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Bible Lesson 13 (BTJ)

1. Introduction

On the other side of the Red Sea, God continued to lead the Israelites and show them which way to travel as they were going toward the land of Canaan.

The Israelites complained often to Moses and Aaron about their living conditions. Moses and Aaron were leading them according to God's guidance. They reminded the Israelites that their complaints in reality were against God and that it was wrong for them to do so. God dealt patiently with them because he was going to fulfill his promise of sending a Deliverer who would be a descendant of Abraham.

When the Israelites camped at Mt. Sinai, Moses went up Mt. Sinai to meet with God. Then God gave specific instructions to Moses for the Israelites to prepare themselves to receive the covenant he was making with them. This covenant was for the Israelites alone.

At Mt. Sinai, God gave to the Israelites the Ten Commandments. These commandments are God's standards. They show what God expects of people. It is important to discuss carefully the explanations of these commandments.

Often, people talk about their goodness because they think that they have followed these commandments in an acceptable way. God's way of looking at how well people follow the Ten Commandments is very different than ours. It is very important to clearly explain what each of the commandments means and doesn't mean.

If you have taught this lesson well, and if the audience believes what they have been taught, they will see themselves as needy sinners. They will readily admit that they have failed or sinned against God and need his mercy and grace to be forgiven of their sins. This is the main goal of this lesson

2. Review

Setting: Gerald and Ruth, with Teacher present, were talking about the way Pharaoh and the Egyptians hardened themselves against God.

Ruth: After nine plagues upon Egypt, Pharaoh and the Egyptians should have been willing to listen to Moses and Aaron.

Gerald: That is true, but, let's think about ourselves. Are we always ready to listen to what others have to say, or do we want to be in charge? Sometimes we act like Pharaoh but we need to turn away from that kind of behavior. God wants all of us to submit to him and to believe his Word.

Ruth: When God told Moses and Aaron about the tenth plague, I thought, "Every firstborn is going to be judged." This time the death sentence was upon everyone in the land of Egypt including the Israelites. Their firstborn would also die in this judgment unless God provided a way of escape for them.

Gerald: No one except God could make the way of escape for the Israelites. It is the same way with us. We feel the weight and the burden of our sinfulness. No one can take it away except God. I desperately need God's mercy and grace. I need God to save me from the penalty of my sins.

Ruth: God provided a way of escape for the Israelites. God provided an acceptable substitute for the Israelite firstborn. He told Moses and Aaron that every household was to sacrifice a lamb and apply its blood on the doorposts and the beam above the door. Then when the death angel killed all the firstborn in Egypt, it passed over the houses with the blood applied to its doorposts and beams. None of the Israelites were destroyed by the tenth plague.

Gerald: Once the firstborn of the Egyptians were killed, all the families in Egypt felt the awful pain of seeing their loved ones die. No one can stop God's righteous judgments.

Teacher: Did the Israelites remember God's great power when they came to the shore of the Red Sea? What did they do when they were being chased by Pharaoh and stopped from moving forward by the Red Sea?

Ruth: They panicked and began to accuse Moses wrongly saying he was leading them to their graves. They soon forgot about their hardships in Egypt.

Gerald: Again, God showed his mercy and love for the Israelites. He made a dry road in the middle of the Red Sea so they could safely cross over to the other side. This was an incredible miracle of God. Only God, the creator of the Red Sea, could do such an awesome and powerful act.

Ruth: When the Israelites saw the waters cover the Egyptians, they should have been ashamed of having doubted God. Surely, by now they should have understood that God cannot change. He is faithful all the time. He always does what he says he will do.

Gerald: Israel soon forgot about God's goodness to them as they traveled through the wilderness. Then they got angry and very disgruntled with Moses and Aaron. So soon they forgot that God was leading them, not Moses and Aaron. That's why they made wrong and unkind accusations toward Moses and Aaron.

Ruth: God kept on being good to the Israelites even though they were disgruntled and complained about everything. God promised Abraham that a descendant of his would be the Deliverer for everyone and that is why he continued to preserve the Israelites and show his mercy and grace to them.

