

# Workshop for Leaders

By Joyce MacKichan Walker

## *Love Carved in Stone* *A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments*

2019–2020 Presbyterian Women/*Horizons* Bible Study

### What is this?

A lesson plan for leaders who introduce this Bible study to any group that plans to use it.

### Who will find it helpful and why?

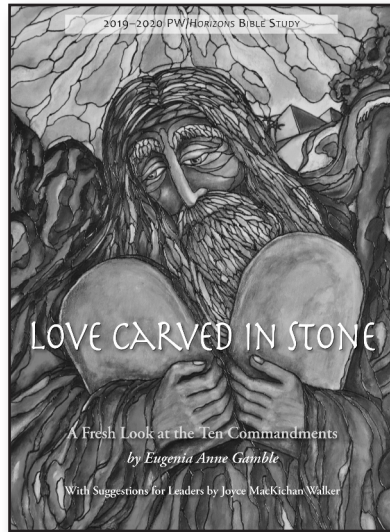
The Workshop for Leaders is written for Bible study leaders who are preparing to lead study groups, pastors and educators who will encourage and prepare others to lead, and presbyteries introducing the study to their congregations. It provides

- a foundational background for the content of the study, including an outline of the study format used in each lesson,
- a description of the design of the Suggestions for Leaders, plus suggestions for a variety of uses, and
- activities for generating interest and building enthusiasm for the study.

### What can you expect participants to learn?

Depending on the activities selected, participants will

1. express their opinions about Bible study and the Ten Commandments;
2. hear Bible stories that provide context for each of the Ten Commandments, and listen for differences in the two versions (from Exodus and Deuteronomy);
3. discover the core (life) wounds that the commandments address, then identify with one;
4. examine the four-fold lesson structure, and the pattern and purpose of Suggestions for Leaders;



5. find resources provided to support leaders and participants; and
6. name their initial response to the study and be supported in prayer.

### Room Set-up

The most helpful set-up will be tables with six to eight chairs. Participants at these tables will have their study materials and notebook in front of them; these groups will naturally serve as small groups during activities.

### Materials Needed

- A copy of the study for each participant
- Copies of *Glory To God: The Presbyterian Hymnal* to share at tables
- One set per table of ten 8 ½" x 11" or 9" x 12" page-sized red paper hearts, each containing an abbreviated commandment (see "Connect" activity for words)
- One copy per person of the lesson summary chart from this workshop
- Copies of a bookmark with basic reflection questions for the lessons (see "Consider and Converse," number eight, for the list of questions)
- Copies of "Suggested Hymns" handout
- Two signs, one with "Strongly agree," one with "Strongly disagree."
- Painter's tape with which to post the two signs
- One pen or pencil per person
- An easel pad, newsprint, and a marker (or something similar)

## Workshop Lesson Plan

### Central Concept

The passages in Exodus and Deuteronomy that include the Ten Commandments are some of the most well-known, oft-quoted, and highly valued biblical texts. But the commandments individually are too frequently used to judge others and to present an uncompromising God of stern prohibition. This fresh look at the Ten Commandments or, more literally, the Ten Words, engages participants in examining the early contexts of the two forms of the Ten Commandments in the Bible, so that we may better understand and interpret their intent. We will find here a compelling invitation to respond to God's action on our behalf, together with guidance and direction for our daily lives of discipleship, by following both the commandments and Jesus' example. The commandments speak to us as individuals and as a community of faith; nothing less than transformed faith and action honor God's love letter to God's called, chosen, and beloved people.

### Come Together

(10 minutes) Welcome participants, introduce yourself, and tell them they are about to experience an introduction to this Bible study that will mirror the sequence of parts of the lesson plans in "Suggestions for Leaders." Direct them to the "Suggestions for Leaders" that follow each lesson, then briefly name each part of the lesson plan and its purpose within the plan, as follows:

1. Central Concept—a statement of the main content of the lesson
2. Come Together—an activity to get acquainted (in the early lessons) and approach the day's focus from one's own context and life experience
3. Connect—an activity to connect one's personal experience to the theme of the lesson, and briefly engage with the "core (life) wound" that the author identifies for that day's commandment

4. Consider and Converse—experiences to explore the content of the lesson material
5. Care and Commit—an opportunity to respond to what has been explored
6. Commune and Close—a time to hear words of wisdom, support one another in commitment, and affirm God's never-ending, redeeming love, in prayer.

