



EXODUS

Week 4 Study Guide

Exodus

Week 4: Day 1

HANDS UP—HANDS UNDER—HANDS ON (God's Design for the Body)

READ: EXODUS 17:8-13

When Moses' hands grow weary, Aaron and Hur are there to help by propping up his hands. Moses finds that he not only leads people and instructs people, but that he also needs people - even the people that were ready to stone him. Dependence on the Lord is among the most beautiful things, but even the strongest can sometimes grow weary. It's difficult to be out there all alone, slugging it out. We need others to prop us up, so to speak, to remind us that dependence on the Lord, not ourselves, is the way to go. There are no Lone Ranger leaders or disciples. We need each other to point us to the Lord.

The result of all this is a crushing victory. Moses trusts Joshua; Moses depends on the Lord; Aaron and Hur help Moses depend on the Lord; and the people win a crushing victory. It's an incredible picture of how the body of Christ works.

This is a key story that we are beginning to use in our Men's Ministry as we build our teams (hands up...hands under...hands on). It is also a blueprint for our relationships and responsibilities.

HANDS UP: I have been called to be the Moses in Men's Ministry, and I accept that responsibility. My main role is to have my hands up in prayer and be in the ministry of the Word ([Acts 6:1](#)). I build up my leaders...trust them...then release them. I let them build their teams. I trust them, and when they stumble, I pick them up and have their back.

HANDS UNDER: I'm so grateful for the Aarons and Hurs on my team. They are the ones that are closest to me. They know the good, the bad, and the ugly. They are so close to me that they know when I'm getting tired or overwhelmed or moving too fast. They are very gifted men that are the real leaders in Men's Ministry. Often, they have gifting and skills that exceed mine. But this season I'm called to be "Moses," and

I accept the responsibility, grateful for the Aaron's and the Hur's who serve alongside me.

HANDS ON: I'm just as grateful for the Joshuas on my team. They are the faithful men who are on the front-line day in and day out. They are the heart and soul of our ministry. They are trustworthy servants. I believe in order to be a great leader you have to be a great follower. Joshua was a great follower who became the leader that led the Israelite nation into the promised land.

NOTE: We all have different roles in our church body. For example: I am Hands Up (*Moses*) in our Men's Ministry but I'm Hands Under (*Aaron/Hur*) to my Men's ministry partner, Lane Sater, and I'm Hands On (*Joshua*) to my Elder Team.

POINTS TO PONDER:

- List the key character traits that Moses, Aaron/Hur, and Joshua need in order to fulfill their roles and responsibilities?
- What are some principles you have learned about relationships and responsibilities? Which one will you apply? How?

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Week 4: Day 2

READ: Exodus 17:8-16

“And Moses built an altar and he named it, ‘The Lord is my Banner.’”
– Exodus 17:15

Since leaving bondage in Egypt, the Israelites have faced a few problems: 1) crossing the Red Sea while being pursued by an army, 2) having no water in the desert, 3) having no food in the desert, 4) having no water again, and **NOW**, an army is attacking them!

If I had been one of the average Israelite citizens in the crowd, I might have been thinking, “*Really Lord? Now we have to take on an army. Can't we get a little break here?*” God had defeated Pharaoh’s army for them. God had provided fresh drinking water and food for them. But now, for the first time, they have to strap on swords and go to battle. I can’t imagine that during their 430 years of slavery they had been given much military training. I doubt that Joshua had ever led an army into battle before. They had no training, no elaborate battle plan, and no experienced commander. But they had God.

I remember 9/11—the day of those terrifying terrorist attacks. I remember there were flags being displayed everywhere—at homes, businesses, churches. People wore flag stickers, flag jewelry, and even flag t-shirts. Our flag had once again become a powerful symbol of courage, unity, hope, and comfort. The Israelites had no flag during their battle; no symbol that would rally their courage. But they had God. And as long as Moses kept his hands lifted to God, they prevailed.

When the battle was over, and the enemy was routed, Moses built an altar, a place of remembrance, and he called it, “**The LORD is my banner.**” The Lord had been their rallying point—He was the source of their courage, unity, hope, and comfort.

Most of the time, I don’t feel like I am cut out for the battles that the Lord calls me to fight. I’m usually afraid, and I often feel alone. I can

easily lose focus and hope. I get weary during the battle and want to give up. And too I often find myself crying out to God and asking Him to fight for me. The Lord is **MY** banner. And as long as I keep my hands and my heart lifted to Him, I find that I can stay in the fight.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION:

- What battles is the Lord asking you to fight?
- What does it look like for you to keep your hands and your heart lifted to Him?
- How has the Lord been **YOUR** banner?