Teacher: In all of these stories, who was the main actor in history? Was it a person? Who was it?

Gerald: It is clear to me that God was the main actor in the Bible stories we have heard. What he did is much more significant than what any person did. God rescued the Israelites from the Egyptian slavery and provided bread and quail for them to eat in the wilderness. He also gave them good water to drink. No person could possibly do what God did for Israel.

Teacher: You are right. God is the main one in all of history. As you hear these Bible stories, it is important for you to believe them because they are about God. It is true that people are involved in the stories, but it is God who is the main character in these stories. In the next stories you will hear more of God's important role in history. You will learn how he continued to work toward the time of bringing the Deliverer to mankind.

3. God Led the Israelites to Mt. Sinai

God had led the Israelites to the wilderness after they had crossed the Red Sea. As they traveled through that area, they faced some difficulties. How did they respond to these difficulties? Did they immediately trust God or did they become disgruntled? The Israelites quickly forgot about awesome God who had delivered them from Egypt. They looked at themselves and their situation and became frustrated and dissatisfied with God. But God had not changed. He was still all-powerful, loving, and he cared for them.

Notice how patient God was with the Israelites as they clamored about their physical conditions. When they complained about not having food and water, he provided abundant food and water for them. Since he was leading them through the wilderness which he had created, he knew that unless he provided food and water for them, they would die. God is sovereign and knows everything. He was not going to let them die of hunger or thirst. He was going to preserve them. It would have been much better for them to believe God, to have faith in him and to trust him to provide their food and water. Instead, they always gripped first to Moses and Aaron about their awful, unbearable conditions.

Let's think about the faithfulness of God. God had promised Adam and Eve that he would send a Deliverer who would defeat Satan. Then he told Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob that the Deliverer would be a descendant of theirs. Can God lie? Of course not. He cannot deny himself or be a trickster. Since he had promised Abraham, Isaac and Jacob that the Deliverer would be one of their descendants, he would preserve the Israelites so that would happen. He could not forget about them in the wilderness and allow them to perish. God is faithful and he fulfills every one of his promises.

As you listen to these Bible stories, do you believe everything that you are learning about God. Do you believe that everything God says is true? God wants you to believe him all the time.

On the other side of the Red Sea, the Israelites camped at Rephidim. Then they moved to the wilderness of Sinai and camped there in front of Mt. Sinai. This is the same mountain where God appeared to Moses in the burning bush when he called him to return to the land of Egypt. At that time God promised to be with Moses as he would soon lead the Israelites out of the land of Egypt. He also said, "This is your sign that I am the one who has sent you to the Israelites. After you have led them out of Egypt, you will come to this mountain and worship God." Now, Moses, Aaron and all the Israelites were at Mt. Sinai and doing exactly what God had revealed to Moses ahead of time.

How did God know that the Israelites would worship him at Mt. Sinai after they left the land of Egypt? God knew that the Israelites would worship him at Mt. Sinai because he knows everything all the time. Think about it. Right now he knows all of your thoughts. He knows what you are thinking about right now, what you thought about in days gone by, and he knows right now the thoughts which you will have tomorrow. Do you know what thoughts you will have tomorrow?

What do you think about the Bible stories you are hearing? God already knows your thoughts and he wants you to believe in him and the message he has given to us.

4. Preparation for God's Descent upon Mt. Sinai

The Israelites were camping by Mt. Sinai. Then Moses went up the mountain and God called to him from the mountain and said, "Say to the Israelites: 'You have seen all that I did to the Egyptians. You know very well how I took care of you, helped you with your needs, and brought you here to this mountain. If you will obey me and keep my covenant, you will be my own special treasure from among all the peoples on earth. Then you will be my kingdom of priests, my holy nation.'" God instructed Moses to tell this message to the Israelites who were camping near to Mt. Sinai.

What kind of a covenant was God talking about? Listen carefully so that you will understand what God said to the Israelites. God promised that he would bestow his blessings upon the Israelites if they obeyed him. If they obeyed him was the condition for the fulfillment of this promise. God wanted to bless the Israelites. He intended to bless them. If they obeyed him, then he would abundantly bless them.