Ask participants to pray in unison the opening prayer in Lesson One. Suggest that they use the opening prayers at the end of each "Come Together" activity, but emphasize that they are welcome to use another opening prayer and time, if they prefer. Then invite them to experience a "Come Together" and a "Connect" activity as part of this study introduction:

(15 minutes) Here's a fun "Come Together" activity to help participants learn something about each other, and express their reaction to what they are preparing to engage. Post "Totally agree" and "Totally disagree" signs on either side of the room with a clear path between them. Invite participants to listen to the choices in these statements and express where they stand on each by going to a place on the imaginary continuum line between the two opinions. Assure them there are no right and wrong responses and invite them to have some fun with this! Ask them to pair with another participant for paired conversations after each statement. Allow one minute (30 seconds for each person in the pair) for conversation after each statement.

1. I've been in Bible studies for years! (*Introduce yourself to one person near you and tell them the topic of your favorite Bible study.*)
2. I much prefer reading the *Old Testament* over the *New Testament*; there's more action! (*Introduce yourself to one person near you and name one of your favorite books of the Bible.*)
3. I'm fairly new to Bible study and feel a little anxious right now. (*Introduce yourself to one*

*person near you and ask them how they are feeling and why.)*

4. I'm excited about a fresh look at the Ten Commandments because times have changed and I think we need new ways to interpret them. (*Go and introduce yourself to another person on the continuum and ask them why they chose that place.*)
5. When we gather for this study, I'm here more for the *study* (or for the *fellowship*) (specify an endpoint on the continuum for each of these choices). (*Introduce yourself to someone on the other end of the continuum and tell each other why this is your choice.*)
6. I think Jesus replaced the Ten Commandments with "Love God and love neighbor." (*Introduce yourself to one person at a different place on the continuum and find out their opinion about Jesus' approach to the Ten Commandments.*)
7. I prefer *leading* the Bible study (or *participating* in Bible study). (Specify an endpoint on the continuum for each of these choices.) (*Introduce yourself to one person and ask them why they prefer the role they chose.*)
8. Imagine the numbers 1–10 on our continuum line. Go and stand on the number that fills in this blank for you: If you asked me right now, I might be able to name \_\_\_\_\_ of the Ten Commandments. (Once placed, invite participants to see if collectively they can name them all—exact words not required! As the Commandments are named, write one or two words for each on a sheet of newsprint where all can see the growing list. Examples: *one God, idols, steal, murder, adultery, covet, Sabbath, lie, God's name, parents.*)

Before participants return to their seats, tell them there is an activity like this in Lesson Three that you hope will be fun for their group.

Sing together "Your Law, O Lord, Is Perfect" (Psalm 19) from *Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal*, 61. Reference the hymn suggestions for the study and for each lesson, inserted in this workshop.

## **Connect**

(10 minutes) Create groups of six to eight people (or fewer, if your group is smaller) around tables that each contain a set of ten 8 ½" x 11" or 9" x 12" page-sized red paper hearts, each containing an abbreviated commandment, as follows:

- I am your God.
- No idols.
- No wrongful use of God's name.
- Remember the Sabbath.
- Honor your parents.
- You shall not murder.
- You shall not commit adultery.
- You shall not steal.
- You shall not lie.
- You shall not covet.

Ask participants to choose a difficult-for-them/most-intriguing/easy-to-keep commandment and introduce themselves to their table group with their name and one sentence about why they chose the commandment they did.

Tell participants that one set of these hearts is used in an activity in Lesson Nine. They might want to use them throughout the study in a display area, posting each commandment as they explore it. (Workshop leader: If you are only leading this one introductory event, you might use the sets you have prepared as table favors.)

## **Consider and Converse**

(40 minutes) Direct participants to the introduction in the front of the study book and the lesson summary chart handout in this workshop. Encourage them to read the introduction carefully before they lead the study. Emphasize this important background from the introduction:

1. Understanding the biblical context of the Ten Commandments will shape the way we understand them for that time, and help us draw fresh insights for our time.
2. Briefly tell the story (or invite someone else ahead of time to tell it) of the exodus of the

Israelites, their time in the wilderness, and the giving of the Ten Commandments, in case some are present who do not know the story. A simple summary will do since the author provides a summary of the story in Lesson One. Make the point, as does she, that differences in the Ten Commandments in Exodus and Deuteronomy help us know that “their meaning and application unfold and expand in the living of them over time.”

