

**Word notes Sunday 30/10/2011 Clare Reed**  
**The Ten Commandments: 1 & 2**

**Summary** (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

**Key Text: Exodus 20:1-21**

The Jewish people knew the Law to be the first 5 books of the Bible and especially the bits in Exodus and Leviticus, which proscribed how to behave in relation to God and each other. It may be tempting to think that since we are justified through faith in Jesus that we have no need to pay any attention to the Law, yet Jesus said other-wise in Matt. 5:17. The difference is that we are no longer slaves to the Law, instead “by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code” Rom 7:6. In other words the way we relate to the Law has changed. In regard to sacrificial laws Jesus once and for all sacrifice means we no longer need to observe these. The same applies to the cleansing laws as a result of the cleansing action of the Blood. However when it comes to the moral/social laws these remain true but the law is not a set of rules by which we strive to keep in order to be good enough, rather they are a definition of what is sin and what is Godly. These Moral/social laws are summed up in the Ten Commandments, and also by Jesus in the Great Commandment in Matt 22:36-40. Clare dissected the first two to help us understand their meaning for us today.

1, “You shall have no other gods before me. More than simply the gods of other religions, we should not let anything or anyone take the place of God. Whatever it is we can think of that God does for us, we should seek only Him for that.

2, “Do not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below.” A common failing it seems for the people of Israel, perhaps not so obviously so now. Idols are things we make, which we control and understand and so ways in which we limit God to something we can be in charge of. Instead of physical idols these can be more elusive when we tend to give more importance to specific parts of the Bible – the easy bits over the hard, or prefer to only listen to a select few teachers who we find most agreeable.

**Application** (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

1, Who is God to you – what is His character, what does He do or provide? *(If you are leading this section a good place to start would be the names of God in the Old Testament and of Jesus, or from the secular world you might look up Maslow's hierarchy of needs).*

2, What things try to take the place of God in these ways in your life (NB they may not be bad in themselves)? How do they get to come before God in importance or role?

3, Name some modern idols. Is the Christian susceptible to any of these?

4, What about “Christian” idols – those we make by painting a selective picture of God – picking only the nice bits, or have we set our understanding of God in stone – unwilling to be open to Him taking us “outside the box” is anyone humble enough to own up to any?

5, Clare said the Bible “forms” our understanding of God while Christian teaching “informs” it. What did she mean and how do we put this into practice? How does 1 Cor 3:4 help?

**Witness** (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Christmas is the most obvious time to witness about Jesus, discuss and plan who and how to do this, individually or as a group. What crazy ideas can you come up with to bless people with the real gift of Christmas? Will you carry them out?