to understand and apply God's word, **not** rehash the sermon.*

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# Read

**Read Deuteronomy 5:1-21 and make observations about the text.**

- What is God teaching us in the passage?
  - What does this reveal about who God is, what God has done, and how I should respond?
  - Which part of the text was most meaningful to you and why?
  - What do you need help understanding about this passage?
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## Sermon Recap

- God gives rules to follow only after he has delivered his people. This makes clear that the 10 Commandments do not function as our path to earn God's approval. Rather, these are how we maintain our relationship with the God who rescued us.
  - The 10 Commandments express how to best relate to God and to others. Commandments 1-4 show how to best love God. Commandments 5-10 show how to best love others.
  - The 10 Commandments allow humans to walk in freedom. When we do life as God intended, life goes better.
  - The 10 Commandments leave us in despair. Though we know we should obey these commands, we fail in obedience over and over again. The 10 Commandments reveal one great truth: we need a savior to forgive our sin and empower our obedience.
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## Discussion Questions

### **God's Identity and Our Response (vv. 1-6):**

*"Verse 6 reminds us that God introduces Himself as the One who brought Israel out of Egypt before giving the commandments. How does knowing God as our rescuer—not just our rule-giver—change the way we approach His commands in our lives today?"*

### **Exclusive Devotion (vv. 7-11):**

*"The first three commandments call us to worship God alone, avoid idols, and honor His name. In our modern world, what are some 'other gods' or 'idols' that compete for our attention, and how can we refocus on God instead?"*

### **Sabbath as Gift (vv. 12-15):**

*"The Sabbath command ties rest to God's deliverance, setting it apart from just a day off."*

*How do you currently practice rest, and what might it look like to make it a time to celebrate God's freedom in your life?"*

### **Relationships and God's Heart (vv. 16-21):**

*"The last six commandments protect our relationships with others—family, neighbors, even enemies. Which of these feels most challenging to you right now (e.g., honoring parents, avoiding envy), and what's one step you could take to align with God's heart in that area?"*

### **Law and Grace Together (Whole Passage):**

*"Jesus said He came to fulfill the law, not abolish it (Matthew 5:17). How do you see these commandments pointing us to Jesus, and how does His grace help us live them out in a way the Israelites couldn't on their own?"*

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## Scripture

### **Deuteronomy 5:1-21**

#### **The Ten Commandments**

**5** And Moses summoned all Israel and said to them, "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and the rules that I speak in your hearing today, and you shall learn them and be careful to do them. **2** The Lord our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. **3** Not with our fathers did the Lord make this covenant, but with us, who are all of us here alive today. **4** The Lord spoke with you face to face at the mountain, out of the midst of the fire, **5** while I stood between the Lord and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the Lord. For you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up into the mountain. He said:

**6** " 'I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

**7** " 'You shall have no other gods before me.

**8** " 'You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is on the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. **9** You shall not bow down to them or serve them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, **10** but showing steadfast love to thousands of those who love me and keep my commandments.

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**Deuteronomy**  
**5:1-21**

**11** “ ‘You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

**12** “ ‘Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. **13** Six days you shall labor and do all your work, **14** but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. **15** You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

**16** “ ‘Honor your father and your mother, as the Lord your God commanded you, that your days may be long, and that it may go well with you in the land that the Lord your God is giving you.

**17** “ ‘You shall not murder.

**18** “ ‘And you shall not commit adultery.

**19** “ ‘And you shall not steal.

**20** “ ‘And you shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

**21** “ ‘And you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife. And you shall not desire your neighbor’s house, his field, or his male servant, or his female servant, his ox, or his donkey, or anything that is your neighbor’s.’

[\*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version\*](#) (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016), Dt 5:1–21.

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## Living on Mission In Community

Before you close the group, answer this question:

*How is God leading me to respond to His Word this week?*

The 10 Commandments provide a map for living according to God’s plan and purpose. Where do these commandments point you to a greater need for obedience?

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# Optional Breakout Questions

*Consider making time at the end of the group to break out into groups of 2-4 (keep them gender specific). Have them answer these three questions about their weeks:*

1. How did you feed yourself?
    - *(What have you been doing to feed your spiritual life, and how is it going?)*
  2. How did you feed others?
    - *(How did you share the gospel or gospel truth with someone this week?)*
  3. How did you feed your flesh?
    - *(What sins did you struggle with this week? How can your friends hold you accountable?)*
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# Leader Resources

## Optional Small Group Curriculum

### Deuteronomy 5:1-21 – The Ten Commandments Revisited

#### Opening (10 minutes)

##### Icebreaker:

Begin with a light, engaging question to get the group talking:

*"If you could make one rule that everyone in the world had to follow, what would it be and why?"*

Give each person a chance to share (keep it fun and brief). Transition by saying, "Today, we're looking at God's rules for His people—not just random ideas, but a foundation for life in relationship with Him."