3. Ahead of time, invite two people to read aloud Exodus 20:1–17 and Deuteronomy 5:1–21. Ask participants to listen for any differences they hear in the two readings, and without dwelling on those differences, note that the author will explain important differences in three of the commandments within Lessons Three, Eight, and Nine.
4. Note the author’s decision to refer to the Ten Commandments as the “Ten Words,” since the Hebrew word for “commandment” appears nowhere in the text—they are referred to as “Words,” and this designation may help us look for fresh insights from them.
5. The author calls these Ten Words a “love letter from God.” Ask “How do you imagine these Ten Words showing us God’s love?” After hearing some ideas, note that the author identifies a “core,” or life, wound that each Word addresses by offering healing for that core wound. Ask participants to turn to their copy of the lesson summary chart provided, and find the column with the “life wounds” identified. Point out that Lesson One has a “Connect” activity that invites study participants to note a couple of life wounds that matter to them personally, for their further exploration. Ask them to read down the list and pick one that particularly hits home for them right now, and take hope from the fact that a “Word” particularly addresses that wound.
6. On the lesson summary chart, point out the scripture column and the Gospel texts present in each lesson. These are moments from Jesus’ life that show us how he lived and taught the Ten Words.

7. Present the four-fold structure of each lesson:
  - a. An exploration of the Word in its biblical context
  - b. A gospel text that shows how Jesus lived out that Word
  - c. The Word for our own lives and times
  - d. An invitation to pray with the Word

Ask the table groups, or smaller groups of four to five, to choose a lesson and look for these four sections, then respond to this question: “How might this structure help us mine the freshness of the Ten Commandments that the author wants us to explore?”

8. Highlight the basic questions the author offers us as we begin this study: These below are written to be used with each individual session. If possible, print them in a bookmark format on cardstock paper and provide copies for those present and for their study groups. (Point out the page of bookmarks in this workshop that has been prepared for them—and you—to photocopy.) Suggest they put the bookmarks in their study books for reference, and use them as ways to reflect on each lesson as they read it.
  - a. In a time of increasing relativism, what does this Word say to me about how to be a moral Christian, both in personal and communal life?
  - b. How do I live out this Word in my relationship with God and with others in a world that is often ruled by other standards?
  - c. What is the pain from which God seeks to protect me in this Word, and how might that protection manifest itself in my life?
  - d. How can a fresh embrace of this Word contribute to my restoration, the restoration of my community, and of the gospel in the world?

(10 minutes) Say “there are many resources available to help us explore the study.” Point out where they can be found.

1. Resources in the study book (refer to the table of contents for exact locations in your edition of the study book):

- a. Find “About the Authors” for an introduction to the women who wrote the study book and Suggestions for Leaders. They are both Presbyterian women and ordained ministers.
- b. The art in a PW/*Horizons* Bible study is chosen carefully and is another way to explore the study. Find “About the Art and Artists” to learn more about the artists and why each piece was chosen. Thinking about the art leads to good discussions. Flip through the book quickly and find a piece that catches your eye. What is it about that piece of art that intrigues you?
- c. Terms to be defined or described are in the sidebars for easy reference. Information will be close at hand when you need it.
- d. Questions for discussion are called “Pause and Reflect” and are placed within the text of each lesson. When you come to one, take time to read it and follow where it leads.
- e. When she wrote *Love Carved in Stone*, the author used resources that have helped her understand the Ten Commandments through the years. Brief explanations about why they were helpful can be found in the annotated bibliography. Maybe there’s a book there that you’d like to read to learn more about the Ten Words.

2. Additional resources

- a. *Love Carved in Stone* is published in English, Spanish, ecumenical, large-print, and audio editions.
- b. A companion DVD includes lesson introductions presented by the author and also includes downloadable resources. Study groups can use the author’s introductions to begin their Bible study

sessions or use them as lesson supplements.

- c. This workshop for leaders can be used with leaders preparing to introduce the study.
- d. The promotional flier and promotional poster can be used to advertise the study. Both resources are free, and a poster is included with each study book.
- e. Use the bulletin cover for a meeting or worship service when you install leaders or for another PW or church event.
- f. The charm/pendant features the study’s cover art and makes an excellent gift for leaders and others.