Moses heard God's instructions for the Israelites and returned from the mountain. Then he called together the elders of the people and told them everything that God had commanded him while he was on Mt. Sinai. The Israelites listened to Moses relay the covenant which God was making with them and they replied in unison and said, "We will do everything God has commanded." Then Moses brought the people's answer back to God.

Let's think about the Israelites' response to God. All of them together said, "We will do everything God has commanded." Their reply sounds good, doesn't it? Do you think that they will actually do everything that God commanded them to do? Have the Israelites demonstrated that they are able to be patient and faithful to follow the Lord all the time?

The Israelites hastily promised to do everything God wanted them to do. Had they thought about their history, they would have known that they would fail God at times. Had they

thought about their own sinfulness, they would have known that they would not always follow the Lord. Sometimes they would sin against God. The Israelites' response shows their over confidence in themselves to be able to do what God required of them. God, however, knew that they would not follow through with their promise. God knows everything. He knew that they would falter and fail to observe all of his commandments.

After Moses told God about the Israelites' promise to obey him in all things, God said to him. "Moses, I will come to you in a thick cloud so the people can hear me when I speak with you. Then they will always trust you." God wanted the Israelites to know without a doubt that he had chosen Moses to be their leader. He wanted them to know that Moses did not choose himself to be their leader.

Then God instructed Moses, "Go down from this mountain and go to the people and prepare them for my arrival. Consecrate them today and tomorrow." Moses told the Israelites to get themselves ready for God's appearance on the Mt. Sinai. They were to purify themselves bodily and spiritually. God is holy. He cannot tolerate impurity and sin.

Moses told the Israelites to get ready because on the third day, God was coming down on Mount Sinai with all the people watching. Moses told them to mark off a boundary around the mountain and warn the people against going near to the mountain. God told Moses, "Be careful! Do not go up on the mountain or even touch its boundaries. Anyone who touches the mountain will certainly be put to death."

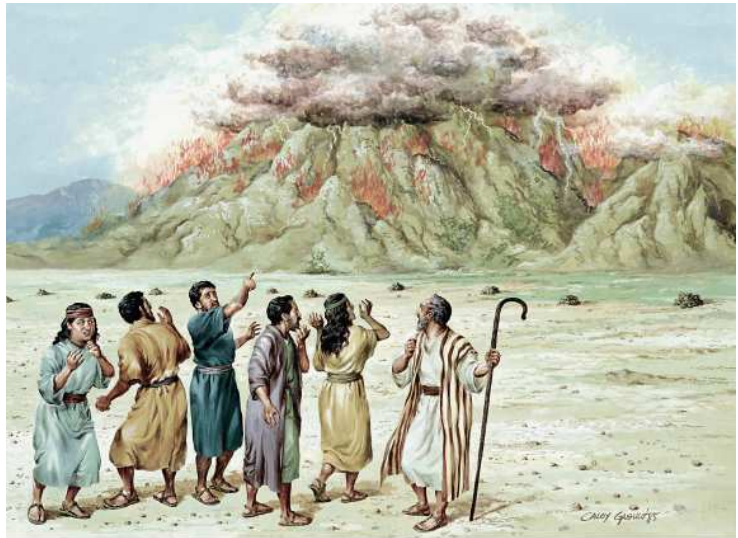
God's warning was clear. Moses clearly understood God's warning. Then Moses carefully instructed the Israelites to obey everything that God had said. Moses told the Israelites, "When the ram's horn sounds a long blast, then everyone may go up the mountain." Every instruction that God gave to Moses was given to the Israelites. God expected them to do everything that he had commanded Moses.

Let's talk about why God intended to meet with the Israelites on Mt. Sinai. Since God is everywhere present at the same time, why did he need to meet with Moses on Mt. Sinai? Why did he have Moses take his commands to the Israelites? Why was it necessary for Moses to take the Israelites' reply to God?

God wanted the Israelites to see the interaction between himself and Moses so that they would trust him as their leader. God wanted the Israelites to know that Moses was following his directives and commands. God wanted the Israelites to trust Moses' leadership. If the Israelites did not trust Moses, it was the same as distrusting God because God was directing Moses all the time.