##### Opening Prayer:

Invite the group to pray together:

*"Lord, we thank You for gathering us here today. Open our hearts and minds to Your Word in Deuteronomy. Help us understand Your commands not as burdens, but as gifts that draw us closer to You and to one another. Guide our discussion and bless our time together. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

#### Summary of Context (5 minutes – Leader to Share)

Deuteronomy 5:1-21 occurs as Moses addresses the new generation of Israelites on the plains of Moab, just before they enter the Promised Land. This is a retelling of the Ten Commandments originally given in Exodus 20, but here it's framed as a covenant renewal. The older generation that witnessed Sinai has died in the wilderness due to disobedience, and now Moses ensures this new generation understands their identity as God's covenant people. The passage emphasizes God's unchanging character, His deliverance from Egypt (v.

6), and the relational nature of these commands—they're not arbitrary laws but instructions for living in harmony with a holy God and each other.

### **Key Context Points:**

- **Historical Setting:** Post-Exodus, pre-conquest of Canaan (circa 1200 BCE).
- **Purpose:** To remind Israel of their unique relationship with God and prepare them for life in the land.
- **Tone:** Both authoritative (God's voice from the mountain) and pastoral (Moses as mediator).

### **Scripture Reading (5 minutes)**

Have someone read Deuteronomy 5:1-21 aloud (NIV, ESV, or preferred translation). Encourage the group to listen for what stands out to them.

### **Teaching Points with Theological Commentary and Exegesis (30 minutes)**

Break the passage into three sections for discussion. Provide these insights and questions to guide the group.

#### **1. Introduction and God's Relational Covenant (vv. 1-6)**

**Teaching Point:** The commandments flow from God's prior act of grace—He rescued Israel before giving them laws.

- *Exegetical Insight:* Verse 2 says, "The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb." This isn't a new covenant but a reaffirmation of the Sinai covenant, showing God's faithfulness across generations. The phrase "I am the Lord your God who brought you out..." (v. 6) roots the laws in redemption, not legalism.
- *Theological Commentary:* God's identity as Deliverer precedes His role as Lawgiver. Obedience is a response to love, not a prerequisite for it.
- *Cross-References:*
  - Exodus 20:2 – Identical intro to the original Ten Commandments.
  - John 1:17 – "The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ," showing continuity and fulfillment.

**Discussion Question:** How does knowing God rescued Israel first change the way we view His commands?

## 2. Commandments 1-4: Loving God Wholeheartedly (vv. 7-15)

**Teaching Point:** The first four commands focus on exclusive devotion to God—His uniqueness, worship, name, and time.

- *Exegetical Insight:*
  - “No other gods” (v. 7) reflects a polytheistic world where Israel’s monotheism was radical.
  - “Graven images” (v. 8) prohibits idols but also guards against misrepresenting God.
  - “Misusing God’s name” (v. 11) isn’t just about swearing—it’s about honoring His reputation.
  - The Sabbath (vv. 12-15) ties rest to redemption (“you were slaves in Egypt”), unique to Deuteronomy’s version (cf. Exodus 20:11, creation focus).
- *Theological Commentary:* These commands reveal God’s jealousy (v. 9)—not petty envy, but a passionate desire for our loyalty. They establish a rhythm of life centered on Him.
- *Cross-References:*
  - Isaiah 42:8 – “I am the Lord; that is my name! I will not yield my glory to another.”
  - Matthew 22:37 – Jesus summarizes this as “Love the Lord your God with all your heart...”

**Discussion Question:** Which of these commands feels hardest to keep today, and why?

## 3. Commandments 5-10: Loving Others Faithfully (vv. 16-21)

**Teaching Point:** The last six commands protect human relationships, reflecting God’s image in community.

- *Exegetical Insight:*
  - “Honor your father and mother” (v. 16) includes a promise of long life, linking obedience to blessing in the land.
  - The prohibitions (murder, adultery, theft, false witness, coveting) address heart issues as much as actions (e.g., coveting starts internally).
  - These laws assume a community bound by mutual respect and trust.
- *Theological Commentary:* These reflect God’s justice and care for human dignity. Jesus later deepens them (e.g., anger = murder, lust = adultery in Matthew 5:21-28), showing their spiritual depth.
- *Cross-References:*
  - Leviticus 19:18 – “Love your neighbor as yourself,” a foundational principle.
  - Romans 13:9 – Paul says these commands are summed up in love for others.



**Discussion Question:** How do these commands challenge or encourage the way we treat people in our lives?

### **Application (10 minutes)**

#### **Group Reflection:**

- “Which of these commandments feels most relevant to your life right now? How might God be inviting you to respond?”
- Encourage practical steps: e.g., resting intentionally (Sabbath), reconciling a relationship (honor, no false witness), or resisting envy (no coveting).

### **Conclusion (10 minutes)**

#### **Leader Wrap-Up:**

“Deuteronomy 5 isn’t just a list of rules—it’s a picture of life with God. The Ten Commandments show us a God who saves, then shapes us to reflect His character. They’re not burdens but boundaries for flourishing. As we leave, let’s remember Jesus fulfilled this law perfectly (Matthew 5:17) and empowers us to live it out through His Spirit.”

#### **Closing Prayer:**

Invite a volunteer or lead:

*"Father, thank You for Your Word and Your covenant love. Help us live out these commands not out of duty, but out of gratitude for Your grace. Strengthen us to love You and others more fully. In Jesus' name, Amen."*

**Optional Take-Home:** Suggest reading Matthew 5:17-48 (Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount) to see how He expands these commands.