### Care and Commit

(10 minutes) If you have twelve people or fewer, ask these questions of the whole group. If more, use the table groups, or smaller groups of four or five, so more participants have time to respond.

1. What have you discovered that will most help you prepare to lead, or to participate in, this study?
2. What challenges do you imagine?
3. Name something you heard that suggests you will discover new ways of hearing and living the commandments.

### Commune and Close


(10 minutes) Make a large circle. Invite participants to say their name, and finish this statement with something they are eagerly anticipating as they lead, or participate in, this study: “I’m looking forward to . . .” Tell them it might be a particular Word or lesson, something they hope this study will invite or inspire, an action for justice to which the study might lead, and so forth. Invite the whole group to offer this litany response after each person speaks: “May the Holy Spirit bless you with power and wisdom.” Close with this hymn prayer, and suggest it might be a fitting closing for each study session: “May the God of Hope Go with Us” (GtG 765).

# 2019–2020 PW/*Horizons* Bible Study by Eugenia Anne Gamble

## *Love Carved in Stone: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments*

	Scripture	Core Concept	Life Wound
<b>Intro</b>	Exodus 20:1–17 Deuteronomy 5:1–21 Genesis 12:1–3	Understanding the earliest contexts of the Ten Commandments is crucial for shaping our interpretation and insights for today. Each speaks to a life wound experienced by humanity, individually, and as the community of faith.	
<b>1</b>	Exodus 20:1–6 Matthew 22:34–37	When God says, “I am the Lord <i>your</i> God . . .” and “You shall not make for yourself an idol . . .,” God is inviting us to look only to God for our sense of worth, our power, and our most steadfast and true relationship. In Jesus Christ we see God most clearly revealed and hear the call to love God, others, and self.	Word One: Loneliness/ Separation from God Word Two: Helplessness and fearful desire for a quick fix
<b>2</b>	Exodus 20:7 Matthew 7:21–23	The Third Word calls us to use God’s name in ways that honor God’s holiness, justice, and steadfast love for all, so that we can more truly represent to the world who God is and whose we are.	Word Three: Trivializing God and attaching God’s name to desires or priorities that are not worthy
<b>3</b>	Exodus 20:8–11 Deuteronomy 5:12–15 Mark 2:23–28	Sabbath is a sacred gift that helps us fuse our personal, intimate relationship with God with Jesus’ call to relationship with others. In Sabbath, intimacy with God meets intimacy in community.	Word Four: Busyness that substitutes for holiness, and achievement that substitutes for identity
<b>4</b>	Exodus 20:12 Luke 9:57–62	Honoring your father and mother is about honoring, caring for, and protecting those who bring us to life, both biologically and spiritually. Remembering those people and passing on their gifts of life will multiply them in our congregations and beyond.	Word Five: Rootlessness, unforgiveness, and a disdain for life itself
<b>5</b>	Exodus 20:13 Matthew 5:21–26	“You shall not murder” carries a breadth of meaning far beyond simply taking a life. Anything that diminishes life for God’s beloved children and community “murders” spirits, self-esteem, and one’s ability to see oneself as loved, gifted, and called.	Word Six: Selfishness, hate, and fear that lash out and seek to destroy both God’s people and the beloved community
<b>6</b>	Exodus 20:14 Genesis 2:18–25 John 8:1–11	Exploring adultery and marriage in Hebrew culture, and the meaning of the partner relationship given by God in Genesis 2, will lead us to self-examination, confession, and standing with the community to recommit to the deep and faithful relationships to which God calls us.	Word Seven: Superficial and exploitative relationships
<b>7</b>	Exodus 20:15 Matthew 25:31–46	Exploring “You shall not steal” will lead us to face our collective responsibility and care for the whole world, and examine our own lives, and our congregational context, for vulnerabilities and response.	Word Eight: Taking the easy way to get what we want at the expense of others
<b>8</b>	Exodus 20:16 Deuteronomy 5:20 Matthew 12:36–37	Exploring the implications of lying in personal relationships, community, and to the most vulnerable may help us examine our own practices and commitments more carefully. This Word calls us to recognize and disavow lying as we recommit to the God who desires love, peace, and justice for the beloved community and the whole world.	Word Nine: The betrayal and erosion of personal and institutional trust
<b>9</b>	Exodus 20:17 (18–21) 1 Kings 21:1–16 Luke 12:13–15	Covetousness has the power to disrupt one’s trust in God, lead to broken relationships, and result in boundary breaking actions that cause great harm. God desires us to reject greed, claim the gifts we have been given, be generous to those with real needs, and live in gratitude.	Word Ten: The human tendency toward greed and comparing ourselves negatively to others

Photocopy this page and cut out the bookmarks;  
give to participants to mark lessons in their study books.