5. God Descended upon Mt. Sinai

The Israelites prepared themselves for God's descent upon Mt. Sinai just like Moses had instructed them. They obeyed God's commands and waited for his descent. On the morning of the third day, booming thunder and lightning flashes were all around Mt. Sinai. A thick cloud came down on the mountain. Then the people heard a long, loud blast from a ram's horn and they shook with fright.



Show #32: The Israelites at Mount Sinai

Then Moses led them out from the camp to the foot of Mt. Sinai to meet with God. They stood at the foot of the mountain which was covered with smoke because the LORD had descended on it in the form of fire. A column of smoke billowed into the sky and the whole mountain shook violently. When the blast of the ram's horn grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him with thunder. God came down on the top of Mount Sinai and called Moses to the top of the mountain. So Moses climbed up the mountain. The Israelites heard and saw the awesome power of God in the thunder, lightening, and the shaking of the mountain.

Then God said to Moses, "Go back down and warn the people not to break through the boundaries around the mountain or they will die. Tell the priests to purify themselves so that I do not break out and destroy them. Bring Aaron back up with you. However, do not let the priests or the people break through to approach me or I will break out and destroy them." Moses heard all that God had spoken then he went down to the people and told them what God had said.

By now, the Israelites were totally in fear and awe of God who descended upon Mt. Sinai. God's demonstration of power overwhelmed them. They certainly could understand now that there is no power like the power of God. They also knew that he is holy and righteous with no tolerance for sin. They also saw how he worked through Moses, his chosen servant and their leader. God wanted the Israelites to fully understand that he alone is the true God. He alone was worthy of their honor and worship.

6. The Ten Commandments

With all the Israelites gathered at the foot of Mt. Sinai, God gave them the instructions which are called the Ten Commandments. These commandments were given to show them God's holy and righteous standard. God wanted the people to think about the commandments and admit their own sinfulness for having violated them. God wanted the Israelites to know that they needed his mercy and grace because it was impossible for them to follow these commandments all the time. If a person had broken only one of the ten commandments, it was as if he had broken all of them. Keeping nine of the ten commandments could not make anyone right before God.

God knew the Israelites were sinners. All of them were sinners. They were the descendants of Adam and often they had sinned against God. God did not give the Ten Commandments to the Israelites as a means for them to become righteous. No, he wanted them to admit their sinfulness. He wanted them to admit that it was impossible for them to obey the Ten Commandments perfectly. He wanted them to respond to him with trust and belief. He wanted them to admit their spiritual neediness and inability to make themselves acceptable to him. God wanted the Israelites to admit that he alone can provide the solution for their spiritual dilemma.

Just like God wanted the Israelites to understand that they could not become right in his sight by doing good things, so too does he want us to understand that fact. It applies to us. Perhaps you are thinking, "I will try to do more good deeds than bad ones" and hope that God will accept you on that basis. Will he accept you on that basis? No, he will not. That is not good enough for God. God requires perfect obedience to him. Remember this: Adam and Eve sinned only one time and they were immediately cut off from God. They no longer had a right relationship with God.

Listen carefully to each of these commandments. Think about God's standard for holiness and righteousness and ask yourself, "Have I ever broken this commandment? Have I broken any one of the Ten Commandments?" Any person who has broken just one of the Ten Commandments is guilty before God and deserves death. Remember! Each of these commandments were God-given directives to be obeyed all the time. They were not given as options.

The first of the Ten Commandments is this: **You shall have no other gods before Me.** What does that mean? It means that God wants people to believe in him alone. It is sin to believe in or worship another god. God alone is the true and living God. He commands everyone to honor and respect him. Worshiping other gods is strictly forbidden by God.

Did your ancestors worship other gods? Did they teach you to worship the true and living God? Right now you are hearing God's command for all people to submit to him and turn away from false gods. This is a God-given command; it is not an option.