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Week 4: Day 3

READ: EXODUS 20:1-17

It's all about loving God and others. In this section we will be reminded of the essentials in our relationship with Jesus and one another. It's the core of who we are and whose we are. The Ten Commandments - the hub of all of Israel's religious and civil laws - has two parts. The first four commandments pertain to the relationship of the Israelites with God, and the other six deal with social relationships within the covenant community. Before giving these 10 stipulations, **God** speaks of His unique relationship with His people in the preamble (**I am the LORD your God**, **Ex. 20:2a**) and in the historical prologue He briefly summarizes what He has done for them (**brought you out of Egypt...the land of slavery**, **Ex. 20:2b; 13:3, 14; Deut. 5:6; 6:12; 7:8; 8:14; 13:5, 10**). Centuries before, God had led Abraham out of Ur (**Genesis 15:7**); now He was leading Abraham's descendants out of Egypt.

The Ten Commandments are an excellent summary of 10 divine rules for human conduct. They might be called rules of **(1)** religion, **(2)** worship, **(3)** reverence, **(4)** time, **(5)** authority, **(6)** life, **(7)** purity, **(8)** property, **(9)** tongue, and **(10)** contentment. As you read through **Ex. 20:2** "**I am the Lord your God...**" just stop and see if that is true. Ask yourself, Is Jesus/God the Lord of my life?

Many people have said that one thing they don't like about Christianity is that it's all about rules and regulations. That could not be further from the truth. Think of any healthy relationship that you have experienced. What you will find is in order for a relationship to be healthy it has to have rules - boundaries that are followed in order for there to be health. Laws/rules for living which are not based on relationship are cold at best and legalistic at worst. In my relationship with my spouse, I know there are certain rules/boundaries that if I were to cross, I would hurt the relationship. For example, there is a rule in marriage that I will not commit adultery. If I disregard that rule, there will be hardship in my relationship. The same can be said for

stealing or lying. Disregarding those rules will hurt my relationship with my wife. In fact, disobeying them will hurt all of my relationships.

When God says, “**no idols**,” what He is saying is that worshiping idols will hurt our relationship with Him, not hinder our freedom in life. When God says, “**don’t steal**,” it’s because He knows that stealing hurts relationships with others. The basis of all the commandments is relationship. If we focus only on the rules and bypass the relationship it will feel burdensome and heavy. Allow the relationship to set us free today from the legalism of rules.

POINTS TO PONDER:

- Are there things in your life that you are doing that are hindering your relationship with God? (*Look back at the first four commandments and ask God to reveal those things to you.*)
- Are there things in your life that you are doing that are hindering your relationship with others (*spouse, kids, work, etc.*)? Ask God to reveal those to you as well.

PRAYER:

God, thank you that it truly is about what your Son, Jesus, said: that following you is about relationships - loving You with all my heart, soul, mind, and strength and loving my neighbor as myself. Help me to recognize my need for You and to live in relationship with You and those around me.

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Week 4: Day 4

READ: EXODUS 19

OLD COVENANT

In **Exodus 3:12**, God calls from the burning bush and promises Moses that He would lead the Israelites back to that very same mountain and they would worship Him there. In **chapter 19** God fulfills that promise - just three months after their deliverance from Egypt. It is here that God establishes a covenant with Israel; they would be His people, and He would be their God. A **covenant** is another word for a *pledge* or *promise*. It was sort of a *contract* between God and the Israelites. God said: '*Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine; and you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*' (**Exodus 19:5-6**). This was a promise based on certain conditions: **if** they were obedient, **then** they would be God's people. It was a remarkably simple agreement, yet as we now know, it was impossible for them to keep it on their own!

NEW COVENANT

Romans 3:20 tells us that the law (*upon which this covenant was based*) was given in order for us to become aware of our sin. But **Hebrews 7:18-22** tells us that Jesus guarantees a better hope through a better covenant! This new covenant is a promise of eternal life in relationship with God. This covenant isn't founded upon the law - it is a covenant of grace! As **Hebrews 10** reminds us: through Jesus, God fulfilled what He had previously stated: "*This is the covenant I will make... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people... For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.*" (**Jeremiah 31:33-34**)

LIVING IN GRACE

It's so easy to make a list of rules we need to follow; have a checklist which we keep up to date; a measuring stick by which we determine whether we (*or others*) are in right standing with God. But God doesn't

want that from us! He doesn't want us to focus on our task list. He wants us to focus on *Him*! Think about it: Do you enjoy relationships with people who try to please you by what they do? Those kinds of relationships are shallow and unsatisfying! Really deep, satisfying relationships involve an investment of time, sharing hopes and fears, successes, and failures.

Certainly, God wants us to obey Him. But He desires for our obedience to come from hearts that love Him and trust that His ways are best! When I put my dirty clothes in the hamper instead of on the floor, I do it because I love my wife, not because she won't love me if I don't! In the same way, God's Word promises me that nothing can separate me from His love. But I still want to obey Him because I love Him!