**In a time of increasing  
relativism, what does  
this Word say to me  
about how to be a  
moral Christian, both  
in personal and  
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**How do I live  
out this Word in my  
relationship with God  
and with others in a  
world that is often  
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standards?**

**What is the pain  
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**How can a fresh  
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# Order Form

## Love Carved in Stone Bible study, supplementary materials, and other helps

To order the 2019–2020 PW/*Horizons* Bible study and supplemental materials, complete and mail in the order form below, go to [www.presbyterianwomen.org/shop](http://www.presbyterianwomen.org/shop), or call the PC(USA) Store at 800/533-4371, Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM–5:00 PM EST.

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## Suggested Hymns

For each lesson of the 2019–2020 PW/*Horizons* Bible study, *Love Carved in Stone: A Fresh Look at the Ten Commandments*

GtG=*Glory to God: The Presbyterian Hymnal* (Louisville, Ky.:Westminster John Knox, 2013)  
PH=*The Presbyterian Hymnal: Hymns, Psalms, and Spiritual Songs* (Louisville, Ky.:Westminster John Knox, 1990)

For general use at any time, these psalms express love for God's law. They all extol the virtues of God's commandments and of those who keep them through their practice and service:

- "Your Law, O Lord, Is Perfect" (Psalm 19), GtG 61
- "I Long for Your Commandments" (Psalm 119), GtG 64
- "God's Law Is Perfect and Gives Life" (Psalm 19), PH 167
- "Blest Are the Uncorrupt in Heart" (Psalm 119), PH 233

For a closing hymn/prayer each time you meet, in the hope of renewal and joy in living by God's Words, and the power of claiming God's hope and justice for the world God loves:

- "May the God of Hope Go with Us," GtG 765

### Lesson One

For Commandment One: "I am your God."

- "Love the Lord Your God," GtG 62

A very simple refrain of the greatest commandment, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart," in response to God's command to have no other gods.

- "Holy, Holy, Holy! Lord God Almighty!" GtG 1 or PH 138

A well-known classic that affirms that only God is holy, "There is none beside thee" (v. 3).

For Commandment Two: "No idols."

- "O God, You Search Me," GtG 29

Based on Psalm 139, this hymn proclaims why we worship the one God; we are centered on being known intimately by the one who made us, gives us life, and is our One and Only.

- "Great Is Thy Faithfulness," GtG 39 or PH 276

Another well-known favorite, this hymn implies that there is no need for idols when, "All I have needed thy hand hath provided" (refrain).

### Lesson Two

For Commandment Three: "No wrongful use of God's name."

- "O God, Who Gives Us Life," GtG 53

Although the whole hymn extols God's all-encompassing care, verse 3 is particularly applicable to the theme of the Ten Commandments as a love letter, with a caution about speaking God's name: "O God of covenant and law, revealed in cloud and flame, your mighty deeds evoke our awe; we dare not speak your name. Yet we by faith are drawn to you and will your people prove, as on our hearts you write anew the covenant of love."

- "Guide My Feet," GtG 741 or PH 354

One way to think of empowering our keeping of God's commandments is to focus on daily living in God's light and walking in God's way. This African-American spiritual captures the importance of that stance—"Don't let my life be in vain; while I run this race, guide my feet, hold my hand, stand by me." If I am

God's child, why would I want to wrongfully use God's name, or look to any other, or do anything other than walk with my God?

### Lesson Three

For Commandment Four: "Remember the Sabbath"

- "O Day of Rest and Gladness," GtG 393; "O Day of Radiant Gladness," PH 470

Two aspects of Sabbath, rest and gladness, are highlighted, as well as the good news around which we shape our lives ". . . the Holy Scripture hear," verse 3.

- "This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made," GtG 681 or PH 230

Especially verses 1 and 3 point to the Sabbath hours as "all God's own" and "this accepted hour" for worship containing "messages of grace."

### Lesson Four

For Commandment Five: "Honor your parents."