The second commandment: **You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth.**

You shall not worship them or serve them. What does this commandment mean? Why did God forbid idols? Idols are made by people who turn around and worship the object their own hands made. How foolish can people be? God, who is infinitely greater than everything else brought all things into being by his power. He is our creator and the creator of all things. The Creator is greater than objects created by him. God, the creator, deserves our worship.

Idols are objects people consider to be sacred. They are made by people who use raw materials which God created. Some are made of wood, others of stone or metals. Then people respect these objects and worship them. Do you feel tension within yourself about showing honor to the idols of your forefathers? God wants you to turn away from them. They are dead, they cannot speak, they cannot hear, nor can they do any harm or good to anyone. Idols are dead and worthless. God wants all of you to believe in him and honor him. Anyone who has honored or worshiped an idol has broken the Ten Commandments.

The third commandment: **You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not leave him unpunished who takes His name in vain.** What does it mean to take the name of God in vain? People take the name of God in vain by cursing others in his name. Another way to profane God's name is do something in the name of God which is contrary to his Word. Sometimes people take an oath and invoke God's name to verify what they are saying, but, they are doing it falsely. Using God's name flippantly is wrong. God and his name are to be respected, not dishonored.

Have you ever profaned God's name? People who deceitfully use the name of God to verify what they are saying or doing use his name in vain. They want the name of God to gloss over the reality of their deceitfulness. God's name is not to be used flippantly or disrespectfully. His name is to be honored because it represents him.

The fourth commandment: **Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.** God told the Israelites to observe the seventh day of a week in a special way. They were to refrain from their daily work and activities and rest. On their day of rest, the Israelites should remember that God created everything in six days. On the seventh day he rested, or ceased from his creation work. Therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and made it holy. God wanted everyone to think about how God made everything for us in six days.

If a person rests on the seventh day, will God accept him or see him as sinless on that account? It is good to remember that everyone has broken one or more of the Ten Commandments. That means they are already sinners and unacceptable to God. God wanted the Israelites to rest on the seventh day and to think about him. He did not want them to just live for themselves and forget who made everything in the first place. If people think seriously about God having created everything, it leads them to honor him. God deserves honor, respect, and praise for who he is. He deserves to be respected and honored as our good and perfect Creator.

The fifth commandment: **Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be prolonged in the land which the LORD your God gives you.** Is this commandment difficult to understand? This commandment is not hard to understand. However, it is one that everyone has broken. God wants parents to be honored and respected by their children. Why? Because children are their offspring. They are alive because their parents cared for them from infancy. Children are commanded to honor their parents. Where is the person among us who has always obeyed his parents? All of us have disobeyed our parents and dishonored them. Disobedience and rebellion toward parents are wrong. Refusing to obey parents is wrong. God expects children to honor their parents.

The sixth commandment: **You shall not murder.** God is the creator of everyone. He strictly forbids murder. Only God has the right to terminate life. He is the creator of life and can also bring life to an end. However for a person to murder someone else is sin. It is a serious sin against God for which he holds people accountable.

Perhaps you are thinking, “I’m good. I would never murder someone.” Have you ever hated a person with extreme hatred and wished they were dead? God sees that as though you murdered that person because in your heart that is what you did. What is the penalty for sinning against God? The payment for sinning against God is eternal death.

The seventh commandment: **You shall not commit adultery.** When God created Eve, he brought her to Adam to be his wife. From there on, God saw them as one. Even though Adam and Eve were individuals, God saw them as being joined together in union. Adam belonged to Eve and Eve belonged to Adam. Adam and Eve belonged to each other because they were a married couple.

When married people engage in sexual relations with someone who is not their spouse, they commit adultery. They sin against God who has strictly forbidden this kind of behavior. And, they sin against their spouse with whom they are one. Sometimes people commit adultery and hide their sin from others. God knows about the sin and he holds

people accountable for sinning in this way.

People who lust for someone who is not their spouse commit adultery in their hearts. God knows all about this and he will judge people for sinning against him. Remember, the payment for sin is death.

The eighth commandment: **You shall not steal.** Has anyone here ever stolen anything? Have you ever taken something that is not yours to be your own possession without the owner's knowledge? When a person steals property from someone else, he dishonors that person and God, the creator of that person. A thief takes property when no one is looking and keeps it for himself. He thinks, "No one knows about it so it doesn't matter." That kind of thinking is from Satan who is a liar and thief.