HOW ABOUT YOU?

- Have you asked Jesus to forgive you and accept you just as you are? If not, why don't you do it right now, and then share this news with someone you know!
- Are you trying to please God by following a list of *Do's & Don'ts*? Take a moment to consider your motives for obedience.
- Have you ever just sat at the feet of the Lord and spent time with Him? What would it look like to draw closer to Jesus?

LET'S PRAY ABOUT IT!

- Take a few minutes and reflect on your answers to the questions above.
- Ask God to reveal any impure or misguided motives you have in your heart.
- Thank Him for His goodness, His grace, and His promises!
- Ask Him to draw closer to you as you open the door of your heart to Him!

Exodus

Week 4: Day 5

READ: EXODUS 20:1-17

If you've got an extra hour on your hands, do a Google search on “*Top Ten Lists!*” Wow...who knew? ESPN has a list every night. So did Late Night with David Letterman. There seems to be a whole “*Top Ten*” movement - just how many “*Top Ten*” lists are there? Have you ever wondered where it all started; wondered why it's “*Top Ten*” instead of 12 or 8 or 20? I didn't have an extra hour on my hands so I'm not sure what the internet will provide as an answer to these questions, but I'm thinking that the whole “*Top Ten*” movement got its start in the Bible, right here in the book of **Exodus** with God's “*Top Ten*” Commandments.

Lately, the 10 Commandments have fallen on hard times. They've been removed from government buildings of all shapes and sizes, removed from places of honor in view of the public, removed from parks and outside courthouses—pretty much anywhere and everywhere. Out of sight, out of mind, right? I hope not.

As you spend time in **Exodus 20** this week, linger over **verses 1-17**, and as you do, remember that God gives us the 10 Commandments not to hurt us but to help us - not to hamper us but to release us - not to punish us but to protect us. The 10 Commandments contain both law and gospel; both a discipline and a promise. When we live in this discipline, under this law, our lives, our nation, and our world benefit because God always keeps His promises! When we choose to break away and go our own way, our lives are compromised, nations destroy each other, and the world groans with pain. The parameters have been set, the boundaries have been outlined, and we can choose whether to live within them or not, it's as simple *and* as complex as that.

And, in proper “*Top Ten*” fashion, I would encourage you to spend a little extra time when you've counted down the first 9 and arrive at number 1, the first commandment. Why? Because it's the most important one. Why else would God have listed it first? It's the most

important one - so important that it has a preamble, a prelude, an appetizer to get you ready, and to launch right into it would simply be too overwhelming. So here it is - the preamble: ***I am the Lord your God.*** Ok! That's good! Sounds rather nice. I can handle that, and yet something tells me You're not finished yet: **YOU SHALL HAVE NO OTHER GODS** - period!

I know that **Exodus 20:3** says, “*You shall have no other gods before me.*” And I know that the textual variant in the Hebrew language allows for that verse to read, “*You shall have no other gods beside me.*” I just like to capture the essence of both of them by suggesting that the first commandment declares **“You shall have no other gods - period.”** No other gods; certainly, none before me or beside me/equal to me; no other gods - period.

The law of the first commandment is clear; there's no wiggle room, no grey area, no room for confusion or misunderstanding. Clear, concise, and to the point: **You shall have no other gods - period.** Which means that in your life and in our faith family, God demands top priority. He created us to be in relationship with us, and He created us because He wanted a family. And as the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, He is the head of the family. And rule number one is: **Nothing can take the place of the head of the family. Nothing else can take top priority. Nothing else can be more important than God - period.**

So, how do we get this right? How do we put God first in our lives? How do we seek first the Kingdom of God? How do we love the Lord our God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength?

I will leave you with 5 points to ponder:

1. How are you putting God first in your **Finances**? Check out **Proverbs 3:9-10** and **Malachi 3:10**.
2. How are you putting God first in your **Interests**? Check out **1 Corinthians 10:31**.
3. How are you putting God first in your **Relationships**? Check out **Ecclesiastes 4:12**.
4. How are you putting God first in your **Schedule**? Check out **Ephesians 5:15-17**.

5. How are you putting God first in your Troubles? Check out **Psalm 50:15** and **Psalm 46:1**.

LET'S PRAY:

Father God, you have spoken so clearly to us through the law and the prophets. You have spoken so completely through the loving sacrifice of your Son. Help us today to see the message You would have us see; to know the love You would have us live - heart, soul, mind, and strength that is built on the solid foundation of the truth that you are our God! There is no other! Help us to live in the promised richness, peace, and joy that You would have us know, and help us to fear, love, and trust You above everything else - today, tomorrow, and forever. Amen.

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