- "Like a Mother Who Has Borne Us," GtG 44

This hymn reinforces the author's focus on God's call to us through those who bring us to life—mothers and fathers and others who care for us—and our response to that call (and example) in our own actions of care and love, peace and justice.

- "Bless All Who Trust in God," GtG 47

Find here recognition that those who trust in God and "parent" us are gifts, building strong families that flourish.

- "For All the Faithful Women," GtG 324

This fairly new hymn points to the faithful witness of women, biblical and modern, who "parent" us by telling their faith stories and modeling service to others.

- “With Grateful Hearts Our Faith Professing,” PH 497

This hymn claims the role of spiritual parents in our congregations who raise up faithful children and youth: “Lord, help us to be wise in guiding, and make us in example strong” (verse 2). See also verse four, which contains a congregation’s promise.

### Lesson Five

For Commandment Six: “You shall not murder.”

- “Judge Eternal, Throned in Splendor,” GtG 342

In this hymn, we invite God’s role as “Judge Eternal,” whose judgment cleanses the nation and brings healing to those who are wronged.

- “There’s a Wideness in God’s Mercy,” GtG 435 or PH 298

This hymn raises up the role of mercy in judgment and of kindness in justice.

### Lesson Six

For Commandment Seven: “You shall not commit adultery.”

- “God, How Can We Forgive,” GtG 445

Jesus’ encounter with the woman caught in adultery is referenced in verse three, which invites us not to judge, but to forgive. This hymn also acknowledges the pain of broken bonds of love, and the challenge of rebuilding trust and regaining hope.

- “God of Compassion, in Mercy Befriend Us,” GtG 436 or PH 261

Once again we focus on God’s compassion and mercy, seeking and finding the lost, and “guarding our thoughts and our passions controlling” (verse 2).

### Lesson Seven

For Commandment Eight: “You shall not steal.”

- “Come Now, You Blessed, Eat at My Table,” GtG 186

The story of Jesus that instructs us in this lesson is the judgment of the nations—the sheep and the goats. This hymn interprets that story and affirms the core of the gospel: “love that is faithful in word and in deed” (verse 4). Its brevity and simple unison tune commend it for use even if it is unfamiliar.

- “The Church of Christ in Every Age,” GtG 320 or PH 421

This hymn is a call to the church to serve all in an age of change, “in full obedience to our Lord” (verse 5).

- “Together We Serve,” GtG 767

Also referencing this lesson’s gospel story, hear the call to work together to extend God’s love to the world.

### Lesson Eight

For Commandment Nine: “You shall not lie.”

- “When the Poor Ones/When a Poor One,” GtG 762 or PH 407

A theology of plenty empowers sharing even when one has little, and living generously in all circumstances—signs that “God still goes that road with us.” Such a life is joyful and, in the spirit of this commandment, one in which “. . . our lips can speak no words other than true” (verse 3).

- “O God, Who Gives Us Life,” GtG 53

From Lesson Two, Commandment Three, revisit this hymn. The call-out of “wastes of empty lies” (verse 2) is particularly applicable to this commandment and to our times.

The reminder that God is a “God of covenant and law” (verse 3) who writes on our hearts “a new covenant of love” (verse 3) is a wonderful way to begin to wrap up this study.

### Lesson Nine

For Commandment Ten: “You shall not covet.”

- “The Right Hand of God,” GtG 332

This stark reminder that God still works in our day and time, noting our challenges (verse 1), guiding us amidst ambiguity (verse 2), calling out and combating our envy, hate, greed, selfishness, lust—all examples of coveting (verse 3)—and healing “. . . with love that means so much . . .” (verse 4), is particularly appropriate for this lesson.

- “In an Age of Twisted Values,” GtG 345

Verse 1 alone captures the sin of covetousness and our need for repentance and forgiveness, but the whole hymn summarizes the sorry mess we find ourselves in from ignoring God’s commandments: “We who hear your word so often choose so rarely to obey” (verse 4). Let this hymn express guilt, failure to follow God’s law and Christ’s teaching, and a deep desire for God to “Turn us from our willful wandering; give us truth to light our way. In the power of your Spirit, come to cleanse us, make us new; hear our cry and heal our nation till our nation honors you” (verse 4).

- “Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples,” GtG 757 or PH 434

At the end of this study, you can’t go wrong with this summary of God’s call to be disciples, claiming the whole earth as the focus of our stewardship, justice, and peace.