Sometimes people get caught stealing and they are forced to give it back to the owner or to pay the owner compensation. Does that take away their guilt of having stolen the property of someone else? No, it does not take away their sin and guilt before God for having stolen someone's property. He knows what they did, that they broke his commandment. God judges sin, doesn't he? He punishes all people for the wrong they do. The punishment for being guilty of sinning against God is death.

Have you ever stolen something and gotten away with it? Truthfully, you did not get away with it. God saw you and knows all about it. God sees everything all the time.

The ninth commandment: **You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.** Has anyone ever said anything untrue about you? Did you like that? Of course not. Telling lies about people is against God's standard. It is according to Satan's ways. Satan is a liar and he tempts people to lie.

It is wrong to say a lie about someone else. Often this happens to demean another person so others think less of him. God wants people to always speak the truth about people and what they do. God knows what everyone else does. He knows what we do. It is a sin against God to speak falsely about someone else. Before we speak falsely about someone else, it is good to remember that all sin will be punished by God. Think about this question. Have you ever spoken falsely about someone else? God wants us to speak the truth all the time.

The tenth commandment: **You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife or his male servant or his female servant or his ox or his donkey or anything that belongs to your neighbor.** God strictly forbid coveting things that belong to others. Satan tempts people to covet things because coveting drives people to sin against others. Have you ever coveted someone's spouse? Have you ever coveted

another person's animal or property?

Why do people covet other people's possessions? Coveting happens because people are greedy and they want more things. Coveting leads people to lie and cheat to get things dishonestly. Have you ever coveted another person's possessions? Have you ever longed and longed for something that wasn't yours? God says, "Do not covet" and that is what he means. It is sin against God to covet others' possessions. The possessions of other people are theirs to keep, to use or to give away. They are not your possessions because they belong to someone else. To lust for them is coveting another person's possessions.

Let's talk about the Ten Commandments and see how well we are doing at keeping all of them. Is there anyone here who has never broken any of the Ten Commandments? Has anyone ever followed the Ten Commandments perfectly? Suppose a person only breaks one commandment one time, is he still guilty for having broken the Ten Commandments?

Suppose a person only breaks one of the Ten Commandments then later is very sorry for having sinned against God. Is that person still guilty of having sinned? Will his sorrow take away his guilt? If he pays a fine for having sinned, will that remove his guilt?

Listen carefully to this important point. A person who breaks only one of God's laws is guilty of breaking all of them. Why? Because that person sinned against God by breaking one of his commandments. Right away that person is guilty of having sinned against God. And, his sin is punishable by eternal death. Even if he is truly sorry for having sinned against God, the fact remains that he did sin and now he is a guilty sinner without the ability to devise a way to make himself right with God.

Let's talk about people trying to make themselves right with God. When Cain tried to make himself right with God, did God accept his self-effort? No, God did not accept it, nor will he accept any self-effort of ours. Everyone is guilty before God for having sinned against him. Do you want to escape God's judgment for having sinned? Do you want to pay for your own sins in the never-ending fire of punishment? If you cover up your sinfulness and deny that you need God's mercy and grace, you will go to the awful place of eternal punishment and suffer in the never-ending fire of punishment.

You have heard this lesson on the Ten Commandments. God wants you to believe in him and to trust him to help you with your sin problem. The guilt and weight of sin are very heavy upon you. Only God can show you mercy and grace and help you. Trust God, all of you, and believe all that his message teaches us. Believe these Bible stories so that you will be saved from having to pay for your own sins.

7. **After the Meeting**

Setting: The meeting was over but some of the people continued to discuss the Ten Commandments.

Richard: The Ten Commandments of God show us how evil and wicked we are. We think if a person doesn't do really bad actions he is okay. We have always prided ourselves for being good people.

Sara: In reality we were not good people.

Richard: We learned how to lie and deceive people by watching our parents and forefathers. I learned how to lie and trick people and make it look like I was telling the truth. I am a condemned man for having broken so many of the Ten Commandments.

Sara: When Teacher explained God's expectation of us to obey all the Ten Commandments, I was convicted of my many sins. I am a guilty sinner and ashamed of myself. If the string he cut off would have been my string, it would have been cut so many times that only a small piece of it would have remained.

Richard: God gave the Ten Commandments to the Israelites to show them that they were not as good as they thought they were. And, God wanted them to know that he was much greater than they were. He is holy and righteous. All his ways are good.

Sara: If I had been there with Moses and the Israelites, I would have been terrified to hear God's voice which sounded like thunder. Seeing the lightening and the shaking mountain would have made all of our hearts melt like wax. However, all of us know that we would have forgotten about it later. All of us need God's mercy and grace or we will be doomed forever because we are sinners who have often sinned against God.

Richard: I am concerned about what will happen to me. What will happen to my family? What will happen to the older people here because we know that we have broken the Ten Commandments hundreds of times. Now what will happen to us?

Sara: We are hopelessly lost and do not know what to do to be forgiven of our sins. We have broken all of the Ten Commandments so what hope is there for us.

Teacher: There is hope for you. This message I am teaching you is helping you understand your need for God's mercy and grace. Please keep coming to the meetings. I have many things to teach you. I want you to know there is hope for you. You need to

believe every Bible story. At the beginning of these meetings I told you that it would take time to teach you the whole message. I also told you that if you believed God's message and trusted him, he would help you with your sin problem as he has helped me with mine.

Richard: I need God's help so the weight of the guilt of my sin will be gone.

Teacher: Think about the meanings of the Bible stories. Come to every meeting to learn more about God. If you believe what I am teaching you, God will rescue you from your sin problem as he did me.

8. **Review of the Lesson's Themes**

God communicates with man: God told Moses how the Israelites were to prepare themselves for coming to Mt. Sinai when he would descend upon it. Man must come to God in his way and God disclosed to the Israelites through Moses how they were to come to him.

God is holy and righteous: The holiness of God is shown in this lesson. It needs to be emphasized throughout the lesson. This point must be understood by the audience.

Man is a helpless sinner who needs God's mercy and grace for salvation: It is impossible for any person by his own effort to do something which makes him right with God. Without God's mercy and grace shown to man, there would be no hope for him whatsoever to be forgiven for having sinned against God.

God is supreme and sovereign: The supremacy and sovereignty of God is clearly evident in this lesson on the Ten Commandments. God rightfully holds people accountable to himself, and, by his sovereignty has exercised his mercy and grace to man by showing him his holy standards.

9. Students Practice Telling the Stories

At the end of this lesson, practice telling the story you have just heard to each other. Everyone needs to practice teaching Bible lessons by telling the stories. By now you should have a feel for how to make the stories interesting according to your cultural ways of storytelling. Be sure to maintain the right focus in each story. Focus on God being the primary one who worked in history in these stories.

Practice telling the stories of this lesson in pairs. One pair should teach one of the stories in the lesson following this lesson's Table of Contents for divisions in the lessons.

The Table of Contents at the beginning of the lesson lists the stories for each lesson. Some of the stories or sections of a story are short so they should be combined with another section to make the exercise of practicing to teach by using stories a profitable exercise.

When you are teaching this lesson, especially the part on the Ten Commandments, use culturally appropriate questions and illustrations to keep the story interesting and to make the people think about the lesson's meanings. For example: "Joe stole some money from Pete but no one saw him do it, no one knows about it. He got away with that, didn't he?" The answer is obvious: No, he did not get away with it because God saw him and his conscience told him that he sinned. This short example shows the wrongness of stealing and the impossibility of getting away with it.

Be prepared to engage the audience with questions about each one of the Ten Commandments. Use questions which will lead the audience to think realistically about their own lives and how they have broken God's Ten Commandments. Be prepared to follow up their answers with more questions if necessary.

Use visual aids or objects used in the lesson when you teach a story. Show the pictures at the right time in the story. When illustrations are used, be sure to bring them to a right and logical conclusion. If you do not make the right conclusions through telling the story, people will likely guess what it means and they could easily come to a wrong conclusion.

After you have practiced telling stories to each other, talk about ways to improve your story-telling ability. Be open to critique and be kind to each other as you work together to help each other become master story-tellers. The goal of teaching God's Word via telling Bible stories is not to merely impress your peers; it is the salvation of spiritually lost people.

Self-evaluation: As you tell the stories, how well do you present the stories and the themes? Does your teaching tend to highlight people? Or does it rightfully focus on God working in history? Do you tell the story so that God is highlighted throughout the story? Or is man, in a subtle way, the main actor in the story? You need to make sure that the role of God in these stories is the main focus. People are the instruments through whom God achieves his purposes.

10. Teaching Tips for Teachers

Lesson Point #4:

Stress that God communicated clearly to the Israelites through Moses that his exact instructions had to be followed in preparation for his descent upon Mt. Sinai. To transgress his instructions and the boundaries he set would have resulted in death.

Lesson Point #5:

In history, God's descent upon Mt. Sinai graphically showed the Israelites of his awesome, unparalleled power. He wanted them to be overawed by all they saw and experienced so that they would not forget who he was.

Lesson Point #6:

Mirror and the Ten Commandments demonstration: You can use the following one actor drama to demonstrate the purpose of the Ten Commandments and to show what they cannot do. The teacher tells everyone to watch the action. A person with a dirty face appears before the audience with a mirror. Looking into the mirror, he sees smears and dirt on his face. Then he takes the mirror and tries to clean his face. He tries to wipe off the smears and dirt, but, is unable to do so with the mirror.

Then make these points: The Ten Commandments show people about their sinfulness because all people have broken them. As a mirror reflects images, the Ten Commandments clearly show people that they have sinned against God.

However, just as the mirror could not clean the actor's dirty face, the Ten Commandments are powerless to save anyone from the guilt and penalty of their sins. Only God can save people from the guilt and penalty of their sin.

Two strings of equal length and a scissors demonstration: Take two strings of equal length. One represents God's standard, the Ten Commandments. The other string represents the history of someone's life. Have they really obeyed the Ten Commandments? God requires a person's history of abiding by the Ten Commandments to be equal to his perfect standard.

Now ask, "If the second string represented how you have obeyed the Ten Commandments, how long would it be?" Choose a volunteer before the meeting to use as a life history for this demonstration. Before doing the demonstration in public, ask permission to ask him questions such as, "Did you ever disobey your parents?" "Have you ever lied (false witness)?" "Did you ever steal anything?" Only ask in public the questions you've agreed upon before the meeting. Here is a caution: Do not ask if he/she committed

murder, adultery or any question that would cause more problems among others. Be prudent as you do this demonstration.

Each time a sin is mentioned, cut off some of that person's string. After two or three cuts, ask the audience. "Is this person's record of obeying the Ten Commandments the same length as God's standard?" Give time for them to answer. Emphasize that anything less than a string of equal length is falling short of God's requirement. What does that mean for that person? It means the person is guilty of having sinned against God and deserves death.

Emphasize to the audience that the Ten Commandments are God's holy standard and that he makes no exception for anyone. All people who have tried to perfectly obey the Ten Commandments have failed.

At the end of this lesson, the audience should understand and be willing to admit their spiritual helplessness.

11. To the Honorable Teacher

If any part of this lesson is misunderstood, go over that part again. Play that part of the lesson again. Summarize that part briefly for the students then play that part a second time. Then ask questions to ascertain whether or not this part of the lesson is now understood correctly.

Be prepared to use proper illustrations to clarify a given lesson point. Sometimes it is helpful to use a picture and talk about what is portrayed in the picture as you teach.

Stress to the students that the important themes of this lesson must be understood before proceeding to the next lesson. By interacting with people and discussing the teaching it is possible to ascertain how people are understanding the lessons and whether or not they are believing the teaching.

Simple drama can be useful to make a point clearer in the people's minds. Before using drama, be sure that it is culturally appropriate to do so. If people are not accustomed to understanding simple drama, it may be best to not use it.